

RE-EMBODIMENT
OR
HUMAN INCARNATIONS

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Immortality", "Death and After",
"Occult Powers Resident in
Sound", "Western Science
and the Ancient
Wisdom",
Etc.



1930

---❧ ONE OF A SERIES ❧---

Published by
MERRELL-WOLFF PUBLISHING CO.
BOX 626, SAN FERNANDO, CALIFORNIA

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Printed in the United States of America
SKELTON PUBLISHING CO, Los Angeles

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PREFACE

THIS little booklet is one of a series designed to bring the Philosophy of the Ancient Wisdom Religion closer to the understanding of the Western Mind. The cultures of the East and the West have developed in diametrically opposed directions. The result is that it is difficult for the sons of one culture to understand the spirit of the other. Each tends to look upon the other as inferior. But in forming such a judgment it is usually forgotten that each is taking the perspective of his own culture as having peculiar objective validity. If the metaphysical significance of the now superficially familiar Theory of Relativity were more generally understood this mistake would not be made. No one culture can possibly afford an absolute criterion. Wisdom would counsel him, who seeks a fuller realization of Truth, to penetrate into the spirit of the culture which is foreign to his own immediate training.

The East has been forced into a commercial, military and diplomatic contact with the West and thus has come to know more of the western spirit than the latter knows of the former. If we of the Occident are not to be left trailing behind in the attainment of synthetic Wisdom it behooves us to

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become students of the eastern Knowledge. Whatever there may be of fault in the oriental cultures this fact remains that the East has built a power of endurance and persistence utterly unknown to any western nation. This implies that basically Nature has placed her stamp of approval upon that culture. Unless we are content to become, like Egypt, Greece and many other nations, but an historic memory, while India and China continue, as they have in the past, in continuity of life, then we should seek to learn of the latter their secret.

The method in these writings is that of casting into a western rational form the metaphysical material which comes out of the East. Thus, in so far as they are successful, they are a union of the Spirits of the East and the West. For Essence or Being is the prime concern of the Oriental, just as for the Occidental the center of interest lies in external Form. Mayhap, if we of the New World can be successful in achieving this Union, a destiny never equaled before lies before us. But such a destiny can be won only through effort.

YOGAGNANI

January 30, 1930

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INTRODUCTION

FOR HIM, who would delve into the Mysteries of Being or would seek to solve the problems which surround the lives of our common humanity, an understanding of the Law governing the cycles of human incarnations is of the very first importance. To one who believes that for every new-born babe a soul is newly created and that embodiment on this plane is but for the period of one life-cycle, the appearance of the life-problem must take on a wholly different character than would be true, in the case of one who views embodiments as but a series of Days in the grand Life-cycle of the Soul. In the former case the problem of evil and human suffering must take on a radically different appearance than is possible in the case of one who

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believes in, or has proven to himself, the truth of the second alternative. Neither the philosophy nor the technique of Yoga* can be considered apart from the Reincarnation. If there were no such thing as the recurrent incarnation of the soul then the greater portion of the bondage and suffering of man could not be attributed to causes which he, himself, sowed. This would reduce the moral law to the status of mere social convention and give man a position of spiritual irresponsibility, as there would be no relation between the experience which he reaped and the sowing for which he was responsible in thought, word and deed. The theory of Liberation from bondage or salvation, as some would call it, in that case would take on entirely different form from that which would be true in a world order in which there was a perfect balance between cause and effect in the acts for which man was responsible and the circumstances which he experiences. It is therefore of the highest importance that the student should have as comprehensive an un-

*Yoga is conscious realization of Spiritual Being.

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derstanding of the philosophy of Reincarnation as is possible.

This brochure is designed to serve two purposes. In the first place, the rational ground for belief in the reality of reincarnation together with evidences supporting the validity of the teaching will be elaborated. After that there will be a discussion of what might be called the technique of Reincarnation. To determine that there is a recurrent embodiment and then what it is which is subject to reincarnation are two very different questions. Many, who have already convinced themselves of the reality of the multiplicity of the life cycles of the individual soul, are quite confused as to what it is which is subject to this periodic principle. There is THAT which is wholly unaffected by all objective processes and the essence of Spiritual Realization is the becoming conscious of the fact that the Self or the "I" in every man is identical with THAT. Thus there is a sense in which one could say quite correctly; "I am not subject to reincarnation". But in

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this sense "I" am not only not subject to incarnation but "I" have not incarnated even once. However, that is a very different proposition from the one which maintains that this bundle of qualities which characterize this individualized personality will never manifest on earth again, once the physical body has passed through the transition called death. It is quite possible to logically assert that "I", in the metaphysical sense, am not subject to incarnation and, at the same time, maintain the reality of Reincarnation. It thus ought to be apparent that the problem of Reincarnation is much more than that of a mere determination that Reincarnation is a fact. However, without establishing at least a reasonable presumption in favor of the reality of this principle there is no use discussing the second question. Accordingly the elaboration of the rational ground and evidence for multiple embodiments will constitute the first and principle portion of this effort.

The philosophy outlined here will not be an arbitrary dogma. No one is asked

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to believe who is not reasonably convinced. The autonomy of every individual being, as a self-determining, rational intelligence is not only a principle which we recognize, but we also maintain that respect for this principle is the first obligation of ethics and brotherhood. Likewise we maintain that violation of this autonomy becomes the supreme moral crime and is the essence of the black arts. That governments, orthodox religions and much of business practice are widely guilty of this crime does not change the moral status of that violation but is simply an index of the darkness of the age. Invasion of this domain by physical violation or psychological trespass are both acts which belong unconsciously, when not consciously, to the powers of darkness. The only valid method of appeal to any body for the purpose of building a belief is through his reasoning intelligence, freed from the improper psychological force, which is so often now days called propaganda, salesmanship, "Americanization", missionary drives, etc. Accordingly the method followed in the first section of this booklet

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will be that of building up a presumption for Reincarnation through the drawing together of implications from general principle, and then the collecting of certain types of evidence having a more empirical character. In the second section Reincarnation will be assumed as an established fact, and, in that attitude, its technique and purpose will be discussed.

We ask that the reader on his part will meet us half way by approaching the first section with an open mind, not allowing pre-conception, prejudice or early training to stand between him and a fair valuation of the reason and evidence which will there be unfolded. He may do this in full confidence, knowing always that Truth has the better Reason and therefore can never be slain by Reason. If, in the end, he is honestly not convinced; then we freely offer respect for his difference of opinion.

PART ONE

Evidence for Reincarnation

ONE OF the most fundamental intuitions of man is, that Nature is orderly or, in other words, Rational. This is not a point of view which is simply the result of a high degree of philosophical sophistication, although the formulation of it as a principle does require the development of the philosophical sense. The analysis of the acts of man reveals the fact that unconsciously perhaps, he assumes this principle as necessarily true. Everybody, or nearly everybody, plans his actions in terms that imply a future. Tomorrow, we take for granted and plan our educational program, business affairs, amusements, etc. accordingly. We recognize that there are changes so that tomorrow the complexes of experience will not be precisely the same as those of today; but while we expect unforeseen elements to enter into the manifold of the next day's events, yet in its main or fundamental features we regard that day as bearing an orderly relationship to the present. All

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of this is implied in the simple act of planning for the future. If this, which we call the universe, where an absolute chaos or the manifestation of pure lawlessness, then we could not so plan concerning anything. If the water which runs down hill today should, without rhyme or reason, go uphill tomorrow; if the attraction of gravity should suddenly become levity; if the relationship of streets and buildings in a city were subject to suddenly shifting about in location, form and so forth, without prediction or the possibility of being predicted; if, in a word, the whole idea of law as a system of innate order were suddenly wiped away; then all basis of action, of assurance, or faith, even, would be destroyed. But the fact is that, however great uncertainties we may have in the details of life or even in some of the transcendental problems, we feel assured that there is a basic order in Nature such that it is possible to plan future action.

