METEMPSYCHOSIS

The Ingersoll Lecture, 1914

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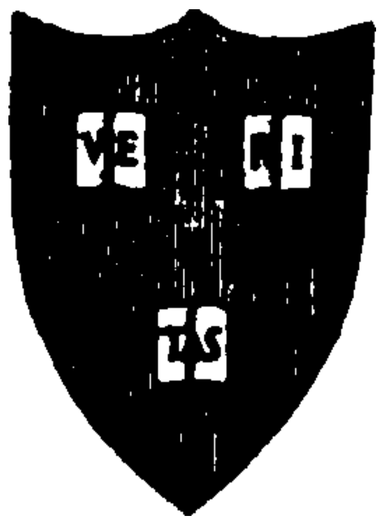

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

METEMPSYCHOSIS[1]

THE belief that man somehow survives death is universal. To the untutored mind death is not the cessation of a delicately balanced system of bio-chemical functions, but the departure from the body of something real and substantial, the living, breathing, speaking, moving part of man — the soul. Dreams, in which the dead appear in form and act like their living selves, give greater distinctness to the imagination: the soul is a vaporous double of the body, usually invisible, but capable of sensible manifestation and even — as in nightmare — of energetic materialization.

The souls of the dead haunt their former abodes; their kinsmen set out food and drink for them, without which even

ghosts starve; tombs are built and furnished for their habitation. Or the dead are imagined to be gathered in the cavernous recesses of the earth as in a vast common tomb; they migrate to unfrequented regions beyond the mountains or over the seas, where they lead a life like that on earth, but exempt from all its evils; or they ascend the sky and dwell in the sun and the moon. Diverse, and to our thinking contradictory, notions often exist side by side without conflict; sometimes they are harmonized by the belief, not uncommon among savages, that man has more than one kind of soul.

The social distinctions of this world are carried over into the other. Chiefs, heroes, priests, by virtue of their divine origin, or in requital of their great deeds, or through their potent magic, are translated to Elysian fields or admitted to the company of the gods, while the common

herd crowd the murky realms of Hades. Moral distinctions, also, come by degrees. The abominably wicked are hurled into nether darkness, the eminently good are given a place in heaven. Finally, retribution becomes universal: every soul receives its deserts, whether good or bad. The first conception, like the beginning of earthly justice, is retaliation — man suffers what he has made another suffer — and this poetical justice contributes reality and variety to all the infernos of later imagination.

Besides the question, What becomes of the soul after death? men early asked its counterpart, Whence comes the soul of a living man? It is universally assumed that it comes from without, and enters the body of the infant at birth or the embryo at quickening; and the belief is very wide-spread that the souls of deceased ancestors or kinsmen are so re-embodied. Family likeness in feature

and disposition is thus accounted for; and methods of more particular identification are sometimes practised, by which the child's name is ascertained.

Savages, knowing no difference in kind between themselves and other animals, of whose superiority in strength or cunning they have frequent experience, and whose mysterious and uncanny powers seem a kind of magic, attribute to them souls like their own, and it is generally believed that the soul of a man may be reborn in a beast and conversely. Tales of were-wolves fill a large room in folklore; transformations by witchcraft, and the power of sorcerers to extract the soul of a living man and ban it in a tree or animal, are common. The premises of the transmigration of souls are thus found in savage psychology all the world over.

Into this circle of ideas, also, retaliation, the rudimentary form of justice,

enters. The soul of a man who has done heinous wrongs to his fellows in this life will be born in another life to be the victim of like evils. Or the embodiment of the soul corresponds to the character it displayed in its former existence. Thus, to take examples at random from the Law-book of Manu:[2] Men who delight in doing hurt become beasts of prey; those who eat forbidden food become worms; for stealing meat man is born as a vulture; for stealing grain he becomes a rat; for stealing perfumes, a musk-rat; and so on. He who unlawfully kills an animal will in future births suffer as many violent deaths as the slain beast had hairs.[3] Defects and deformities are of similar origin: "In consequence of a remainder of guilt, are born idiots, blind, deaf, and deformed men, all of whom are despised by the virtuous."[4] Plato has the same doctrine: cowards and unjust men will be born again as

women; gluttons, drunkards, and wantons become asses; the violent become wolves or hawks.[5]

The re-embodiment of souls, thus become retributive, may be superimposed on retribution in another world, a sojourn in heaven or hell intervening between two successive lives on earth. This combination was made, as we shall see, both in the East and the West.

II

In India and among the Greeks metempsychosis was not only a popular belief and a religious doctrine, but it was taken up into philosophy and metaphysics. An exposition of these classical systems will show what great possibilities there were in the idea.

In the older Brahmanic scriptures there is no distinct reference to metempsychosis. The hymns of the Rig-Veda know of the blessedness of the good in

the heaven of the gods, while the fate of the wicked is less frequently and less explicitly alluded to — they are thrust down to "that deep place," into unfathomable darkness. Later texts are less reticent; in the torments of hell the Indian — especially the sectarian — imagination has achieved unsurpassed horrors.

In the Upanishads the re-embodiment of the soul to another life on earth is introduced as a solemn mystery. The novelty and the mystery do not lie in the idea itself, which, as we have seen, is a common savage notion, and is doubtless far older in India than philosophical thinking, but in the law of reincarnation which reflection discovers. In passages which are among the oldest in the Upanishads and the most profound,[6] it is not merely the fortunes of men that are determined by their previous existence, but their character. When Ya-

jñavalkya and Artabhaga go out alone to talk of the secret that fills them with awe, " their discourse was of deeds (Karma),[7] and what they praised was deeds; verily, a man becomes good by good deeds, evil by evil." In another conversation, after speaking of the transit from one life to another in the world of men or of gods, Yajñavalkya says: " As a man consists of this or that, as he acts, as he lives, so will he be born. He who did what was good will be born as a good man; he who did evil, as a bad man. He becomes holy by holy works, wicked by wicked. Therefore it is said, ' Man is altogether fashioned of desire; as his desire is, so is his insight; as his insight, so are his deeds; according to his deeds, so is his destiny.' "[8]

In this passage — in which, it may be noted, only human births are contemplated — re-embodiment appears to follow at once on death:[9] " As the cater-

pillar, when it has reached the tip of a leaf, lays hold of another and draws itself over to it, so the soul, after it has cast off the body and [temporarily] abandoned ignorance, lays hold of another beginning and draws itself over to it." [10] But the belief in heaven and hell was already firmly fixed, and in the general conception the soul at death goes to heaven or hell and there remains until its merit is exhausted or its ill-desert expiated, when it returns to earth to enter a new body.

In other Upanishads, as in Manu, the principle that what a man sows in one life he shall reap in another determines the rank and condition in which a man is born: "Those who here lead a good life may look forward to being honorably born of a Brahman mother, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaiçya (*i. e.*, in one of the three high castes); while those who have led a vile life may expect to enter the

womb of a bitch, or a sow, or a Candāla" (a creature having the semblance of man, but in reality beneath the level of an unclean beast).[11]

Man's destiny is not solely determined by his conduct; knowledge also counts. When the departed soul on its way comes to the moon, where is the entrance to the heavenly world, it is examined on its knowledge; if it fails, "it is rained down to earth to be born again as a worm, or a fly, or a fish, or a bird, as a lion, a boar, a tiger, a man, or some other creature, in this place or in that — each according to his works, each according to his knowledge."[12]

The lot of man from existence to existence is thus fixed by his deeds, his Karma. It is not appointed for him in conformity with his desert by the sentence of a just judge, but is determined by the inexorable law of cause and effect. Every act, every thought, has its inevi-

table consequence in this life or another, and that consequence may in its turn become a cause. All that men have elsewhere attributed to divine justice or inscrutable providence, to fate or chance, is in India the fruit of the deed. To this law, which is the causal nexus of the universe itself, men and beasts, gods and demons, are alike subject. Good deeds, no less than evil, have their consequences, and equally entail another existence. From eternity to eternity all souls are thus bound upon a revolving wheel more terrible than the fate of Ixion — the round of rebirth.

