

REINCARNATION

Who were you . . . who are you . . . who will you be?

"Who taught mankind about soul transmigration? Belief in successive rebirths of the human *Ego* throughout the cycles of life in various bodies is a universal belief, a certainty innate in mankind. Even now, when theological dogmas of human origin have stifled and well-nigh destroyed this natural inborn idea from the Christian mind, even now hundreds of the most eminent Western philosophers, authors, artists, poets and deep thinkers still firmly believe in reincarnation."

(H. P. Blavatsky, "Thoughts on Karma and Reincarnation")

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". . . spiritual man, having always existed, being intimately concerned in evolution, dominated by the law of cause and effect, because in himself he is that very law, showing moreover on this plane varieties of force of character, capacity, and opportunity, his very presence must be explained, while the differences noted have to be accounted for. The doctrine of reincarnation does all this. It means that man as a thinker, composed of soul, mind and spirit, occupies body after body in life after life on the earth which is the scene of his evolution, and where he must, under the very laws of his being, complete that evolution, once it has been begun. In any one life he is known to others as a personality, but in the whole stretch of eternity he is one individual, feeling in himself an identity not dependent on name, form, or recollection.

"This doctrine is the very base of Theosophy, for it explains life and nature. It is one aspect of evolution, for as it is re-embodiment in meaning, and as evolution could not go on without re-embodiment, it is evolution itself, as applied to the human soul. . . . Each man's life and character are the outcome of his previous lives and thoughts. Each is his own judge, his own executioner, for it is his own hand that forges the weapon which works for his punishment, and each by his own life reaches reward, rises to heights of knowledge and power for the good of all who may be left behind him. Nothing is left to chance, favour, or partiality, but all is under the governance of law. Man is a thinker, and by his thoughts he makes the causes for woe or bliss; for his thoughts produce his acts. . . . This is the law of Karma or justice, sometimes called the ethical law of causation." **(William Q. Judge, "Theosophy Generally Stated")**

". . . try to understand our philosophy, before you dismiss our teachings *a priori*. . . . Do they [i.e. Spiritualists as well as Christians] know anything of the laws of Karma - the great Law of Retribution, that mysterious, yet, in its effects, quite evident and palpable action in Nature which, sooner or later, brings back every good or bad deed of ours to rebound on us, as the elastic ball, thrown against a wall, rebounds back on the one who throws it? They do not. They believe in a personal God, whom they endow with intelligence, and who rewards and punishes in their ideas, every action of ours in life. They accept this *hybrid* deity (finite, because they endow it most unphilosophically with conditioned attributes, while insisting on calling it Infinite and Absolute), regardless of, and blind to, the thousand and one fallacies and contradictions in which the theological teachings concerning that deity involve us. But when offered a consistent, philosophical and quite logical substitute for such an imperfect God, a complete solution of most

of the insoluble problems and mysteries in human life, they turn away in idiotic horror. They remain indifferent or opposed to it, only because its name is KARMA instead of Jehovah; and that it is a tenet which emanates from Aryan philosophy - the deepest and profoundest of all the world philosophies - instead of from the Semitic cunning and intellectual jugglery, which has transformed an astronomical symbol into the "one living God of Gods." "We do not want an *impersonal* Deity," they tell us; "a negative symbol such as 'Non-Being' is incomprehensible to Being." Just so. "The light shineth in darkness; but the darkness comprehendeth it not." Therefore they will talk very glibly of their *immortal* spirits; and on the same principle that they call a personal God *infinite* and make of him a gigantic *male*, so they will address a human phantom as "Spirit" . . . It is useless, therefore, to try and convince such minds. If they are unable or unwilling to study even the broad general idea contained in the term *Karma*, how can they comprehend the fine distinctions involved in the doctrine of reincarnation, although, as shown by our venerable brother, P. Iyaloo Naidu of Hyderabad, Karma and Reincarnation are, "in reality, the A B C of the Wisdom-Religion." . . . Karma thus is simply *action*, a concatenation of *causes* and *effects*. That which adjusts each effect to its direct cause; that which guides invisibly and as unerringly these effects to choose, as the field of their operation, the *right person in the right place*, is what we call *Karmic law*. What is it? Shall we call it the hand of Providence? We cannot do so, especially in Christian lands, because the term has been connected with, and interpreted theologically as, the *foresight* and *personal design* of a personal god; and because in the active laws of Karma - *absolute Equity* based on the Universal Harmony - there is neither foresight nor desire; and because again, it is our own actions, thoughts, and deeds which *guide that law*, instead of being guided by it. "Whatever a man soweth, that shall he reap." (HPB, "Thoughts on Karma and Reincarnation")