This assurance does not rest upon sheer experience. The Scotch philosopher, David

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Hume, in his trenchant analysis of experience, showed quite conclusively that from the mere fact that we have seen the sun rise any number of times we can build no ground for being assured that it will rise tomorrow. Something more is required in order that there can be any knowledge whatsoever. And that something man carries with him.* This something we call the fundamental intuitions. These are not the detailed or special intuitions which come with the growth of spiritual insight. They are the basic intuitions which every creature must have, at least every reasoning creature.

The whole structure of physical science, which has accomplished so much of practical value for the world and considerable of theoretical value, rests first of all upon the principle of the Uniformity of Nature. From a formal logical point of view this might be called simply a fundamental assumption, but for the natural sciences them-

*Perhaps the greatest value contributed by the philosophy of Kant is just the point that whether or not all knowledge begins with experience not all knowledge comes from experience.

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selves it is much more than that. It is a conviction that this principle is true. And on that conviction libraries are filled with the records of man's scientific experience and the formulation of the synthesizing concepts suggested by those experiences, plus intuition. Upon this conviction laboratories and mechanics' shops are builded; in fact our present industrial and social system is so intimately interwoven with the practical fruitage of scientific research that this ground principle of all science has become one of our most intimate hand-maidens.

Now the principle of the Uniformity of Nature is not something which science has proven or even can prove by empirical method, for the reason David Hume so well points out. It is a foundation principle on which all generalizations in science rest as subsumptions. Our knowledge of it is immediate and not derivative. In other words, it is a fundamental intuition.

It will be unnecessary to go further to show that the principle of Order or Rea-

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son is universally recognized in every act of life, at least implicitly. But there are many who have failed to make this recognition explicit and thus realized consciously the importance of it. When this step is fully taken man will find in his hand the most important key for unlocking the mysteries of Nature in all her departments.

Physical science has gone far in applying this principle of Order (of which Uniformity of Nature is but a special form) to the sensuous world. Not always has she, as represented in her votaries, been consistent; not always has she been sufficiently cautious regarding premature generalization often in rather dogmatic form; not always has she been daring enough in giving recognition to the unusual when the evidence has been presented; but with all these imperfections she has gone far in throwing back the veils of ignorance for man and at the same time furnished for him the vast majority of his instruments for objective comfort. However, giving to science all due credit for her posi-

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tive achievement, the fact still remains she has not yet recognized the reality of supersensuous Being. In this, one may see the reason why nearly always her generalizations have a purely transcendent value. It seems that all of her concepts sooner or later have to give way in the face of greater refinement of observation. Today that observation has reached to the borderland beyond which the outer senses cannot go.

The Ancient Wisdom or Occult Philosophy is in agreement with physical science in predicating Order as a governing principle of Nature. But where physical science has confined itself to the sensuous world, Occult Science maintains the universality of this principle on all planes of Being. Thus, while science and religion in the West have applied diverging canons of Truth-determination to Nature, so that between the two there is a more or less active conflict, the Wisdom Religion or Occult Philosophy on the contrary is a synthesis of these two aspects of human life. Thus the spirit of interpreting

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all planes of manifested Being in conformity to the principle of Order or Reason marks the Wisdom Religion as also being a Science. On the other hand, in subordinating all knowledge to moral values, even to carrying moral criteria into the very structure of investigative method, this body of Knowledge becomes also a Religion. Thus, where we in the West have had the courage to go a certain distance in following up the implications of the basic intuition that Order underlies the world, but have failed to carry that implication through to its logical conclusion, Occult Philosophy on the other hand goes all the way and asserts that the principle of Order or Reason is strictly universal in its application. Hence in this principle we have a major Key for the resolution of every problem which life may bring before one.

It is in this spirit of the Ancient Wisdom that we will approach this problem of Reincarnation.

Analysis of the principle of Order reveals as the most primary implication that the

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Universe must ever be in a state of balance. In other words, every mode in the Universe must be balanced by its own other, which is a mode having the same modulus but taken in opposite sense. Thus the balanced values of all action become a perfect cancellation. This is equivalent to saying that the Universe taken in the fullest sense is a self-contained Whole. When viewing any partial aspect, one finds continually a process of Becoming with no rest anywhere, and if one could then view the complementary partial aspect he would again find this process of Becoming, but in just that opposite sense which would balance the first. The view which comprehended All would reveal, not a process of Becoming but perfect Balance, in other words, pure Being.

In the domain of physical science the principle of Balance is reflected, in part, in the law which asserts that action and reaction are equal but opposite in sense and also in the law of conservation of matter-energy.* In

*The former principles of conservation of matter and conservation of energy have become conservation of matter-energy.

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logic it is revealed in the law of contradiction, i. e., "A cannot be both A and not-A at the same time and in the same sense." This principle of balance constitutes the very woof and warp of mathematics by which she has ascended to the most transcendental domains to which uninitiated human consciousness has yet attained. In a word, balance is the foundation principle of all organized thinking.

Spread out in Time the principle of Balance becomes the principle of Periodicity. Every manifested mode is bound to its own other. In the metaphysical sense these two aspects are never separated. Each action is at once its own negation. But thus, obviously, on this level of consciousness there can be no manifestation. To make the modes apparent requires the separative yet uniting action of the principle of Time, so that one mode stands in contrast to its own other to which it is bound by Time.* The compound totality of all modes becomes a cycle, so that for any process represented by a given arc of the

*Space is also a binder of complemental opposites, as up and down, left and right, north and south, etc.

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cyclic figure, there would always be another arc representing just exactly the reverse process.

The recognized applications of this principle of Periodicity are to be found in all departments of Nature. Thus, corresponding to the rising of the tide there is the recession; the apparent climb of the sun from the nadir to the zenith is matched by its decline from the zenith to nadir; the similar motion of the sun from the summer solstice southward, bringing colder weather, stands balanced by the reverse motion from the winter solstice back to summer, bringing heat. Examples may be enumerated on every side. In no part of Nature where our observation reaches any degree of completeness do we find any exception to this Law. Every energy that we know manifests through a vibratory form made up of parts just balancing each other.

Applications of the principle of Periodicity of particular interest are to be found in the relationships between matter and en-

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ergy. Until a few decades ago scientists thought that matter and energy were two independent domains. Today they know differently. The researches, stimulated by the discovery of radium, have revealed that ponderable matter is continually in a process of breaking down into the form of free energy. Among some elements and on cold bodies this process is relatively slow, among other elements and on the hot stars the breakdown is rapid. It is this break-down of matter into the energetic form which affords the energy which we derive from the sun. Now another process is recognized by scientists which is just the complement of this. Matter is also being continually rebuilt from the freed energy. Thus we have a cycle in this process and that is why the universe does not run down.