From the moment when this idea took possession of men's minds, the problem of philosophy was to find what it is that holds the soul fast in this round, and how its bonds may be broken; and men began to demand of religion, not that it should get from the gods the good things of this life and the promise of a future

abode in heaven, but that it should assure them of deliverance from the law of transmigration.

For the thinkers, the great evil was not the sufferings of the mortal life and the dread of death in endlessly repeated existences. The loathing of life which was methodically cultivated in Buddhism, for example, does not appear in the earlier Upanishads, nor is their tone prevailingly pessimistic.[13] The evil is that in this life the soul is estranged from its origin and its true destiny.

For the soul, the true self of man, is not a part of what we call "nature," with its incessant change; it is of another order of being, essentially eternal and unchanging. The great discovery of the Upanishads, the truth of which the teachers speak with bated breath, is that the soul in man is identical with the All-Soul, the one reality in the universe, the Absolute of which naught can be said

save, "It is not this, not that."[14] As a modern interpreter expresses it: "The Brahman, the power which presents itself to us embodied in all beings, which brings into existence all worlds, supports and maintains them, and again reabsorbs them into itself — this eternal, infinite, divine power is identical with the Atman, with what, after stripping off all that is external, we find in ourselves as our inmost and true being, our real self, the soul." The pregnant formula for this identity is found in the great word, "That art thou!"

Ignorance of this unity and identity — an ignorance which is not negative but positive, a false knowledge — is the *fons et origo malorum;* it is this ignorance that binds man to the wheel of rebirth. In the transcendental knowledge of identity is dispelled the illusion of finite individuality, and with it the might of "Deed" is destroyed, the soul is forever

set free—" It cometh not again." Nor is it only after death that this eternal life begins: " He who is without desire, free from desire, his desire attained, whose desire is set on Self (Atman), his vital breath does not pass out, but Brahman he is, and in Brahman he is absorbed. As the verse says,

'When all the passion is at rest
That lurks within the heart of man,
Then is the mortal no more mortal,
But here and now attaineth Brahman.'

As a serpent's skin, dead and cast off, lies on an ant hill, so lies this body then; but the bodiless, the immortal, the life is pure Brahman, is pure light."[15]

When this monism is consistently thought through in the classical Vedanta, what we call the phenomenal world is as unreal as the empirical Ego; both are projections of the cosmic illusion, Maya. In other schools the philosophy takes a more pantheistic turn, with the exist-

ence of individual souls in God; and it finally accommodates itself to Hindu theism, in which the grace of God delivers from the round of rebirth those who turn to him in faith and love, and takes them to be forever with him.

The dualistic system of the Sankhya likewise culminates in a philosophy of salvation. Here too the way is knowledge — knowledge that the true self is not what men think, whether they identify it with the body or self-conscious mind, but a transcendental Ego, essentially inactive and impassive, untouched by all the changes of its environment. Sensation, intellection, volition, together with the self-consciousness which refers these to an Ego, are not functions of the soul, but operations of that matter, instinct with productive and destructive energies, which is the seat and source of all change. When the illusion is dispelled by which the soul is conceived to be actor

or sufferer in the drama of existence, it is set free not only from gross embodiment but from the subtle material apparatus of sense and consciousness, and abides forever an unconcerned spectator of a play it does not see — a monad Absolute.

The Yoga, with its physiological and psychological methods, has the same end, the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of rebirth, which is the greatest imaginable evil. Ascetics of every type — Sannyasins, Yogins, Sadhus — seek this deliverance in their several fashions. Jainism and Buddhism, rejecting the authority of the Vedas and the pretensions of the Brahmans, painted in still darker colors the misery of mortal life, and preached salvation by the suppression of the activity of the soul or by the extinction of desire — the will to be. Primitive Buddhism, indeed, denied the perma-

nence of the Ego, and therefore knew no transmigration of souls, because in that sense there was no soul to migrate from body to body; but it claimed as its great discovery the "chain of causation" which entails rebirth, and to the ordinary mind, incapable of the psychological subtleties of anegoism, the difference from the common belief in metempsychosis was probably more in words than in conception.

The goal is Nirvana. In different schools in the course of the centuries Nirvana has had many meanings; to some it signified the extinction of the desire which gives the deed its deadly power, and the great release from mortal existence;[16] some conceived it positively as the supreme good, the transcendent intelligence which is the essence of a Buddha, or as absolute Being. But always it has been the end of the round of rebirth.

The missionary expansion of Buddhism carried the Indian doctrine of an endless series of mortal lives under the law of Karma — the inevitable consequence of the deed done — to Tibet and China, to Corea and Japan, as well as to Ceylon and Farther India; while along the routes of commerce Hinduism reached far into the Malayan lands where Hindu influence has now been superseded by Moslem. The belief in rebirth in some form or other pervades all Eastern Asia.

In the Great Vehicle (Mahayana) school of Buddhism, which gained predominance in China and Japan, reembodiment has acquired another significance. While the old-fashioned saint sought only to achieve his own salvation and enter at death into the Nirvana from which there is no return, the Bodhisattva aspired in some future age to become a Buddha and a saviour of the

world, and therefore voluntarily remained in the round of rebirth when he might have escaped from it and entered into his rest. In his long succession of embodiments, from the time he first conceived the great purpose, he is cultivating the perfections which a Buddha must possess, carrying over what he has achieved in one existence as a diathesis of character into another, until the consummation.

The identity of the individual Bodhisattva in all these lives is assumed; for the original purpose, or vow, runs through them all and gives unity to the endeavor, and the results of these endeavors are preserved and transmitted from life to life; and although even here Buddhist psychology does not allow us to speak of an individual soul,[17] founding its refusal on the metaphysics of unreality, the less subtle Western mind can find no more appropriate name for it.

Metempsychosis — using the term with the same qualification — here becomes a way by which man may progress from life to life till he attains perfect intelligence and a perfection of character in which he is not only free from all selfish desires and aims, but is filled with pure compassion and benevolence. Then, out of love to all beings and desire for their salvation, he becomes incarnate as the Buddha of the age, and reveals the way of life.

Herein the Bodhisattva has a great exemplar in Sakyamuni, whose experiences in many forms of existence before he became Buddha were narrated in the Jataka-book, and formed the favorite subjects of Buddhist art. Other Buddhas, like Amitabha, had trodden the same path to the same end.

The conception of the progressive development of character to perfection through many rebirths is common, as we

shall see, in modern Western forms of the belief; but in the East it is peculiar to Mahayana Buddhism. And while in the West the perfection of the individual is the end in itself, in Buddhism it is a means to a greater end — the salvation of all sentient beings.