"The objections to reincarnation are generally based upon the question, why we do not remember. In the West that objection arises from the fact that we have been materialists so long, we have been deceived so long, that we have forgotten; we are not able to remember anything but what makes a violent impression on our senses. In the East and in some places in the West the people remember, and the time will come when the people in the West will remember also. And I warrant you that the children of the West know this, but it is rubbed out of their minds by their fathers and mothers. They say to the child, "Don't bother me with such questions; you are only imagining things." As if a child could imagine that it had been here before if it had not been. They never could imagine a thing which has not some existence in fact or that is not built up from impressions received. . . . You say you cannot remember a past life, and therefore you don't believe it is true. Well if we grant that kind of argument, apply it to the fact that you cannot remember the facts of your present existence here; you cannot remember what dinner you ate three weeks ago; you cannot remember one-quarter of what has happened to you. . . . You cannot remember what happens to you now, so how do you expect to remember what happened to you in another life? But the time will come when man not so immersed in materiality will form his soul to such an extent that its qualities will be impressed upon the newborn child body and he will be able to remember and to know all his past, and then he will see himself as an evolving being who has come up through all the ages as one of the creators of the world, as one of those who have aided in building this world. Man, we say, is the top, the crown of evolution; not merely as one who has been out there through favor, but as one who worked himself up through nature, unconsciously sometimes to himself, but under law, the very

top and key of the whole system, and the time will come when he will remember it." (WQJ, "Theosophical Doctrines")

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NOW WE WILL WATCH THE VIDEO "**REINCARNATION - SHANTI DEVI**" ON YOUTUBE
at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7IK6OoU6SI>

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"KARMA, TANHA and SKANDHAS, are the almighty trinity in one, and the cause of our re-births. The illustration of painting our own present likeness at death, and that likeness becoming the future personality is very poetical and graphic, but we claim it as an occult teaching. . . . For the vices, defects and especially the passions of the preceding life become, through certain laws of affinity and transference, the germs of the future potentialities in the *animal* soul (*Kama rupa*), hence of its dependent, the astral double (*linga sharira*) - at a subsequent birth. It is the *personality* alone which changes; the real reincarnating principle, the EGO, remains always the same; and it is its KARMA that guides the idiosyncracies and prominent moral traits of the *old* "personality" that was (and that the EGO knew not how to control), to re-appear in the *new* man that will be. These traits and passions pursue and fasten on the yet plastic third and fourth principles of the child, and - unless the EGO struggles and conquers - they will develop with tenfold intensity and lead the adult man to his destruction. For it is they who are the tools and weapons of the Karmic LAW OF RETRIBUTION." (HPB, "Theosophical Articles and Notes" p. 201-202)

". . . every child who dies before the age of reason - when only it becomes a responsible creature - reincarnates immediately after its death - since, having had no personal merit or demerit in any of its actions, it can have no claim upon Devachanic reward and bliss. Also, that as it is irresponsible till the age of, say, seven, the full weight of the Karmic effects generated during its short life falls directly upon those who reared and guided it." (HPB, "Thoughts on Karma and Reincarnation")

"Q. - What becomes of the spirits of the departed?