Again, if we turn our attention to geology we can readily trace the action of this periodic principle. Let us start with the great primary rocks, such as granite. These rocks take a crystalized form out of a molten mag-

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ma or, at least are produced under conditions of high temperature, and thus are called igneous. In the course of time, as through deformations of the earth these rocks become exposed to the surface, they are broken up and worn away by the various agents of erosion. In time the fine particles are deposited in beds of the sea, of lakes or of streams, there to form, at first, sand or mud beds and soils. Then, as time moves on, these beds become consolidated forming the masses of sedimentary or stratigraphic rocks. In turn, these masses in time become subjected to immense, heat-producing pressures both by superimposition of great masses of material and by earth-stresses. This leads to a metamorphic reconstruction of the rock masses so that they again take on the crystalline structure. This process is repeated over and over again, so that even the hardest and most solid rock is in a process of becoming transformed in a seemingly endless series of cycles.

If we enter the domain, commonly called organic, we still find this law operat-

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ing. Mineral matter in the soil is taken up in the plant, there to become organic or actively* living matter. In time, the plant dies and disintegrates so that the material ingredients which constituted its body return to the forms whence they came. Thus the soil became organic matter but to return again to the soil and repeat the process over and over again in other plants.

With the animals this process is extended but a step further, but there still continues a periodic form. The matter from the plant is taken into the body of the animal there to become a constituent part of the animal form. Then, with the death of the animal, it may, perhaps, pass on to other animal forms, but sooner or later it is returned to the soil, where the cycle from mineral to plant to animal to soil is repeated over and over endlessly.

It should not be necessary to elaborate more examples. The action of periodicity may be traced by every one in all the phases of nature about him.

*Occult Science does not make the distinction between the inorganic and the organic that physical science does. The former asserts that all matter is living matter, only in the mineral form the life is latent.

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Now the lesson to be drawn from this action everywhere that observation can trace, of this one principle of periodicity is very simple, but it has been widely neglected. It is simply, that if a principle applies without exception in the domains of Nature which can be traced, then the *presumption is that that principle still governs in the domain which is now beyond our power of direct observation*. If, further, the deepest, most basic intuitions of man imply this given principle, that presumption of universality of application becomes almost definite knowledge. At any rate, the full burden of proof must fall on any one who contends that some domain of Nature is an exception to the rule. If such a contention has merely the entrenchment of habit or the backing of established authority, such as a church dogma, the requirement of proof still remains. Mere habit of belief or the assertion of entrenched authority proves nothing concerning the truth of any proposition.

There is another implication from the principle of Balance which is of profound

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importance. It is the law of causal connection. Each aspect of a cycle is bound to its complement, since the metaphysical reality is that both are one. This complemental bondage becomes in Time the process of inter-connection by which the antecedent in the periodic series implies the succeedents. This is simply causal connection. Every act implies its own effect; in fact is, in the last analysis, that effect.

Application of Periodicity to Life-Cycles

When we come to the study of man we again find this principle of periodicity operating, at least in so far as our observation can extend. Consider, first, the physical body. Both physical and Occult science state that the matter of which the body is composed is continually subject to a process of transition so that it is completely changed in a cycle of seven years. Thus the adult human being has an entirely different physical body from that in which he was born, not only in the sense

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that it has grown, but also in that it is composed of a different group of material atoms. Thus constantly in the body there is a process of new matter being taken into its structure and old matter being thrown off. There is consequently a condition of being born and dying going on continuously.* This is really a series of new incarnations of atoms progressing in the microcosm of the human physical body.**

St. Paul said: "I die daily." This is really a statement of an occult truth which applies to the various sheaths of the human being. In the fact of the seven-year renewal of matter in the physical body, we can easily see the truth of this proposition as applied to the physical sheath. Through the matter that leaves the body man undergoes a process of continual dying. But through the new matter that is also constantly being drawn into it,

*The discipline in occult training makes use of this cyclic change in the constitution of the body to effect its progressive etherialization. By feeding the body only with matter which is favorable to this process in the course of seven years a body with entirely different kinds of tendencies can be formed.

**Occult science teaches that the matter that has once formed part of a human body gravitates back again to human bodies. Thus we have here a process of reincarnation of atoms in the physical body.

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he is likewise being born anew. In youth the process of being born is more rapid than that of dissolution, hence there is growth of the physical body and an expansion of physical activity. At the mid-point of life the two processes just balance each other, while in the latter portion the tearing down proceeds more rapidly than the growth. Finally there comes a critical point where the tearing down process destroys the physical body as an organized association of material atoms. This is the moment of death in the familiar sense of that word. But while this is a critical point which produces a marked transition, it is not correct to identify death only with this moment. Death is really a process which is continuing all the time. The final break-up of the body is only the culmination of a long process.

Now, what happens with the final dissolution of the physical body? Is the matter of which it is composed destroyed? We know, from what science tells us, that it is not. As indicated in the ceremonial phrase, the "Earth returns to Earth," and thus is not lost. Mat-

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ter-energy is not destroyed by death. It has simply changed its form and association, to be used over again in new combinations by Nature. We see it taken up again by plants and then by animals and finally returning through fruits, vegetables and flesh to the human form. The final act of physical death destroyed nothing but an association. The component elements of the body continue on in their cycles of incarnation.

But man is much more than a physical body. Throughout all the period of his physical life-cycle while the matter in his body was being continually renewed, he was yet identified, both to himself and his acquaintances, as the same individual. This proves that the continuity of his self-identity and character was not dependent upon the matter of his physical body. There was a complex of an emotional, an intellectual and a desire nature which marked him as a given personalized-individuality. With the final disassociation of the physical body this personalized-individuality disappears as a force which may

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be objectively perceived. What becomes of it? Does it vanish and become nothing?

The above questions are vital and the student should consider them well, for the crux of the problem of Reincarnation lies concealed in them. The character of a living man is a real force. In the case of great men it becomes a force which may make whole nations tremble. No one can doubt its pragmatic reality. It is not, as we have shown, an attribute of the physical matter which composes the body. Hence, it is not to be traced by following the physical body after the culminating act of death. It is thus an energy which remains to be accounted for. If we say that it becomes nothing, that is, destroyed, we then violate a basic principle of science, i. e., the conservation of matter-energy. In fact, we would then violate a fundamental canon of thought in that we would have something become nothing. The presumption must always rest with such vital and long-established canons. Hence, apart from every other consideration, he who would maintain

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consistently the attitude of the rational or scientific investigator, must, in the absence of proof to the contrary, assume that this manifold of qualities which formed a given individualized character, still is, although the physical body has disintegrated.

Let us turn our attention now to another familiar event which is the complement of the one we have just been examining, i. e., the birth of a child. New-born children are not simply blank forms capable of taking on any character. Some of the qualities which they manifest as they grow older may be traced to heredity and environment. But study makes us well aware, that we cannot predict the life-course of a child by simply knowing his heredity and controlling his environment. Also, genius is a law unto itself. Generally it shoots to heights far above its parents regardless of the possession or lack of educational opportunity. Thus we see that the newly arrived child carries with him something which is uniquely his. In other words, he carries a character which later he makes

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manifest as belonging to him peculiarly. Now, again, from whence came this character? Did it come from nothing?

In this second pair of questions we have the complement of the first pair. The law of conservation of matter-energy again requires us to say that this unique character of the newly-born child could not come from nothing. Reason demands that before the birth, it must have been.