This rapid survey would be incomplete without at least a mention of the Chinese thinker Chuang-tzsĕ, to whose philosophy "we are such stuff as dreams are made of," and who conceives metempsychosis accordingly. In an often quoted passage he writes:

"Once upon a time I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither. . . . I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly, and was unconscious of my individuality as a man. Suddenly, I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a barrier. The transition is called metempsychosis." [18]

Chuang-tzsĕ wrote in the latter part of the fourth and the first quarter of the third century B.C. In his time Buddhism had not yet been introduced into China,[19] and it is very improbable that Chuang-tzsĕ had any knowledge of its doctrines. Influence of Indian philosophy upon the Taoism of Lao-tzsĕ and his successors has been conjectured, but without sufficient reason. So far as Chuang-tzsĕ is concerned, his playful treatment of the subject is far removed from the Indian seriousness, and of the deterministic idea of Karma there is no suggestion. Popular Chinese beliefs and the principles of his own philosophy are quite adequate to account for Chuang-tzsĕ's fancy.

III

The Greeks had all the common varieties of belief about the whereabouts of the departed. Ghosts troubled them as much as other people; piety and appre-

hension conspired to build tombs for the dwellings of the dead and to provide for their wants; the Homeric Hades was a vast cavernous nether-world like the Hebrew Sheol, among whose pallid shades a later hand painted in the torments of Tityos and Sisyphos and Tantalos — the beginnings of hell.[20] Polygnotos depicted for the edification of worshippers at Delphi the punishment of the Danaidae. Plato and Plutarch, Aristophanes and Lucian, in their different ways let us look into the Greek inferno, and we can follow the tradition through such writings as the Apocalypse of Peter into the vision literature of the Middle Ages and the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.

The oldest conception of retribution doubtless was that the Erinys, the vengeful Fury, pursued the guilty beyond the tomb; but the idea of a judgment of the dead early appears. Thus Pindar:

"At death, forthwith, the helpless souls receive their retribution, and deeds done in this realm of Zeus are judged beneath the earth by one who gives sentence with dire necessity." The poet goes on to picture the abode of the blest in their subterranean world where the sun shines by night as brilliant as by day, and the toil-free and tearless life of the good there in company with the most honored gods; while the others endure a misery men cannot bear to look upon.[21]

The Orphic religion, which, from the sixth century on, spread widely in Greece and had great influence, dwelt with evangelistic zeal on the misery of the unsanctified in hell; much of the familiar imagery of later representations can be traced to this source. It was, indeed, as a way of salvation from this misery that the new religion offered itself, with its initiations and purifications, its orgies and enthusiasms. Through the

same Orphic channels, probably, the idea of metempsychosis, at least in a religious connection, was introduced into Greece. The view of the Greeks themselves, that Pythagoras, with whose name the belief is peculiarly associated, appropriated the doctrine from the Egyptians [22] must be rejected; for among the many and confused notions of the ancient Egyptians about the hereafter, the transmigration of souls does not figure. The premises of the Greek conception are not to be sought in the mysterious philosophy of Egyptian priests, but in a rude popular psychology which does not have to be borrowed. The belief, it may be observed, is expressly attributed to the Thracian Getae, and may well have been general among the Thracians from whom the Dionysiac-Orphic religions spread into Greece.

The starting point is religious, not metaphysical. The soul is a fallen

divinity (*daimōn*), for its fault embodied upon earth and subject here to physical and moral defilement. The body is the tomb of the soul, or its prison-house, or its transient habitation, its tabernacle, or its vesture of flesh, its filthy garment — all these figures, so familiar in Christian literature, are Greek commonplaces.

From this bondage the soul is freed by death only to pass into another body of man, or beast, or plant. Pythagoras taught that the soul, entering the round of necessity, is bound now in one kind of living creatures, now in another;[23] and Empedocles says of himself: "I was erst-while a boy, a girl, a shrub, a bird, a speechless fish in the sea."[24] Later, when psychology discovered a difference of kind between men's souls and brutes — not to speak of shrubs — the soul's migrations were confined by some to the human genus, though Plato still holds the older opinion.

Rebirth, as well as the first embodiment, was expiatory. Pindar speaks only vaguely of the "ancient guilt," but Empedocles is more explicit: "There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient decree of the gods, eternal, sealed with broad oaths, that when one of the divine beings (δαίμονες) who have endless life as their lot criminally defiles his hands by bloodshed, or when one, in the train of Strife, swears a false oath, he must wander thrice ten thousand seasons far from the blessed, being born through all that time in all manner of forms of mortal creatures, exchanging one grievous path of life for another." [25]

In Greece, as in India, the belief in metempsychosis was early combined with the established notion of retribution after death. From their punishment in the nether-world for deeds done in the body or from their reward in the abode of the blest, souls are sent back to

earth to enter other bodies, returning at death again to Hades — thus the round goes on.

It is not, however, as in India, an *endless* round. The guilt of the fall is expiated by the soul's banishment,[26] and by the sufferings it undergoes in this mortal life and beneath the earth its defilement is purged; when this has been accomplished, the soul is delivered from mortality and returns to its original estate. The souls whose expiation of the ancient guilt Persephone accepts as sufficient, she sends back to the light of the sun in the ninth year (after their descent to Hades); of such are born illustrious kings, and men excelling in might, and eminent in wisdom. Thereafter they are worshipped as heroes.[27]

It was an early and persistent feature of the doctrine that the expiation was completed in a certain cycle of rebirths recurring at fixed intervals of time. In

Pindar, those who thrice, in both states (*i.e.* in the earthly life and in Hades), have persevered to keep the soul wholly free from evils traverse the way of Zeus to the towers of Kronos, the island of the blest, whose delights are poetically described.[28] The common belief was that a sojourn of a thousand years in the abodes of the blessed or the dismal realm of Hades intervened between the successive earthly embodiments of the soul, and that the whole cycle comprised ten such returns, so that, in normal course, the soul could attain final release and restoration of its divinity only after a lapse of more than ten thousand years.[29] This scheme, which we shall find again in Plato, is probably Pythagorean.

The guilt which was to be expiated was, as in ancient religions generally, conceived as defilement, and demanded physical or magical purifications. Such purifications formed an important part

in the ritual of the Orphic and Pythagorean sects; Empedocles was a famous expert in the art.

In the body, the soul is ever beset by the temptations of sense and exposed to pollution by contact with things unclean. Worse still, it is in danger of forgetting its origin and destiny, and thus, with no effort to escape the round of death and birth, contracting fresh guilt in every existence, may go on endlessly. The task of religion and of philosophy is to awake in man the consciousness of his true divine nature, to arouse him to a sense of his misery and peril, and to show him what he must do to be saved.

The way is the religious, or, as they called it, the philosophic, life, a regimen by which the accumulation of guilt and defilement was guarded against and uncleanness purged. Since the greatest sin is the taking of life, it was forbidden to eat flesh, or to offer bloody sacrifices to

the gods;[30] wine, also, was generally proscribed; and there were many other taboos, such as the famous rule against beans. For the better observance of this mode of life, Pythagoras founded in southern Italy a religious order, which for a time flourished greatly. Similar abstinences were practised by the Orphic sects and other seekers of salvation. To this bodily discipline the Pythagoreans added the purification of the soul by philosophy, but wherein this consisted is beyond our knowledge.

Thus far the conception of metempsychosis had been that the soul, a divine being, had been banished to earth for an "ancient guilt," a mythical fall, and condemned to alternating sojourns in mortal bodies and in Hades; and that its release came by expiation and purification through a long period.