"A. - There is but one "Spirit" - Parabrahm, or by whatever other name one chooses to call the Eternal Principle. The "souls" of the departed pass through many other stages of existence after leaving this earth-body, just as they were in many others anterior to their birth as men and women here. The exact truth about this mystery is known only to the highest Adepts; but it may be said even by the lowest of the neophytes that each of us controls his future rebirths, making each next succeeding one better or worse according to his present efforts and deserts." (HPB, "Questions Answered about Yoga Vidya" "A Modern Panarion" p. 359)

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AN UNSOLVED - BUT CONVINCING - CASE FROM DR IAN STEVENSON

(Extracts from p. 67-74 of "European Cases of the Reincarnation Type" by Ian Stevenson, M.D.)

"Carl Edon was born in Middlesbrough, England, on December 29, 1972. . . . Carl was able to speak coherently when he was about 2 years old. Almost immediately he began to say: "I

crashed a plane through a window." He repeated this often and gradually added further details about a previous life that he seemed to remember. He said that he was on a bombing mission over England when he crashed. From additional details that Carl added to his narration his parents concluded that he was talking about the life of a German Air Force pilot who had been killed during World War II. Carl added to the evidence for this when, as he became able to draw, he made sketches with swastikas and eagles on them and, a little later, drew a sketch of the panel of a pilot's cockpit. He also showed a fondness for Germany and some behavior that could be considered "German." . . . A brief report of this case was published in an article in the magazine *Woman's Own* on August 7, 1982. Through the editor of the magazine I was able to learn the address of the Edons. . . . I neglected the case for 10 years before deciding that we could and should learn more about it. . . . on June 13, 1993, I went to Middlesbrough and had a long meeting with Carl and his parents. . . .

"Carl's first statement about the previous life, which he afterwards repeated often, was: "I crashed a plane through a window." He later added that the airplane he had crashed was a bomber and a Messerschmitt. . . . He also added the detail that in the crash he had lost his right leg. Carl said that his name was Robert and his father's name was Fritz; he had a brother called Peter. . . . Carl's early statements were spontaneous and had no identified stimulus. When he became old enough to watch television programs about Germany, he would sometimes comment on some details of an actor's costume. He would say, for example, that the actor did not have the badge on his uniform in the right place. On another occasion Carl was watching a documentary film about the Holocaust that showed a scene at a concentration camp. The scene stimulated Carl to say that his camp, that is, the airplane base from which his bomber flew, was near this concentration camp. . . .

"Carl differed from other members of his family in preferring coffee to tea, and in liking to eat thick soups and sausages. . . . When he was first talking about the previous life, Carl spontaneously demonstrated the characteristic Nazi salute with the right arm raised and straight. He also demonstrated the goose-step march of German soldiers. When standing up he always stood erect with his hands at his sides. . . . Carl expressed a wish to go to Germany and live there. . . . Carl was extremely blond. His hair was straw colored and his eyebrows and eyelashes were also blond. His eyes were blue. In his comparative lack of pigmentation of his hair Carl differed markedly from the other members of his immediate family who all had brown hair. . . . Carl's parents were members of the Church of England. They knew little about reincarnation . . . After some years of listening to Carl, they became more or less convinced that he was referring to a real life that he certainly believed he had lived. They were undogmatic and continued to think the case a mystery.

"Carl's schoolmates, on the other hand, teased him cruelly. They mockingly imitated his goose-step walking and called him a German and a Nazi. This contributed to Carl's stopping to speak about the previous life when he was about 10 or 11 years old. . . . The family had few books and none about World War II. James Edon [the boy's father] said that when he asked Carl a question about some detail in the previous life to which Carl was referring he had to borrow a book from a local library in order to learn that Carl had been correct. . . .

Carl was born with a prominent elevated hyperpigmented nevus in his right groin. It increased in size as he grew, and it eventually protruded so that he caught his clothes in it. . . . A physician removed it under a local anesthetic early in 1993. . . . Carl never complained of pain in the area of the nevus, and he never limped when walking. His parents conjectured a connection between the nevus and Carl's statement that he had lost his right leg when the airplane of the previous life crashed; Carl himself never made that connection. . . .