Now we have before us two blind points with a cycle between which we can trace. Between birth and death we can observe the character, but at one point there is an apparent coming of character from nothing and at the other a similar appearance of its disappearance into nothing. The law of the conservation of matter-energy, and a fundamental principle of reason, demand that we regard both these appearances as *Appearance* only. Somewhere character must go and from somewhere character must come. Now, if we complete the circle, of which we perceive only the arc of the outer life, and

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identify the character, which seemed to become nothing, with the character, which seemed to come from nothing, then we would have, at least, an hypothesis which does not violate either the principle of the conservation of matter-energy or the principle that nothing can become nothing. This is reincarnation of character.

That the foregoing discussion is not complete proof of the reincarnation of character is recognized. But what is maintained, however, is that reincarnation of character is more rationally thinkable than the idea that there is no such cyclic process. In other words, the presumption of Reason places the burden of proof upon the opponent of this doctrine, no matter how extended his background of habitual or theological thought, which may have stood opposed to the idea of Reincarnation.

There are those who, while they stand in agreement with the proposition that the collection of associated qualities, which we call an individual character or entity, did

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not originate with the physical birth of the child and did not cease to be with the passing of the body, yet maintain that the prenatal life always had been in some other domain than this plane of this earth, and that the post-mortal life is likewise always on some other plane. This point of view does not violate the principle of conservation of matter-energy and therefore to that extent is compatible with the principles we have here enunciated. But those who take this position have neglected an important implication of the principle of Periodicity, i. e., that the completion of every cycle of periodic motion is a return to the starting point, except in so far as it may be deflected by another impinging energy. It is highly important that the student should grasp the significance of this implication as far as is possible.

Let us take as an illustration the motion of a comet, newly captured by the sun, and having an elliptic orbit of high eccentricity. This defines a body newly started on a periodic cycle, such that, at one stage it comes

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very close to the sun but in the opposite stage swings very far away.* The starting point of this series of periodic cycles is the time when the cometary body is drawn under the dominant attractive force of solar gravitation. The comet is impelled with rapidly growing velocity toward the sun, but when it comes to its closest point in its path the accumulated momentum tends to sweep it by. But the attraction of the sun, acting upon it very strongly at this point, tends forcibly to bend it out of its path, thus producing a curvilinear motion in which the comet's own driving momentum is progressively exhausted, until such time as the attractive force of the sun becomes greater than that of the former's momentum. There then occurs a return movement on a curved path which is the complement of the outward-going path. This leads to a return to the same point, where the comet was once before nearest to the sun, and the cyclic process continues indefinitely. Now

*The earth or any planet would also have afforded an illustration save that they would not have afforded any observed starting point and the difference between aphelion and perihelion is not large enough to make the illustration impressive.

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the significance of this illustration lies in the tendency, in periodic motion, of a return to the very point where a causal process starts.* The study of various periodic forms found in nature shows this tendency everywhere.

If, taking the illustration of the comet again, we assume that this body in the course of its motion, combined with the motions of the planets around the sun, comes so close to one of these planets as to be appreciably deflected by the gravitational field of the latter, then the form of its periodic course will be correspondingly altered. Periodicity will not be destroyed but the form that periodic action takes will be changed. With a large number of factors operating the periodic form may become very complex, but the periodic principle remains ever unaffected.

This tendency to return of any body, gross or subtle, to the point of origin** is a metaphysical necessity. Thus, given any state

*The writer realizes that it is not philosophically correct to speak of the starting point of a causal series as occupying a given place in time. In the sense used above this point is taken as any convenient arbitrary point in the causal chain.

**"Origin" is not here used in an absolute sense. It is any arbitrarily chosen initial point.

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whatsoever, as an assumed original condition, we will postulate a displacement or distortion induced into that state. Balance, being the very nature of primary substance, this displacement or distortion sets up a counter force which just exactly corrects it and thus reproduces the original state. In the highest metaphysical sense this is an all-at-once or non-temporal process. Reflected in Time, the various steps in the process are separated by a lapse of time. But the fact remains that the grand metaphysical movement in the macrocosm is reproduced in the tendencies of every microcosmic cycle.

The application of this principle to human life implies that causes set up by any individualized character tend to produce a return to the point where those causes were produced. Thus, causes originating on this physical plane of Life tend to bring the causal agent back to this same plane. This process of cyclic return may take place one or more times within the limits of one incarnation, or it may not have occurred by the time the

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physical body has been disintegrated. When this is the case, the momenta of the periodic energies operating become a force which drags the individualized character, that acted as causal agent, back into incarnation with the inescapability of an inevitable necessity.

If the whole objective plane of the world is itself subject to a motion towards either greater density or etherialization, that movement is also imparted to the cycles of the reincarnating individualized-character so that the final motion, instead of being like a closed curve on a plane surface, takes on, rather, the form of a spiral in three-dimensioned space. Other causes, both subjective and objective, may be set up, such that, they radically affect the form of the reincarnation cycle, so that the final appearance of the given form may be very complex. But the law that operates remains the same and is without exception.

A given set of causes, imposed upon the effects of previous causes, may produce a resultant which radically alters the original mode of cyclic motion. This does not con-

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stitute an exception to the Law of Periodicity, but is simply the production of a compound resultant in periodic action which has a totally different effect from the original form. It is thus possible for the individualized character to break out of a reincarnational series and thus change his field of motion to other spheres. But such a change would be the fruitage of properly directed individual effort. It is not a description of a general tendency in our world-nature. Thus the logic of Periodicity implies a recurrent appearance, on this objective plane of physical matter, of every individualized character who sets up causes on this plane.

Apart from the general logical and philosophical considerations discussed above there is a large amount of evidence which, while not compelling belief in the doctrine of Reincarnation, yet through the accumulative weight of its mass produces a strong presumption in support of that doctrine. This line of evidence will now be briefly outlined.

First of all, belief in reincarnation is

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widely current among men. In fact, the larger portion of the human race takes this doctrine as a matter of course. It is an old, accepted principle throughout Hinduism and Buddhism, and these two constitute by far the largest religious group in the world. With these religions it is not an arbitrarily imposed dogma, but simply something recognized as a matter of fact, just as science would recognize gravity as a law in Nature. These are not the only groups that recognize reincarnation as a principle, but they are the most important. It is thus seen that this belief has the prestige of the weight of numbers who believe in it.

Of course, the mere fact that numbers of people believe in an idea is not proof of its validity, but old, well-established tradition has a force which is not to be denied. Even though the form of a belief is a counterfeit of the true idea, none the less the presence of the counterfeit is evidence of the Reality which is counterfeited. An idea must have a source. The wise student, instead of ridiculing the perhaps childish form an idea may have in

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the common consciousness of a race, will look for a cause behind that idea. This applies also to the widely current and ancient belief in Reincarnation.

A point, which is of especial significance to the Christian student, is the fact that Reincarnation was an accepted principle in the groups in which Jesus moved, and at least one statement in the Gospels would imply that Jesus accepted this doctrine. All that is necessary for the student to do is to turn to a few references in the Christian Bible. A few instances are noted as follows:

In the Gospel of St. John, 1:27, the Levites are represented as asking John the Baptist, "Art thou Elias?" and "Art thou that prophet?" etc. These questions quite clearly indicate the currency of the idea that one who had incarnated once on earth and died in his physical body, could be born as a child again in another physical body. Again, if we turn to Mal., IV:5, we find the words: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful

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day of the Lord." Then turning to Matt. XVII: 12-13, we have: "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. *Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist.*" Thus if the testimony of St. Mathew is to be credited, Jesus accepted and implied reincarnation in His teaching. It is strange, indeed, that so many who claim to give authority to the words of Jesus as represented in the Gospels should yet look askance at the doctrine of Reincarnation!