For Plato also the soul is here below in consequence of a fall; but it is the fall

of the soul itself rather than the transgression of an eternal statute of the gods. In the myth of the charioteer and his pair of winged steeds in the Phaedrus,[31] the disaster comes from the driver's inability to control the unruly beast — that is, the failure of the intellectual element in the soul to master its lower desires. Plunging madly downward, the brute drags the soul, with broken wings, to earth, where it enters a human body,[32] it may be of one who becomes a philosopher, or of some lower kind of man, according to the measure of the vision of truth it had caught there above. At death, the souls go to judgment, and are sent to places of punishment beneath the earth, or are borne aloft to a region in the heavens, their destiny corresponding to the life they lived among men.

In the thousandth year, the souls from above and below come to draw lots and elect the life on which they are about

to enter. A soul that was once a man's may now by its own choice pass into a beast, and one that was before in a beast may enter the body of a man. Ten thousand years must pass in these vicissitudes before the soul that has lost its wings can have them restored. Only the soul that has sincerely pursued philosophy and in three successive millениums has made the election of the philosophic life recovers its wings in the third thousandth year, and mounts up to the world above whence it came.[33]

The same conceptions recur in the most extended of Plato's presentations of the state after death, the myth of Er the Pamphylian at the end of the Republic. For every wrong men do to any one they suffer ten-fold — a thousand years, ten times the span of human life. Especial emphasis is here laid on the freedom of the soul in choosing its life. On the eve of its return to earth, each

soul elects the kind of life it wishes to live, after solemn warning of the responsibility of the choice: "The word of Lachesis, daughter of Necessity! Short-lived souls, this is the beginning of a new cycle of mortal life and death; your genius will not pick you out, but you will choose your genius . . . Virtue is free to all, and as a man honors or disesteems it, he will have more or less of it. The fault is the chooser's; God is blameless." Having made their choices in the memory of their former life, the souls drink the water of forgetfulness, and, attended by their genii (*daimones*), ascend to earth.

The eschatology of Plato is thus a combination of metempsychosis with retribution in heaven or hell.[34] All the elements of this eschatology are found in authors much older than Plato, and it is well established that the doctrine originated and was systematized in Orphic-

Pythagorean sects or schools, from whom Plato appropriated it.

But under all the similarity of Plato's teachings to those of his predecessors, lies a different conception of the nature of the soul, of its ruin and its restoration. For Plato the soul is an immaterial intelligence, and thus essentially divine; its fall is the consequence of an imperfect vision of the eternal truth and beauty; its purification is not by magical medicine and dietary laws, but the clarification of the intelligence by philosophy.

So far as the obscuration is moral, the catharsis is moral; not only the truth, but temperance and justice and courage and sound sense are means of purification. Above all, the soul, rising superior to the deceptions of the senses and the seductions of the appetites, emancipating itself from the body, must collect itself, and, so far as it can, now and hereafter, live by itself.[35] This liberation makes

man, even on earth, immortal and divine. His flight from the world is the putting on of the likeness of God; and when such a one is finally released from mortal existence, the pure soul ascends to be forever with God.

Plato thus took up into his idealistic philosophy the conceptions of the origin and destiny of the soul which came ultimately from the mystery religions, and in so doing purified and transfigured them. His successors rejected them altogether. Aristotle's psychology made the "active intellect" essentially eternal, but admitted no individual existence after death; the skepticism of the Middle Academy brought the immortality of the soul into doubt in Plato's own school; the Epicureans took it for their mission to free men from the fear of death and hell by the knowledge that the soul is dissolved with the body; the older Stoics in general held that the in-

dividual soul survived till the next universal conflagration, but not that it migrated into other bodies; some of the teachers of Middle Stoa — notably, Panaetius — taught that the soul was generated with the body and perished with it.

In the first century before Christ, however, in the general revival of religious philosophy, there was a revival of the doctrine of metempsychosis in more than one school (Pythagoreans, Sextians), and in the eclectic or syncretistic popular philosophies and theologies of the succeeding period metempsychosis is a common belief.

It is found, for instance, in the so-called Hermes Trismegistos, with the old controversy whether a human soul can ever be degraded to existence in the body of a beast. The soul (Nous, or Logos) is of the same nature with God; its descent to the earthly sphere and incarceration in a mortal body is brought

into connection with a mythical cosmogony; its transmigrations, its salvation by transcendental knowledge (γνῶσις), and the upward way by which it attains to godhead and immortality, are the proper subject of these curious scriptures. Many Gnostic sects which figure in the catalogues of Christian heresies also held to metempsychosis.[36]

The doctrine attained its final form in ancient philosophy in the Neoplatonic system of Plotinus. The mythical vesture — especially the infernal features — is here stripped off, and the theory is presented in the context of a transcendental psychology and as an integral part of an imposing metaphysical construction of the universe.

The soul is by nature divine, of the same essence with deity;[37] its fall is its desire to be something for itself, through which it forgets its father, God, and its own true nature; rejoicing in the exer-

cise of its free-will, it strays so far that it loses the consciousness of its origin, " as children early torn from their parents and brought up for a long time away from them do not know either who they are or who their parents were."[38] The double error of the soul is overvaluing earthly things and disprizing itself. But if it can be brought to see the worthlessness of the things it esteems above itself, and to recognize its origin and worth, it has in itself the power of recovery. For, as Plotinus expresses it, " our soul did not wholly descend into the world of sense, but somewhat of it ever abides in the intelligible world."[39] To that world it may mount up again, and dispelling the illusion of the separate self-consciousness, " ceasing to draw a line around itself to divide itself from universal reality, will come to the absolute whole, not by advancing somewhither, but by abiding in that whereon the whole is based."[40]

But there are heights above even the unity of intelligence; above the vision of an intelligence that is master of its faculties there is the intuition of an intelligence in love. Bereft of its faculties by the intoxication of the nectar, "it is reduced by love to that simple unity of being which is the perfect satisfaction of our souls."[41] Of this final state of blessedness the soul has a foretaste and earnest here in moments of ecstasy.

In their descent from the intelligible world, the souls come first to the heavens, and there assume a body, through which they pass into more earthy bodies the farther they proceed in this downward way, and from one body into another, these incarnations being retributive; a hard master, for example, being born to be a slave, one who misused wealth born to poverty, and so on.[42] In compassion with the souls suffering such hardships, Zeus made their bonds (the

body) mortal, and gave them a respite at intervals, that they might be free from the body, and become themselves, and dwell where the soul of the universe ever abides, subject to no such vicissitudes.[43]

We have seen how the soul may reascend to its source; but there is also a downward way, in which the soul may lose the dim consciousness of its origin which man retains, and thus sink to the level of the irrational animals or even to the purely vegetative life of plants.[44]

The influence of Plotinus was very great not only in the Neoplatonic school but upon Christian theology, and he is the fountain head of the higher Christian mysticism. The Bible of the mediaeval mystics, Dionysius Areopagita,[45] is thoroughly Plotinian; the ascent of the soul to God and its union with God through love — the goal and the way — are the same. But the transmigration of souls, which was not an

essential part of the Neoplatonic system and was, moreover, at variance with the doctrine of the Church, was tacitly let fall.