"As I mentioned, Carl stopped speaking about the previous life around the age of 10 or 11, largely because of the merciless teasing of which he had been a victim . . . After this he seemed to lose interest in what he had been saying earlier. . . . At the age of 16 Carl left school and became employed as a coupler by British Rail. He developed a close companionship with a girl to whom he was more or less affianced. They had one child. . . . In August 1995, James and Valerie Edom wrote me with the distressing news that Carl had been murdered a few days earlier. His murderer was identified, arrested, tried, and sent to prison for life. Carl's girlfriend gave birth to a second child later that year. . . .

"Despite the loss of some - perhaps many - details, enough remained for our investigation to warrant my saying that we cannot explain the case by present knowledge of genetics or environmental influences. Therefore, I believe reincarnation is at least a plausible explanation for it."

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"The re-incarnating Principle, or that which we call the *divine* man, is indestructible throughout the life cycle: indestructible as a thinking *Entity*, and even as an ethereal form. . . . Manas is a "principle," and yet it is an "Entity" and individuality or Ego. He is a "God," and yet he is doomed to an endless cycle of incarnations, for each of which he is made responsible, and for each of which he has to suffer. . . . In its very essence it is THOUGHT . . . *individualised* "Thought" . . . called in its plurality *Manasa putra*, "the Sons of the (Universal) mind." . . . Our incarnating Ego was a God in its origin, as were all the primeval emanations of the One Unknown Principle. But since its "fall into Matter," having to incarnate throughout the cycle, in succession, from first to last, it is no longer a free and happy god, but a poor pilgrim on his way to regain that which he has lost. . . . This *individualised* "Thought" is what we Theosophists call the real human EGO, the thinking Entity imprisoned in a case of flesh and bones. This is surely a Spiritual Entity, not *Matter*, and such Entities are the incarnating EGOS that inform the bundle of animal matter called mankind, and whose names are *Manasa* or "Minds." But once imprisoned, or incarnate, their essence becomes dual: that is to say, the *rays* of the eternal divine Mind, considered as individual entities, assume a two-fold attribute which is (a) their *essential* inherent characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind (higher *Manas*), and (b) the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalised owing to the superiority of the human brain, the *Kama*-tending or lower *Manas*. One gravitates toward *Buddhi*, the other, tending downward, to the seat of passions and animal desires. . . . Yet it is the Ego, the Manasic Entity, which is held responsible for all the sins of the lower attributes, just as a parent is answerable for the transgressions of his child, so long as the latter remains irresponsible." (HPB, "The Key to Theosophy" p. 177, 181-184)

A CREED

~ By John Masefield (1878-1967), Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom ~

I hold that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the roads again.

Such is my own belief and trust;
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again;
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

All that I rightly think and do,
Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,
Is curse or blessing justly due
For sloth or effort in the past.
My life's a statement of the sum
Of vice indulged, or overcome.

I know that in my lives to be
My sorry heart will ache and burn,
And worship unavailingly,
The woman whom I used to spurn,
And shake to see another have
The love I spurned, the love she gave.

And I shall know, in angry words,
In gibes, and mocks, and many a tear,
A carrion flock of homing-birds,
The gibes and scorns I uttered here.
The brave word that I failed to speak
Will brand me dastard on the cheek.

And as I wander on the roads
I shall be helped and healed and blessed:
Dear words shall cheer and be as goads
To urge to heights before unguessed.
My road shall be the road I made;
All that I gave shall be repaid.

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,
In this long war beneath the stars;
So shall a glory wreath my head,
So shall I faint and show the scars,
Until this case, this clogging mould,
Be smithied all to kingly gold.

(This poem was published in the May 1913 issue of the ULT's "Theosophy" Magazine)