Consider the two following quotations:

"They who are accounted worthy to obtain that world—neither marry—*neither can they die any more.*" (Luke XX: 35-36.)

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God, *and he shall go no more out.*" (Rev. 3:12).

The statement; "neither can they die any more"; implies a previous habit of dying, which in the case of those designated ones

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who have "Attained," a given state or "world" is overcome. In other words, Reincarnation is recognized as the rule. In the words; "and he shall no more go out"; the same idea is contained. "Going out" is clearly going into incarnation, or physical embodiment.

The student who desires to do so may find other quotations in the New Testament which will support those given above. It is unnecessary to give more here.

What the vast bulk of Jesus' teachings were no man knows, at least no non-Initiate. For clearly Jesus did not take three years to say the few words recorded in the Gospels. Whatever may have been his real practice and emphasis, it is clear that those who wrote, what purports to be the words of Jesus, did not give a conspicuous place to Reincarnation. The few references that exist give the idea that it was a doctrine believed as a matter of course, and not requiring any special teaching. *Who knows what the record of Jesus' life contained before that record passed through the mutilating hands of the early Councils?*

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There is a pragmatic or ethical argument for reincarnation which, while lacking all formal logical value, still has a distinct, psychological and practical utility. The essence of this line of reasoning is that if an idea gives a perspective for the viewing of the problems of Life, such that, those problems become more easily resolved in Consciousness, then a presumption of truth is established for that idea. Such a mode of reasoning implies, as a pre-supposition, either the assumption or intuition that the Nature of Being is such that the problems which Life brings, Consciousness can resolve. Hence, any co-ordinating idea which makes such a resolution easier is presumptively truer than one which makes it more difficult. Of course, to an individual consciousness which did not accept the above fundamental principle as true or probably true, all argument of this form would have no value, but for all others it is of high significance. For many, the application of this argument to Reincarnation has been the prime factor which led to the ac-

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ceptance of that doctrine. In fact the numbers are considerable of those who have been saved from despair concerning the problem of Life and Being by the pragmatic value of the principle of Reincarnation.

Under the view that each newly born child is a freshly created soul and having therefore, prior to birth produced no causes either good or evil, the manifold inequalities in the circumstances of birth manifestly violate the most elemental principles of justice.*

If the circumstances of life were so arbitrarily determined as would be the case if the above were true, it would imply that moral order is not part of the nature of manifested Being as such. If this were the case, then universal soul-suicide would be the logical solution of the Life-problem. But man's deeper consciousness ever asserts and demands the reality of moral values as being part and

*The idea that this condition is due to the will of "God" and is therefore above criticism, is an insult to the intelligence and moral sense of the vast majority of human beings. Such a "God" is really a devil and the worship of him is essentially devil-worship. This idea is nothing more nor less than an imposition fostered upon man by a priesthood that has proven traitor to its trust. There are few ideas more thoroughly immoral and impious than this one.

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parcel of Being itself. Hence, the man, who is not psychologized by arbitrary, dogmatic, theological training, naturally responds to a view of Life which satisfies the ethical yearnings of his soul. In a peculiar sense and degree the idea of Reincarnation renders this service.

With Reincarnation combined with the principle of Periodicity in the form of moral causality, known as the Law of Karma, all of the inequalities in the circumstances of Life can be reconciled with Justice. For in the Light of these ideas it is easy to see how the man was responsible for the causes which produced the circumstances of his life as natural effects. Where the cause of a given effect in the form of the circumstances of life cannot be traced in the current life-cycle of an individual, then it is to be found in some previous life-cycle. Thus it would remain always true that "as we sow, we ever reap." If one is born into poverty, he has earned it. Likewise, if all the circumstances of his life are favorable to the maximum expansion of

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Consciousness and Life-activity, he also has earned that. Also, if in the present life one works an injustice on another, he will be constrained by the Law of Karma to make that wrong right in this or another life. And further, the administration of this Law cannot be bribed by endowment funds to charitable institutions or by eleventh-hour repentances. Debts due must be paid, now or later. Likewise, every good and noble deed will have its reward. If this is not realized by the time of the dissolution of the body, then it will come in another life. Thus there is seen ever to be a just proportion between the thought, word or deed which stands as cause, and the circumstances of life which are experienced.

The implication is that what man, as an individual, as a nation, a race or a humanity experiences in the conditions of Life he has himself produced. Of course, recognition of this fact leaves most of us with a sense of not being flattered, but that is no evidence that it is not true. On the other hand, Re-incarnation, together with the Law of Karma,

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offers us the best ground for hope and the taking-on of new courage. For readily it may be seen that no one need lie supinely under the conditions of his life. He may set up new causes and thus build his future as he would have it to be.

Another implication of the combined doctrine of Reincarnation and Karma is that effect is proportioned to cause. Thus the production of a finite evil does not lead to an infinite retribution. Nor, on the other hand, is there any escape, simply by some act of belief, from the responsibility to make right wrong. There is an even proportioning of justice at all times.

Under this view it is possible to see Justice acting even in worldly injustice. It is possible to become reconciled with all that is, without having to renounce a sense of Justice, nor be harrassed with the idea that Unreason rules in Nature. There is probably no idea so potent in building contentment with the essential Order in the World as is the idea of Reincarnation in conjunction with the Law of Karma.

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There is an objection to the doctrine of Reincarnation based upon the fact that human beings generally do not have specific memory of the events of past lives. If we have lived on earth more than once it would seem that we should have memory of that fact and thus tie together the events of several lives in Consciousness. At first glance this objection seems cogent, but deeper reflection resolves this difficulty in two ways. First, it can be shown that we do remember, though generally that memory is not recognized for what it is. In the second place, specific memory of events in other lives is generally lacking for the reason that the consciousness of most is not correlated with the vehicle, which is the carrier of memory across the gulf between physical incarnations. There is finally a body of testimony from a limited number who constitute exceptions to the general rule of non-remembrance of the details of past lives.

In a discussion of memory of past lives there is one important general characteristic of memory which should not be neglected.

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That is the fact that we do not at all times remember or hold in the fore-ground of consciousness those events of the past which we still are able, normally, to recall. When consciousness is focused in some given domain, such as business affairs, for example, those elements which belong to that domain are, with more or less completeness, drawn to the fore-ground of consciousness from out the pool of memory. Yet during such a period other events, such as those which belong to the social life, are lying dormant in that pool until such time as there may be a reason for focusing consciousness in their direction. Thus it is easily seen that it is not correct to regard as retained in memory only those elements which at any given moment may be in the focus of consciousness. Memory is much wider than that. Further, it is possible by various means, such as hypnotic suggestion, to draw out of memory consciousness of events which ordinarily had been regarded as lost. This reveals that there is such a thing as unconscious memory, and therefore it is not correct to measure the limits of memory by simply those elements

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that can be easily recalled by ordinary means. This consideration has a distinctly important bearing upon the action of memory in relation to other embodiments.