The development of the idea of metempsychosis in India and among the Greeks is in many respects similar. Thus, to indicate only salient points of comparison, in Plotinus, as in the Vedanta, the soul is in essence one with the Absolute, from which it is estranged by ignorance at once of the Absolute and of its own true nature. Alienated thus by a separating self-consciousness from its real self, the soul is invested with a body, and passes from body to body of man or beast as its character determines from existence to existence. From this condition it can be delivered only by true self-knowledge. The illusion of the separate consciousness is thus dispelled, and in sublime intuition the soul realizes its oneness with the universal intelligence

and universal being, and with the Absolute which is beyond knowing and being.

These fundamental agreements, to which many resemblances in particulars might be added, naturally prompt the inquiry whether they are the outcome of an independent parallel development, or whether the idea of transmigration in Greek religions and philosophies is derived from India, or at least influenced in its higher development by Indian thought.

Many scholars are convinced that the belief in metempsychosis was received by the Greeks from India;[46] and some go so far as to attribute the introduction of the doctrine to Pythagoras, whose travels in search of wisdom are for this purpose extended to India.[47] The question is but a part of a larger problem, the influence of India on the West, which lies quite beyond the scope of our inquiry. It

must suffice here to adduce briefly certain considerations bearing on the particular subject before us.

It may be said, to begin with, that there is no indication that the Greeks in any age entertained a suspicion that the doctrine of transmigration was derived from India, or, indeed, that they had any philosophical debts in that quarter. Further, the doctrine appears to have been well known in the sixth century, and to have been especially current in Sicily and southern Italy, while all that we know of communication in that age makes it improbable that the Greeks had such a knowledge of Indian thought as the hypothesis implies prior to the consolidation of the Persian empire under Darius and the end of the Persian wars.

Of greater weight than these antecedent probabilities are the far-reaching differences between the Greek and Indian conceptions of metempsychosis. The

Indian conception is inseparable from the doctrine of Karma,[48] to which there is no parallel among the Greeks.[49] On the other hand, the characteristic Greek notions of a fall of the soul in time by an act of free-will, and of the expiation of this original sin and of the actual transgressions of earthly lives by a limited series of rebirths in a period of ten thousand years, are not only foreign to Indian thought of every school but radically at variance with it.[50] What remains is the bare belief in transmigration (which, as we have seen, is a common piece of savage soul-lore), and the moral development of it (also common), according to which man's estate and fortune in the mortal embodiment are predetermined by former deeds.

In Plato, metempsychosis is most clearly, even to its mythical form, adopted from the Greek mystery religions and religious philosophies. What

raises it above the level of the vulgar beliefs is the mind of Plato himself, his own higher theology and anthropology, whose antecedents again are well known, and are genuinely Greek.

And now, coming back to Plotinus, in whom we found such striking resemblance to the Vedanta, it must be said that in his time, as, indeed, ever since the conquests of Alexander, communication between the West and the East was such that knowledge of Indian religions and philosophies might very well have reached a great commercial and literary centre such as Alexandria. How much was actually known of them is another question; so far as can be judged from what remains to us, it was surprisingly little. Concerning Plotinus himself, the testimony of his disciple Porphyry is, that, after attaining proficiency in Greek philosophy, he desired to acquaint himself with that of the Persians and the

Indians, and to that end accompanied the Emperor Gordian on his campaign against the Persians. He had got no farther than Mesopotamia when Gordian was murdered, and Plotinus was lucky to get safe back to Antioch. This was as near as he came to the sources of Indian wisdom. Deussen, than whom no one is better qualified to speak, seems to me right in the conclusion that "the remarkable agreements between Neoplatonic and Indian ideas are to be explained solely by essential affinity, not by historical dependence." [51]

The system of Plotinus is, as I have said elsewhere, "a summation, or rather synthesis, of the whole movement of Greek metaphysics from the Eleatics down, and there is nothing in it that is not thus adequately accounted for; while the characteristic features of this system have no parallel in Indian philosophy" — I mean, the theory of emanations by

which he endeavors to bridge the impassable gulf between the Absolute and a real world, and which, in inverse order, are the stages by which the fallen soul ascends to God.

IV

Primitive Christianity received the eschatology of contemporary Palestinian Judaism, the general features of which were that at death the disembodied soul went to an abode of blessedness or a prison-house of misery according to its desert. In the general resurrection at the end of the age the soul would be reunited with the body, which to this end would be raised from the tomb, and thus man would stand at the judgment bar of God to receive the final award, a paradise of delight for the righteous and a hell of fire for the wicked.[52] In this scheme there was no room for the migration of the soul from one body to another. Some of

the Hellenized Jews adopted Platonic ideas of pre-existence and immortality, and Philo has a doctrine of reincarnation, different, however, from the common notions of metempsychosis.[53]

The resurrection of the body was a stumbling-block to all who had a tincture of Greek education, not merely because the reconstitution of a long-dissipated body out of its original elements was beyond the most elastic imagination for the miraculous, but because the reincarceration of the soul in its prison-house of flesh — though it were to dwell in an earthly or other-earthly paradise — was the greatest evil they could think of. Paul meets this feeling at least half way: the resurrection of the body is not a restoration of the old material, or animal, body; it is the investment of the soul with a new "spiritual" body, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.[54]

The Gnostics, with their dualistic hostility to matter as inherently evil, rejected the resurrection of the body, and many of them, as has been said, held to the transmigration of souls.[55] Against the objections of Gentiles and heretics, Christian apologists like Athenagoras proved their stalwart faith by affirming the resurrection in its most material form. The Apostles' Creed makes the resurrection of the flesh one of its cardinal articles;[56] Tertullian gives its sense in his uncompromising way when he says: "*resurget igitur caro, et quidem omnis, et quidem ipsa, et quidem integra.*"[57]

The Alexandrian Fathers, following Paul, denied the resurrection of the flesh; their conception of the immortality of the soul, like that of their precursor, Philo, was essentially Platonic, and Origen is accused by Theophilus of teaching that the soul was frequently re-embodied and repeatedly experienced

death.[58] From his own writings, however, it appears that, while Origen, in his theory of the consummation of being, held that the same soul might be variously embodied in successive worlds, he did not accept metempsychosis in the usual meaning of the term.[59]

It has been asserted that the doctrine of reincarnation was formally condemned by a Church Council in the sixth century, and the inference is drawn that prior to that time it had been current and uncondemned in the Church.[60] The Council referred to leveled its anathema, however, not at reincarnation — of which it makes no mention at all — but at the Origenistic heresies of the pre-existence of souls and the final restoration of all beings (ἀποκατάστασις).[61]

That individuals here and there held Platonic or Neoplatonic conceptions of metempsychosis is not remarkable;[62] but that the belief had any general cur-

rency there is neither evidence nor probability.

In the East, where Gnostic sects and Gnostic influences obstinately persisted, the doctrine of metempsychosis also survived. It had a place in the eclectic religion of Mani, with a function which shows fundamentally Western rather than Indian affinities, though Indian influence is plainly seen in related parts of his system, for instance, in the rules (for the Elect) against injuring any living thing, which are carried to as great lengths as the principle of Ahimsa in the extremest Indian sects.[63]

Among Mohammedans the difficulty of reconciling the sufferings of innocent children and dumb animals with the goodness or even the justice of God led some of the liberal theologians (Muʿtazilites) to seek a solution in sins committed in a former existence. The same opinion is said to have been entertained

by some mediaeval Nestorians. It appears also among the Jewish Karaites. There was large interchange of ideas among these schools or parties, which, besides common principles, had a natural bond of sympathy in the fact that they were all in the like condemnation in the eyes of the orthodoxy of their several religions.

Indian, particularly Buddhist, influence was also strong in that region and time; the Buddhist idea of Nirvana is unmistakable in the later Oriental Sufis, and similar methods of attainment were practised. It may be inferred, therefore, that knowledge of Buddhism contributed to the currency of the belief in rebirth among Oriental Christians and Jews as well as Moslems.

Reincarnation is fundamental to the doctrine of the Imam as held by the Shiʿa Moslems; it was developed in a characteristic form by the Ismaʿilis, and

is a cardinal doctrine of Babism. The Druses believe that the souls of the righteous (Druses) pass at death into progressively more perfect embodiments till they reach a stage at which they are re-absorbed in the godhead, while the wicked are born in lower condition. Their teaching allows transmigration only within human kind, but the less instructed extend it to animals. The Nusairis believe that the souls of the wicked are born again as animals, according to the kind and degree of their sin becoming cats, asses, wolves, and the like.

In the Jewish Kabbala, which has preserved so much ancient gnosticism, metempsychosis is an essential part of the system. The destiny of the soul is to return to the Infinite Source from which it emanated.[64] This goal can only be attained when all the perfections that are potential in it are realized; until

then it passes from body to body continually. According to some of the later Kabbalists, this round of rebirth, in which the soul of a man may not only be incarnated in another human body but in that of an animal suitable to its former character, will come to an end only when the Messiah establishes a new moral order.

Though the philosophical thinkers in general combatted the doctrine, some, like Abrabanel, adopted the theory of metempsychosis; he argues — anticipating a more modern turn of thought — that God thus gives another chance to the soul of one who, urged by his temperament, commits a great sin such as murder or adultery, or to one who died in youth without opportunity to do good works.

In the Middle Ages some heretical Christian sects of dualistic principles, such as the Kathari, had a dogma of

metempsychosis similar to that of the Manichaeans and not improbably derived from them. It reappears in the belief of the modern Russian sect of the Doukhobors, whether as a survival from these mediaeval heresies or derived from some more recent source is uncertain[65]

In all these Western survivals or revivals of the doctrine the influence of the later Neoplatonism is evident; only sporadically can an Indian (Buddhistic) strain be recognized or surmised. The re-embodiments are — at least, for those who know the origin and destiny of the soul — stages of a progressive purification and elevation, through which it reascends to its divine source.

It is not surprising, therefore, that with the revival of Platonism and Plotinianism at the renaissance, the theory of metempsychosis was revived in European philosophy. Cosimo de' Medici's Florentine Academy was founded

to cultivate and expound the philosophy of Plato; Marsilio Ficino translated not only Plato but Plotinus and the so-called Hermes Trismegistos, and wrote a treatise on the Platonic doctrine of immortality. From Plotinus, and from the Kabbala (which had for him as for many Christian scholars in the following centuries a singular fascination), Giordano Bruno derived the theory of transmigration which he expounds in various places in his writings, especially in that entitled "De gli heroici furori," which — it is of interest to us to note — was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney.[66]

V

Lessing's conception of history, and especially the history of religion, as a divine education, by which, from elementary beginnings, mankind is led on stage by stage toward the perfection which is the goal of God's ways with

men, had for a corollary that the individual must traverse from end to end the same path by which the race achieves its destiny. It is inconceivable that this should be accomplished within the limits of a single life — that a soul should be in the same existence upon the stage of the Old Testament religion, and of Christianity, and of that new eternal gospel that lies beyond them both.

But why may not every man have been in this world more than once? Is this hypothesis so absurd because it is the oldest; because the human mind, before it was dissipated and weakened by the sophistries of the school, at once came upon it? Why should I not in a former existence have progressed toward my perfection as far as mere temporal punishments and rewards can bring a man? And why not, in another, have made all the progress which the prospect of eternal rewards so powerfully furthers?

Why should I not come again as often as I am sent to gain new knowledge, new abilities? Do I carry away so much from a single life that it is not worth while to return?[67]

These paragraphs furnished Herder the text for an essay, "Palingenesie. Vom Wiederkommen menschlicher Seelen."[68] Herder discusses the origin of the belief in transmigration, which he rightly finds, not in speculation, but in savage psychology; it is a "Wahn sinnlicher Menschen." In the form in which it was developed by the Brahmans in India — the doctrine of a retributive metempsychosis, according to which the misdeeds of one life are expiated in another embodiment — Herder emphatically rejects it: Why does this unhappy man suffer, without knowing for what he suffers? If we consider it from a moral point of view, the expiation is extreme: one who is no longer a man suffers for

what he did when a man, in a condition which deprives him of all capacity of moral action, that is, of amendment and atonement. On the other hand, morality out of consideration, how slight the expiation! He who was once a tiger in human form is now a real tiger, without obligation or conscience, which formerly sometimes troubled him. . . . Instead of being punished, he is rewarded; he is now what he wished to be and in his human form could only be imperfectly.

The considerations which inclined Lessing to the hypothesis do not convince Herder. The solution it offers of the suffering of the wretched, the deformed, the oppressed, does not really solve the problem; it assumes a destiny or a deity that robs a man of the enjoyment of this life for the transgressions of a former life; and since the victim is unconscious of his fault, the infliction can have no rational or moral end of

discipline — it is mere vengeance, and a deity which avenges wrong-doing without seeking to make the wrong-doer better is an impossible idea.

To know what is essential to the happiness of mankind in particular and in general, we do not need to have been repeatedly on this earth; and if we have in one life neglected to learn it, we should probably neglect it in many. It is not more knowledge that is of chief importance, but character; and character is possible in all ages and conditions. There have always been great and good men, and we also can be such; this is the task that is set us in this, the only life we know — to achieve a good character. It is a Palingenesia, a rebirth of ideals and motives, in this life that is needful.

Lessing conceived of reincarnation as a way by which a human soul might advance stage by stage in knowledge and virtue to perfection, repeating in itself

the progress of the race in its divine education. An older contemporary of Lessing's, the Swiss naturalist Charles Bonnet, while expressly repudiating the Pythagorean doctrine of metempsychosis — which he believed to come ultimately from India — developed in detail the hypothesis that the souls of the lower animals survive, and are successively re-embodied in animals of higher rank in the scale of classification until they arrive at the perfection of human souls.[69] Charles Fourier worked transmigration, in peculiar form, into his fantastic scheme of social and economic progress.[70]

Louis Figuier, in "Le lendemain de la mort, ou la vie future selon la science," not only repeated the ancient arguments — reincarnation is the only explanation of the presence of man on the earth, of the sad and unequal conditions of human life, of the fate of children dying in

infancy, etc., — and extended it, like Bonnet, into natural history, the scale of animal types being steps in the ascent of souls — the soul of a zoöphyte or a mollusc, for example, being promoted to an articulate — but introduces it into astronomy and astrophysics, reviving thus, in modern scientific guise, ancient Greek adventures. The sun is the abode of purely spiritual beings; its rays are emanations (souls) perpetually sent out by the sun through space to the earth or the planets; the sun's heat is kept up, not, as some astronomers have conjectured, by a bombardment of asteroids, but by the return of souls, ardent and pure spirits, continually replacing those which are emanated from it.