In connection with the first point referred to in the second preceding paragraph, the student should bear in mind the fact that memory may operate in other than specific forms. Thus, to take an example, we may consider the case of a mathematician who has spent some years and much labor solving specific problems in gaining mastery of some branch of mathematical science. In accomplishing this end he may have worked out hundreds or even thousands of individual problems and exercises, yet, at the end of his course, he probably will be able to recall to specific memory only a small proportion of the problems with which he has worked. It would not, however, for that reason, be correct to say that he had forgotten the mathematics which he had so carefully studied. But the important thing builded into memory would be certain principles of mathematical thought and problem-solving processes. The

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purpose of the problem work was just precisely the implanting of these principles in the mind. After that the remembrance of the specific problems would be a matter of relatively very little importance.

Now this action in memory illustrated by the mathematician is typical of memory of life-experiences in general. As a result of repeated experiences of a given type, rules of life-practice are formulated, and such rules carry the essence of memory. A man may forget the first occasion on which he was cheated, but he probably will not fail to remember to be on guard against being cheated in the present and future. That is a form of memory and probably the most important of all forms. It is the way the fruitage of experience is carried.

Now, it is maintained that the primary action of memory in relation to previous incarnations is just of this type. Thus all the basic tendencies and modes of action, such as those which we now-days class as the subconscious, are of this type. They are the stored up memory of long experience.

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In a less general and more individual sense, memory, or rather reminiscence, is revealed in the gravitation towards certain types of things, such as chosen objects of nature, and repulsion with respect to others. We often feel at home in places which we have contacted for the first time in this current life-cycle, yet the "*at-home*" feeling is characteristically a result of habit and association. We are often introduced to a new friend and quickly feel as though we had always known him. From the standpoint of the philosophy of Reincarnation these experiences are not relegated to the status of psychological curiosities, perhaps to be explained away by some psycho-analyst as due to some suppressed sexual-imagination, but, on the contrary, they are seen as reminiscences growing out of previous-life events.

It is true, however, that in general memory in the specific sense by which we can knowingly correlate given events with given places in past lives is lacking. There is a very good reason for this, i. e., the physical brain which is ours in the current life is not

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that which we used in the past. Now memory in the ordinary sense is correlated with the substance of the physical brain. It readily follows that where there is a break in the continuity of physical brain-substance there must be a break in the chain of that phase of memory which is dependent upon such a continuity. Consequently the general failure of this type of memory to bridge the gulfs separating different physical embodiments affords no valid ground for objection to the soundness of the principle of Reincarnation.

But a fact which is of positive significance in support of this principle or doctrine is found in the testimony, purporting to be genuine specific memory of other-life events. This occurs most, perhaps, in the case of young children.* At this period of life the brain-mind is very plastic and is not dominated by impressions from the outer world nor

*The ignorance and folly of parents has led to much suppression of valuable testimony in this field. Because the statements of the young child do not fit in with the adults' notions of what is true is by no means necessarily proof that the child knows nothing of what he is talking about. Sometime, perhaps, mankind will learn that wisdom is often spoken through the mouth of babes. The age of soul is not to be measured by the age of the body.

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is it filled with the concepts evolved from the outer action of the social mind. The result is that the knowledge of the inner-man is often able to make an impress upon the child-mind which cannot be done when that mind has gone through the hardening of later life-experience. The personal mind of the child cannot, of course, understand the significance of the wisdom, for the expression of which it may serve as an instrument, but if the adults who stand in its presence would give a discriminating attention they would often find that they are standing in the presence of superterrestrial knowledge.*

If the student will look for such testimony he will find reports of, or even meet, young children who speak of having lived in other places than those contacted in the present incarnation, and also of having had other

*In the old age of men and women who have lived lives of aspiration towards spiritual values the same thing happens as in the case of the child. As consciousness at this period tends normally away from worldly affairs and the mind becomes polarized inwardly, a degree of purification takes place such that the inner-man is again able to leave his impress upon the mind-substance. In this case, the outer mind having been trained by life-experience, inner wisdom can be spoken with an understanding that the child lacks. The basis of attentive respect for the aged, such as is found in old and wise races like the Chinese, lies right in this fact.

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parents than the present ones. There are well attested records, coming more especially from India, of children being born with knowledge of language not belonging to or spoken by their parents. In some instances, such children have described events in the lives of known adults who have been suddenly killed and whom they claim to be.* All such testimony is very significant.

There are some adults who, either as a result of training favorable to the awakening of the inner doors of perception or because they have been born as natural "sensitives," are afforded more or less extensive glimpses of their pre-natal past. Such are enabled to know with an immediacy, past all need of other proof, that they have lived before. But, while for others their testimony is not demonstration, it is none the less important evidence. It deserves the same serious consideration which we readily accord the testimony of the traveler concerning a country which we do not know from our own experience.

*Instances of this type are distinctly exceptions to the general rule. They are cases of immediate reincarnation without break in the subtle vehicle of consciousness. Understanding of this phenomenon requires knowledge of the septenary constitution of man.

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Finally there are the statements of men of proven spiritual wisdom, who by the nobility of their character as well as the profundity of their knowledge have earned the deepest respect of those who have come within the orbit of their influence. Not many have been so happy as to come knowingly either directly or indirectly within the radiant influence of the Consciousness of such Men, but for those who are so fortunate their statements concerning the reality of re-embodiments carry profound weight.

Perhaps no one of the above discussed reasons or lines of evidence may be, by itself, sufficient to convince the student of the reality of the principle of Reincarnation, but the cumulative effect of the whole should, at least, cause him to pause and reflect, if he is not already convinced of the reality of that principle. Certainly it is not a doctrine which lacks in moral and intellectual dignity. So far as the writer knows there is no alternative idea which in the remotest degree approaches the dignity of the concept of Reincarnation

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in either respect. But every reader and student is, of course, at liberty to draw his own conclusion. At any rate, this idea has established the right to demand the conscientious attention and study of all who would claim that their opinions should be regarded seriously.



PART TWO

The Technique of Reincarnation

Asking the reader to accept as established the reality of the principle of Reincarnation, at least in the sense of "for the sake of argument," we will proceed in this section to consider problems which are concerned with the technique of Reincarnation. This part of the discussion must necessarily be very incomplete since to give it a finished form would involve an extensive exposition of the principles of the Philosophy, of which Reincarnation is a part, that cannot be done within the limits of this booklet. Truth seems to be an unity involving such interdependence of parts, so that no aspect of Being can be completely understood without a knowledge of all. There is, therefore, no such thing as a complete statement of a part-truth. Always, the student will find some problem left unanswered, and as he struggles on to the resolu-

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tion of this problem he finds still others which carry him ever onward toward the final goal, provided he is not overcome by indolence and becomes content with unresolved problems. This situation arises in connection with the study of Reincarnation in such a way that it affords one of the best introductions to the Arcane Philosophy and Science.

In addition to the Law of Karma, already introduced, there are two other phases of the Philosophy which are especially involved in the consideration of the processes of Reincarnation. These are the organization or constitution of man's nature and the stages through which man passes in his after-death states. In the exposition of the subject at present before us, some reference will have to be made to these two phases. The reader will have to be asked to accept, tentatively at least, what is said in this connection. In subsequent booklets or manuals in this series these subjects will be developed more fully and in a form designed to show that the principles enunciated are not mere arbitrary statements but are to be deduced, at least in their

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broad outlines, by simply a careful penetration into the implications of the common knowledge of Life. Until that time the reader, unfamiliar with this field, is asked simply to suspend his judgment on these points and give his main attention to the material which constitutes the especial field of the present discourse.

The central problem of Reincarnation is contained in the question: "What is that which reincarnates?" There is much confusion on this question and there is, at least, one school of reincarnationists in the West which teaches a doctrine, not only utterly opposed to that of Occult Philosophy, but one which will not stand up under analysis. Accordingly clarity on this point is highly important.

First of all it is not the personal man which returns. The personality which in the present incarnation has been known as John Smith will, after death and the passage of a certain subjective cycle, be the partial cause of another personality in another Day of

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Time. But the latter is a new personality, which will, in general, be known under another name and have another center of outer self-identity. It is precisely because the personalities, which are like beads on the thread of the individualized life-series, are distinct as to self-identity that memory of past lives in the specific sense is so rare. The John Smith who was the immediate succeedant, say of Anthony Petronius of Rome, does not remember the life of the latter, primarily for the simple reason that he never was that Anthony in the personal sense. Each new personality is, in one sense, a new production which, while it is the effect of causes builded through other personalities, is yet distinct in the sense of personal selfhood. Specific personality is born and does die, though its death is not simultaneous with the disintegration of the physical body. He who wishes to realize immortality must rise above personality.

The idea may be made clearer by the following illustration. Let us take a candle composed of certain determined materials in definite proportions and with a definite form.

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When the wick is ignited a flame having a definite quality and size throwing a certain light will be produced. Now the properties produced in that flame will be the resultant of the construction of the candle as outlined already. Any number of candles made as precise copies of the first will produce the same kind of flame. Slight divergences from the model candle will lead to small changes in the character of the flame, while large alterations will lead to correspondingly large modifications in its form, magnitude and various other qualities. Now, let us take two candles that are precisely alike as near as may be. Burn one for a time, then extinguish it and light the other. It is clear that in one sense we may say that both flames are the same in that examination would show that they had exactly the same qualities. But in another sense they would be different in that there was not a continuity between them. Now, if we assume that the first candle as it burns undergoes a certain process of change induced by the burning which, in its turn reacts upon the flame to produce corresponding

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alterations, we would say that the flame was yet the same flame because of its continuity, but different because of changed character. Next, let the second candle stand in such sympathetic relationship to the first that when the former is lighter it is very similiar to the latter at the time of extinguishing the flame. We would then say that the flame on the second candle was so like the first that we could easily tie the two together, yet fine discrimination would say they were different, both because there was break of continuity of flame and because of the continuation of progressive alteration in the qualities of the flame.

In this illustration we will let the flame stand for the sense of personal consciousness which is marked by the characteristic of being different from other personalities. It is the consciousness which thinks of itself as John Smith in contradistinction to others, centered in personal likes and dislikes and having a sense of personal possession in certain things, qualities, relationships, etc. The candle is the personal nature consisting of a certain physical body, with given emo-

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tional; desire and intellectual natures. With a given composition of this "candle" of the personal nature a defined corresponding flame of personal consciousness is produced. As the material composing this personal nature is altered, so the consciousness changes. Now just as in the illustration above we may call the changing flame the same and yet not the same, the same thing is true of the personalized consciousness. Also with the passing of one personality as a manifested form producing later another personality which is its effect and similiar but not quite the same, we may say the personal consciousness of one is the same as that of the other, and yet not the same for there has been a break of continuity and some change in the constituent structure of the new personal form.

Now the flame of the candle and the personal consciousness is that which men commonly call the "self" or the "I".* Oc-

*The distinction between the qualities which make up character and the personal "I" is strongly emphasized in the words of Gautama Buddha. But the student who reads the Gospel of Buddha should be warned of one thing or he will be confused. In that Gospel it is stated that the Atman does not persist. Now "Atman" as introduced to Western thought is precisely that which is eternal, i. e., the center of all Consciousness, the SELF. Thus there appears to be a contradiction. The solution of this difficulty lies in the fact that in India the word "Atman" is also used in the sense of the personal self. It was in this sense Buddha was speaking.

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cult Philosophy calls it but a reflection of the true Self and therefore it is often designated as "Non-self", or the "false self". At any rate this self is mortal and not only does not reincarnate, but can be shown to be eternally subject to change and therefore "dying daily", indeed, momentarily for that matter. For what is change if not a process of Becoming and therefore involving continual dying and being born again? But the personal qualities, the association of which produced a given flame of consciousness, serve as causes which produce themselves as effects in a new association of themselves. This is what reincarnates.

With those forms of Life in which individualized Soul has not yet been attained, Reincarnation amounts to no more than this. This would apply to mineral, plant and most animal forms. There is not in these cases individual threads of reincarnational series that can be traced. Reincarnation in the human sense is an attainment which results from individualization.

The discussion of our question is still

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incomplete. While the composition of the candle determines the qualities of the flame which it produces, yet the candle does not produce the fundamental principle of Flame itself. Flame in the particular is possible because there is an universal principle of Flame.* Somehow or other the candle was ignited. That which performed this function was the source of the flame. In the case of the actual physical candle this source is man, while with the group of personal qualities which make the body of the outer man, it was a subtle principle within, which started the flame. Again, just as it is the man who lighted the candle who will be responsible for the results of such igniting, so that subtle principle within man is responsible for the series of personal lives. This is the Individual Ego**, sometimes called the Higher Ego. This is that which persists from incar-

*Thus, when an ethnologist describes a primitive race and what it possessed, he will say it did or did not have Fire. He does not use the word in the plural and say they had or had not fires. This is significant.

**In terms of the Principles of Man this Individual or Higher Ego is identical with Higher Manas, which is the Son in the Higher Triad of man's Nature. In turn the Higher Ego is the Father in Heaven of the personality. When the personality becomes one with its Father in Heaven in Consciousness, an Adept is born.

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nation to incarnation with continuity of identity, and by which one personal life is recognized as belonging in a series with selected other personal lives, but not with all personalities whatsoever. Within the Mind of this higher or inner Man is retained the conscious memory of all lives. When the outer personality becomes sufficiently attuned to this Ego, then that memory can be reflected on this outer plane of consciousness.

It is clear from the fore-going that the only sense in which it is correct to say that "I reincarnate" is in the sense of the Higher Ego. This Ego is a distinct center of consciousness. The Higher Ego of one man is different from the Higher Ego of another Man. Thus there are a number* of such Entities appearing on this earth through a vastly larger number of personal forms throughout a series of separate points in Time. It is this Ego which reaps the fruits out of the experiences of the various personal lives. And as that fruitage is worthy of permanence, so something of the personal

*Occult Science says that the number of "Souls" connected with earth-evolution is limited.

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nature of each personality is taken up into the Ego and enjoys such duration as belongs to the latter.*

Above the Ray, which is the Higher Ego, there is the Sun which is the source from which all Rays emanate and, in fact, is one with those Rays. This is That LIGHT from which all Light is derived. It is the eternal Subject to all Consciousness. Viewed from the perspective of any Ego, It seems distinct, hence every individual is said to have an Atman. But this distinctness is an appearance only, just as the sun may appear to be different from the standpoint of various observers on the surface of the earth, yet in reality it is one and the same sun. Atman is one and indivisible. When a distinction is made between Atman as appearing distinct and its real character as unique and indivisible often the term "Atman" is used in the first sense while "Paramatman" is employed for the latter. Now, this supreme aspect, which in its very nature transcends all action

*It is by winning the right to be so "taken up" that the personal man attains to relative or individualized immortality. The winning of this is of the very highest importance. It is the "Great Work."