In the revival of the theory of metempsychosis in the nineteenth century, the influence of Indian thought had a considerable part. The Bhagavad-gita was Englished by Wilkins in 1785; in 1801

Anquetil Duperron published a Latin translation of a modern Persian version of the Upanishads made at the instance of the Mogul Emperor and eclectic theologian, Akbar. The impression which the Upanishads in Duperron's translation made upon Schopenhauer is well known. Other translations of philosophical and religious texts followed in rapid succession, until the greater part of this literature has been rendered into the languages of modern Europe. The philosophical systems of India have been interpreted by a succession of illustrious scholars from Colebrooke's day to our own; the Upanishads and the Vedanta, in particular, have been studied with increasing insight and appreciation. Interest in Indian thought has been stimulated by popular literature; societies for the study of the Vedanta under the guidance of native teachers have been formed; texts have been translated and

expositions published by Hindu scholars for Western readers; a kind of missionary propaganda has been carried on both in Europe and America. "Theosophy," also, with its travesty of Indian ideas, has contributed to make transmigration familiar.

The modern variations of the doctrine of metempsychosis, both such as have arisen in the West and those in which Indian thought is modernized and accomodated to Western modes of thought, differ from the classical types by introducing the idea of evolution, and often endeavor to establish the theory on a scientific basis. The successive reincarnations are stages in the soul's progress toward perfection; the series is sometimes extended from the lowest animate forms upward to man; others, as we have seen, connect it with theories of social and economic development, or with physical hypotheses.

However natural such a way of conceiving the subject may be to our evolutionary habit of mind, it is entirely foreign to the thought of the ancients in the East or West.[71] In all the ancient theories of metempsychosis the soul is by origin and nature divine, eternal, co-essential with the Absolute or identical with it. From this high estate it fell by its own fault, or from this unity it is separated by ignorance of itself and of the Absolute, and is in consequence imprisoned in a mortal body and destined after death to be re-embodied until its guilt be expiated or its ignorance dispelled by the supreme knowledge. Its goal is the recovery of its lost estate, the return to its source; " the end is, not to be sinless, but to be God." [72]

Metempsychosis among the Greeks was in the beginning an expiation of guilt, and the conception of a fall of the soul, moral or intellectual, persists in the

more speculative systems. In India it is the inexorable law of cause and effect, the deed and its consequence, which pursues man from existence to existence. It had no beginning in time, and has no end but by the attainment of the transcendental knowledge the possession of which is to *be* the Absolute.[73]

The biological evolution of souls from some primitive psychic cell to the fullness of humanity or of divinity, as some of our contemporaries imagine it, is a new hypothesis, which owes more to the century of Darwin than to the philosophies of Greece or India.

VI

A theory which has been embraced by so large a part of mankind, of many races and religions, and has commended itself to some of the most profound thinkers of all time, cannot be lightly dismissed.

In its classic forms, as we have seen,

the soul is in essence eternal and unchangeable; it does not originate in time, either by creation or by propagation; consequently the difficulty of conceiving how what has a genesis in time can be exempt from dissolution in time does not arise.[74]

The hypothesis offers an explanation of the inequalities among men in mental and moral capacity and predisposition, as well as in soundness and health of body and station and fortune in life. In these things there is nothing arbitrary and nothing accidental; everything is the determinate consequence of former acts, thoughts, volitions, and desires, or of the totality of character. It is a kind of doctrine of heredity; only, a man does not inherit from his ancestors, but from himself in a former existence; to speak in a paradox, his parents are a part of his inheritance.

If this determination of a man's lot by

his deeds be regarded from the point of view of retribution, it seems to be in kind and measure more equitable than the incommensurate doctrine of endless punishment in hell for the wrong-doing of a brief human life.

If man's earthly existence be conceived as a probation, it must be admitted that in any one life men are put upon this probation under very unequal conditions of every kind, and that the theory of a series of embodiments in which the soul is tested under various conditions accords better with our notions of justice in the order of things.

Finally, if an end of perfection is set for the soul, metempsychosis affords the opportunity for a progressive approach to that infinite attainment, whether the latter be a return to an initial state from which the soul in some way lapsed, or the development of the soul's latent potentialities.

The objection was long ago urged by Epicurus against the Pythagorean doctrine, that, inasmuch as the soul has no memory of former existences, and there is no conscious personal identity running through the series of rebirths, the consequences fall virtually upon *another*, who knows not the cause, and cannot be made wiser or better by the punishment he bears.[75]

Similarly, if we think of the reincarnations as probationary, the soul carries over no experience from one to another, and there is thus no cumulative profit from the experience of former probations. And, considered as development, the soul begins each new stage, not where it left off in the last life, but, so far as consciousness goes, starts *de novo*; it is as if, at the several stages of one life-time, all memory of what went before should be obliterated, so that the grown man had no knowledge of himself as a youth,

and consequently no light from his earlier experience.

To this objection various answers have been made by defenders of the doctrine. Perhaps a better one may be offered by recent theories of the unconscious and the subconscious. From these premises it might be admitted that the memory of former existences does not emerge in normal consciousness, and yet affirmed that in the subconscious region of the mind there is not only a continuity but an organized memory of former experiences. But, granting all that can be said for this hypothesis, it remains that there is no intelligence in the subliminal realm, and no moral quality; and consequently the only conditions under which we can conceive of intellectual and moral progress or recovery from life to life are lacking.

This objection applies with peculiar force to the modern rationalizations of

the belief in reincarnation which endeavor to give it the semblance of a *scientific* hypothesis; for they, by their very profession, take it upon them to prove the theory reasonable. The genuine doctrine has never been concerned to demonstrate itself to the finite understanding; it finds its authority in revelation, its verification in ecstatic experience; and in this higher assurance needs not be troubled by what, from its point of view, are rationalistic cavils. Its philosophy is an ontology which is above reason, incomprehensible, and apprehensible only by intuition.

In this system reincarnation has a logical place; the attempt to substitute biological analogies for the metaphysical foundation is a relapse into the crude physiological psychology which Indian and Greek thought overcame. Metempsychosis without its absolute origin

and its transcendent goal is a pseudo-scientific hypothesis which has neither philosophic meaning nor religious worth. It seems often to be inspired by that lust of life in which the thinkers of India discovered the root of death — of innumerable deaths.[76] To those whose belief in reincarnation is animated by such desires, the wise will be inclined to address the words of Aeneas, when in his visit to the nether-world he saw a troop of souls about to ascend to earth and be re-embodied:

" O pater, anne aliquas ad caelum hinc
ire putandum est
Sublimas animas, iterumque in tarda
reverti
Corpora ? *Quae lucis miseris tam dira*
cupido ? "

NOTES

NOTES

1. *Μετεμψυχωσις* is the commonest Greek word for the transmigration of souls. Other terms are *παλιγγενεσία* (said by Servius to be Pythagoras' word), *μετενσωμάτωσις*, and *μεταγγισμός*. These are employed without any difference of meaning, as are the modern equivalents, re-embodiment, re-incarnation, rebirth, etc.

2. Manu, xii, 59 ff.

3. *Ibid.*, v, 38.

4. *Ibid.*, xi, 53. — Their suffering shows that they were sinners, and therefore to be shunned.

5. Timaeus, 90 f.; Phaedo, 81 f. An allegorical interpretation was given to these passages by later Platonists.

6. Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, iii, 2, 13.

7. I. e., the *law* of the act and its consequence.

8. Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, iv, 4, 5.

9. This implication is contested by Windisch.

10. Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, iv, 2, 3.

11. Chandogya-Upanishad, v, 10, 7.

12. Kaushitaki-Upanishad, 1, 2. Deussen, Sechzig Upanishads, 2 ed., p. 24.

13. The Maitrayana-Upanishad, in which this disgust is strongly expressed (i, 3), is post-Buddhistic. The pessimism of Kathaka-Upanishad, i, 26 f., is comparatively mild. The Sankhya philosophy, and Jainism and Buddhism under its influence, are much more deeply pessimistic. There is a similar difference between Neoplatonism and Gnosticism or Manichaeism.

14. *Neti, neti.* Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, ii, 3, 6; iii, 9, 26, etc.

15. Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, iv, 4, 6 f.

16. Whether there is an immortal existence beyond for the saint who has attained Nirvana, is a question to which Buddha gave no answer.

17. To be strictly accurate, we should say, the psychology of the most influential schools.

18. Giles's translation.

19. The traditional date is 55 B.C. (return of Ming-ti's envoys); but there is reason to think that the Chinese had come into contact with Buddhism as early as the second century B.C.

20. Odyssey, xi. These additions to the Nekyia are of Orphic origin.

21. Olymp. 2, 56 ff. Pindar is here, as well as in the Threnos (Frg. 133) quoted below, drawing on the teaching of Sicilian mysteries. Compare also Frg. 129–130, 131, 132.

22. Herodotus, ii, 123. The Egyptian belief, as Herodotus reports it, was that the soul of man is immortal, and when the body dies passes into another animal; only after it has been successively embodied in all kinds of land animals and fishes and birds does it again enter a human body; the round consumes three thousand years. No trace of such a doctrine has been found in Egyptian sources, though it is not difficult to explain the misunderstanding.

23. A familiar presentation of the Pythagorean doctrine is Ovid, Metamorphoses, xv, 153 ff.

24. Frg. 117 Diels. The memory of such transmigrations was exceptional. Besides Empedocles, the soul of Pythagoras had received from Hermes the gift of remembering all the plants and animals into which it had come. The same power was possessed by Apollonius of Tyana. These reminiscences provoke the scoffs of Xenophanes (Diog. Laert. viii, 36) and Lucian (Gallus, c. 18 f.).

25. Frg. 115 Diels.

26. As in ancient Greek law blood-guilt was expiated by the exile of the man-slayer for a term of years.

27. Pindar, Frg. 133. — Heroes are divine.

28. Olymp. 2, 75 ff.

29. The "thrice ten thousand seasons" of

Empedocles make ten thousand years, each year in the old calendar having three seasons.

30. Farcite, vaticinor, cognatas caede nefanda
Exturbare animas, nec sanguine sanguis alatur. — Ovid, Metam. xv, 174 f.

How strict a vegetarian Pythagoras was, was disputed in antiquity. See Diels, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, [3] i, 31.

31. Phaedrus, 246 ff.

32. Never, in this first embodiment, a lower animal.

33. The three choices of the philosophic life correspond to the three periods in which the soul keeps itself from all evil in Pindar (above, p. 29).

34. Besides the passages in the Phaedrus and the Republic, reference should be made to Gorgias, 523 ff., and Phaedo, 109 ff.; to which may be added Axiochus, 371 (not by Plato). The speculations of the Timaeus are of a different order.

35. Phaedo, 67, C-D.

36. Cerinthus, the Carpocratians, Basilidians, and others.

37. Ὁμοούσιος. Plotinus, Enn. iv, 7, 5; it is a divine thing, from the realms above (iv, 8, 5, etc.). Concerning the descent of the soul Plotinus finds Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Plato in accord (*Ibid.*).

38. Enn. v, 1, 1.

39. Enn. iv, 8, 8; cf. iv, 3, 12; "souls are not cut off from their origin and the Nous."

40. Enn. vi, 5, 7. See E. Caird, Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, ii, 295 ff.

41. Enn. vi, 7, 35. Caird, *op. cit.* p. 300. The pregnant Greek is ἁπλωθεὶς εἰς εὐπάθειαν τῷ κόρῳ.

42. Enn. iii, 2, 13.

43. Enn. iv, 3, 12.

44. The successors of Plotinus (Porphyry, Iamblichus) confine transmigration to *human* bodies.

45. Written probably about 500 A.D. The influence of these writings was not confined to those whom we call the mystics; the great scholastics of the East and the West are no less in debt to them.

46. Sir William Jones, Colebrooke, Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, L. v. Schroeder; see Garbe, Samkhya-Philosophie, 90 ff.

47. Especially L. v. Schroeder, Pythagoras und die Inder.

48. See above, pp. 10 f..

49. The deterministic principle, ἀνάγκη, corresponds only in determinism.

50. In India the fatal ignorance and the incarnation of which it is the cause have neither beginning nor end; it is not a finite guilt that can be expiated.

51. Deussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, ii, 1, p. 485.

52. These beliefs are similar to those of the Persian religion, and not independent of the latter.

53. De somniis, i, § 138 f. (p. 641 f., Mangey).

54. I Cor. 15; cf. II Cor. 5.

55. Tertullian combats this doctrine both in the Greek philosophers and in the Gnostics who adopted it from them; see De anima, cc. 28 ff., 34 ff.

56. *Ἀνάστασις τῆς σαρκός, resurrectio carnis.*

57. This material identity was necessary to justice: soul and body which sinned together are punished together.

58. See Jerome, Ep. 98, 10 f.

59. De principiis, i, 6, 1 ff.; iii, 5, 6; iii, 6, 6; cf. ii, 9, 6; i, 7; Contra Celsum, iv, 83.

60. So, *e. g.*, Abhedānanda, Vedanta Philosophy. Three Lectures (1899); Orlando Smith, Eternalism (1902).

61. Mansi, ix, 395; cf. Hefele, Concilien-Geschichte, ii, 772.

62. *e. g.* Nemesius, De natura hominis, who agrees with Porphyry and Iamblichus that human souls migrate only into human bodies.

63. Acta Archelai.

64. Zohar ii, 99 *b*, quoted in Jewish Encyclopedia, xii, 232.

65. I am indebted for information about the Doukhobors to Professor Aurelio Palmieri.

66. De gli heroici furori, pp. 618 ff., 661 ff.; cf. Cabala del cavallo Pegaseo, pp. 585 ff., 589 (ed. Lagarde, 1888). Plotinus is the chief authority.

67. Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts (1780), §§ 93 ff.; cf. Lessings Leben und Nachlass, Th. 2, p. 77.

68. Zerstreute Blätter, Sechste Sammlung, 1797. (Ed. Suphan, xvi, 341 ff.) This essay, with two others on kindred subjects, was translated by F. H. Hedge in 1848.

69. Palingénesie philosophique, 1769.

70. Théorie de l'unité universelle, 1822. Part of this work was translated by Arthur Brisbane. (New York, n.d.)

71. The stages in the re-ascent of the soul to its source — in Plotinus, for example — are, it need hardly be said, a very different thing from an evolution.

72. Plotinus.

73. In some of the Hindu religions the deliverance is wrought by the grace of God for those who trust and love him.

74. That the pre-existence of souls is the necessary corollary of their immortality has been apparent to many, apart from the hypothesis of transmigration.

75. Plato seeks to avoid the apparent injustice

of this by letting the souls choose their lot. See above, pp. 35 f.

76. This lust for the life of the senses expresses itself in peculiarly crass form in Fourier, *op. cit.*, iii, 304 ff.