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and hence responsibility, is not in its own nature incarnated. That which is subject to process is but a reflection from It. It follows, therefore, that the Atman or Higher Self, which is one with the SUPREME SELF does not incarnate, but over-shadows the series of incarnations, whether taken as the individual series of a given Higher Ego, or in the sense of the incarnations of all creatures. Thus it is not this aspect of man that reincarnates.

The next question is relative to the purpose of Reincarnation. What end is served by recurrent manifestations on this plane of Being? As is true with teleological questions in general, the sense in which this question can be answered is limited to a partial aspect of the whole field of recurrent manifestations. It is possible to see how Reincarnation practically serves man in that portion of his grand Life-cycle which comes within our ken. But when it comes to speaking in the metaphysical sense a teleological

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question is meaningless. It implies predicating purpose, which is an attribute of finite creatures, as being a characteristic of the Infinite Whole. That is an absurdity. The Whole simply IS, and from that point of view description of processes, relationships, etc., is but defining the nature of that Whole. In this sense one would simply say that the process of Reincarnation is but the description of one phase of the nature of Being, and that is all. But from the partial point of view one can see Purpose and therefore the teleological question does have significance in that sense.

In the broad sense, by incarnation in matter the Perceiving Consciousness acquires experience. Since, as is easily seen by the most cursory observation of human life, man almost always dies after having garnered the fruitage of only a very limited experience, it follows that only after an extended number of incarnations could all experience be acquired. Experience serves the end of building knowledge, and we may say that as far as our human understanding extends, the destruction of ig-

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norance and the mastery of all knowledge is the end of Life. Thus through repeated experience in many bodies man comes to understand and master all conditions.

The individual is always incarnated under the conditions which are those necessary to teach him the next lesson he needs to learn. At the same time he may be righting some wrong which he has done to another in previous life. But from the point of view of the former it is a lesson that is being taught. When the given lesson is learned, that soul will not make the same error again. If an individual is capable of learning quickly, then the Law will keep such an one in the given mode of experience for a correspondingly short period. But for the dullard there may be many weary incarnations involving the same mode of experience. As dullness or brightness is not primarily the result of external factors but of inner causes, it follows that by self-effort, properly directed, the number of incarnations may be indefinitely reduced. For learning the lessons of Life

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well means that one builds the power to balance cause and effect and thus finally destroy the power which compels involuntary incarnation.

But what is the good of acquiring knowledge?, someone may ask. What is achieved by destroying ignorance and building Wisdom? There is but one answer to this question that human insight can find, unless, perchance, there is a profounder answer known to those who have penetrated beyond the veil of Initiation. And that reply is, "Man acquires knowledge through long experience for the purpose of attaining Individualization." From ignorance man has climbed to such knowledge as he has, and from knowing *what* he knows, he ultimately awakens a knowing *that* he knows. This is Self-knowledge. This is the goal that is visible from our present perspective on this plane of Life. What new vistas may loom before us, when once that goal is reached, is far beyond our present powers of imagination, we may rest assured, as we have not yet attained the new type of awareness which is

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the peculiar property of the Knower of the Self.

Many who are ignorant of the true doctrine of Reincarnation have the idea that this concept involves a shifting from human to animal forms and visa versa indiscriminately. There are even some religious sects that hold this point of view*. This, however, is a perversion of the real doctrine. One who had a correct understanding of the philosophy would realize that once the Monad has attained the human stage a return to the animal or any other of the more elementary forms of Life is impossible. But since many, because of misunderstanding on this point have become prejudiced against the whole idea of Reincarnation, it is necessary to resolve this difficulty.

The step from animal to human consciousness involves an act of transcendence. While it is true that man has an animal nature, which all too often dominates him, yet

*The religious order in India known as the Jainists are probably the most noted proponents of this view. Owing to the idea that animals may be ensouled by their own brothers they have carried humanitarianism to great extremes. However their moral consciousness is much superior to that of a people which tolerate slaughtering animals for sport.

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in so far as he is human he moves in a domain of consciousness that could never be reached by merely expanding materialistic or animal consciousness. There is an awakened spiritual element in genuine human consciousness, which is sleeping or latent in the animal. Hence man, as man, never could become an animal; just as a child, once born, can never return to its mother's womb. Thus the periodic cycles of incarnations with man are always in human form.

There are, however, certain abnormal instances which appear to contradict this rule, though in reality they do not. There are instances, fortunately few, where the animal nature of a given man has been so great that he has *wholly* suppressed his humanity. In these cases, the human and spiritual nature separates from the animal and leaves the latter to ultimately disintegrate, the various component parts returning to Nature's storehouse to be used over again in other forms. Now this overly strong animal nature still retains for a time the semblance of man in a human form, but it is in reality no more than an animal.

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Being without soul, it is doomed to disintegration. But its accumulated Karma may hold its component elements in association for a period of greater or less duration. Sometimes it persists over a few incarnations before, like an unwound clock, it runs down. Now, after death this non-human creature in the semblance of man may associate itself with some animal, for a sort of vicarious gratification of its animal desire. But this is not genuine incarnation. Such creatures are past all possibility of being redeemed, and the quicker the elements are returned to in their elemental forms in Nature the better.

A final word may be given relative to the practice of Yoga and its bearing upon Reincarnation. This will elucidate the meaning of the phrase "*escape from incarnation*".

There are times when the reincarnating man becomes caught in a series of incarnations in which practically no progress is made.* A rut is formed so that a certain type

*This condition today is more the rule than the exception. It is the result of habit in the broad sense, and especially in the religious sense.

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of cause is set up in one incarnation leading to its corresponding effect in a later embodiment, where again the same type of cause is produced thus resulting in a vicious circle which leads nowhere. Attachment is the cause of this condition. Unfortunately it is the rule rather than the exception. Now the problem of Yoga, stated in these terms, is to effect the breaking of this vicious circle. Success in this means the destroying of bondage and the effecting of Liberation whether in a minor or major sense.

It is said that humanity is many thousand years behind the stage in evolution which it should have attained in accordance with grand cycles governing world-processes, and the reason for this is the wide extent to which man has fallen into these reincarnational cul-de-sacs. The breaking out of this condition is the most important task that faces mankind. Failure to act quickly may result in disaster on a grand scale. Today it does not take a great prophet to realize this fact. Many are now aware that the next general war threatens

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the whole civilization for just the reason that the mastery of nature-forces has proceeded far ahead of moral evolution. In other words, the ethical-human evolution is not abreast of the cycles in which the present humanity is moving.

Because of this critical condition of humanity the Realization which Yoga brings is of especial importance. Without this Spiritualization of consciousness on the part of a large number of the units of mankind, there is no hope of staving off the disaster that threatens. It is the duty, as well as the opportunity, of all who see the need and realize the cure to strive toward that Realization which is Yoga, not merely as a way of personal escape, but for that much larger end of serving as a means to guard Humanity from the precipice it is so rapidly approaching.

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