

Et Custosi Tutelae™



Remembered Past Lives

Essaier LVIII

Remembered Past Lives

By Michael Freedman

The following experiences took place during the late 1950s, when I was still an inexperienced magician. I do not know whether they are valid memories of a previous life, or whether they indicate only that I have a very vivid imagination. I prefer to believe the former, but will not be disturbed if it is shown that they are the latter. The experiences are valuable to me personally and have played an important role in whatever degree of individuation or integration I have achieved after 60 or 70 years of living on earth this time around.

Bridey Murphy

Like many other people, my interest in the idea of remembering or reliving past lives was aroused by the widely publicised work of hypnotist Morey Bernstein with Mrs Virginia Tighe who under hypnosis, claimed to remember a past life in Belfast, Northern Ireland, as an Irish girl, Bridey Murphy.

As it happens, investigation later showed hint Mrs Tighe was probably faking the memories of a previous life; or she was unconsciously remembering details about the real Bridey Murphy who had lived across the road from Mrs Tighe, when she was a girl in Chicago.

Encyclopaedia of Occultism

In this connexion it is appropriate to quote from the Encyclopaedia of Occultism and Parapsychology [Editor Leslie Shephard, Avon, 1980].

'The Bridey Murphy case highlights the strange ability of the subconscious mind to weave circumstantial fantasies of other lives and personalities, which can be elicited under hypnosis. The same faculty is present in the creative imagination of novelists, although consciously controlled. There have been other cases of claimed memories of former existences under hypnosis which may be more evidential [*than Bridey Murphy*]. Much depends upon the skill of the hypnotist in guiding the sessions and avoiding the temptation to make leading suggestions to the subject. Much valuable research on the evidence for Reincarnation has been done by Professor Ian Stevenson, of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Virginia.'

First experiments

My first experiments in recalling past lives were conducted in 1957 with a friend, Bobby Grey, who had some small experience in hypnosis. He had previously hypnotised me to relieve a severe toothache. That session, initially successful, came to an abrupt end, when he accidentally dripped hot wax on the back of my hand from the candle he was waving to and fro to focus my attention.

On the occasion of my first foray into a previous existence, Bobby Grey did not hold the candle but, at my request placed it on a low table near the chair in which I reclined. He then induced in me a state of deep, hypnotic relaxation, during the course of which he suggested that I should travel back in time to a previous life in which I had been a magician. Throughout the following experience, I was conscious of being in my South Yarra flat (in Australia); at the same time as I was remembering in a very vivid fashion, the following events. I had specifically requested Bobby not to render me unconscious of the present, as I did not altogether trust him for reasons not connected with reincarnation or magic.

I found myself remembering the following events, not as something long ago and far away, but as vividly as though they had happened only hours before. My pulse was racing and sweat broke out on my forehead, while I told my tale to Bobby Grey and the cumbersome Grundig open-reel tape recorder that he had borrowed for the occasion.

I do not have the tape now but I heard it a number of times before Bobby Grey left Melbourne to return to London. I have omitted my recollections of his questions and retained only what I remember of my own remarks.

A treacherous wizard

My narrative went something like this:

"I am on a horse and I am wearing skins. I seem to have several pouches or bags slung round my neck and on my belt I am carrying something like a spear, no, I do not think it is a spear, but rather some sort of staff on which hangs a pennant or flag. No, it is a small animal. I can't remember now what it is, because I am much too occupied with watching someone else a few yards in front of me."

"I know that he is the head of our tribe, and I realise that I am one of his advisors. I am not a warrior and not exactly a magician. I think I am a wizard or shaman, something like that but, I can't be bothered with that now.

"What is important and uppermost in my mind is that I have to get out of there and get out fast. The tribesmen are several hundreds of yards in front of us and they are moving forward in fighting lines, a lot of them.

'Where am I? No, not in North America. It's too early for horses to be there. I think it's somewhere in Germany a long time ago. No, it's later than the Roman Empire but earlier than Charlemagne, I think.

"I have to get away. I know that just over the crest of the hill that they are now climbing, another tribes fighting force is waiting to ambush them. The chief is ill, that's why he is not leading his men himself. He is ill because I poisoned him, but he vomited and so the poison has not taken full effect I had tasted his food, but I am used to it in small quantities, so it did not do more than nauseate me.

(Note: At this point, in the present, I felt extreme nausea, and had to break off the session to go to the bathroom, where I vomited most of my evening meal. I felt so suspended that I asked my friend to put me under again, so I could find out what happened.)

When my memories focused again on those events, the noise of battle had broken out in front of us and I was wheeling my horse about to flee. As I did so, the chief fell from his horse, mid one of his attendants began to shout something that I could not clearly hear in the general noise, except that it knew that it was my name, *Gottfreid* or something like that, and that he was accusing me of treachery.

As I rode off I knew that others followed me, I rode as fast as I could and was conscious of the horde's back hitting my buttocks.

I knew that I was a poor horseman and that soon I would be caught, if I did not put on speed. I remember kicking my heels into the horse's ribs and then a tremendous blow in the back and I was falling.

My last memory before Bobby Grey began to try to calm me down and bring me back to normal was seeing myself lying face down on the ground, transfixed with a spear.

I came fully back to the present in considerable distress. I knew that I had betrayed my chief and my tribe to the others. I felt annoyed that I had not been able to get away earlier and that I had not earlier killed the body-servant who had accused me. He was an old enemy of mine; I felt I also knew that I had cast spells mid enchantments for the defeat of my chief and tribe, so that I would have access to certain things held by the other tribe that would enhance my powers.

Self-hypnosis

I was both impressed and considerably upset by this experience and determined, firstly that I would pursue the matter of past lives, and also that I would do without Bobby Grey, whom had not handled the business at all well, I felt. I was to find out that although he had some skill as a hypnotist, he had never attempted to induce past-life memories before.

I read what books I could find on the subject and, after some trial runs, once again began to explore my past lives. By this time, I had my own Sanyo tape recorder, which I used to make induction tapes for myself. Gradually, over a period of some years, I built up a picture of a series of lives each one occurring about a century apart. However, no matter how strongly I suggested it, I could never recall another life in which I had any knowledge of or dealings with the occult.

A field worker

I remembered working in fields in various places in various eras, which always seemed to be somewhere in the European area. I remember that I usually was lame or limping. In this life, I have walked with a limp, ever since I was injured when I was nine years old, trying to climb over a high fence to escape a beating from my father.

I remembered incidents from a life in which I was a horse groom in Elizabethan days, but my memories were of rubbing down horses or cleaning out muck, and not of Shakespeare or anyone famous. I recall limping along a road at a time and place I felt was Germany in the 17th century, but could not remember anything more that I could clearly identify, other than falling down ill with some sort of sickness and dying by the side of the road.

The most vivid of this series was a life in late 18th century England, of which I remember that I was 7 or 8 years old, and that I had no name. I was dying on a rubbish tip, where I had been scavenging for food. The predominant memory was of wet filth. By contrast, the memory of the life I identify as that immediately prior to my present life was of an old man called Jim, who was lying in a clean bed with clean sheets. The room I was in was a small attic, very neat and clean, with sunlight shining through a skylight or small dormer window. I was dying, but was in no pain. I felt very content I remember knowing that I had spent most of my life making wooden clothes pegs and selling them from door to door. I was not rich but I had never really starved. I was unmarried and had no children. I was dying alone, but I was content.

Here and Now

Some time after I became a student of magic with Freedman Burford, I asked him, whether I limped in this life because of something I had done in a previous life. His reply was: "Whether it is because of something that you have done in a previous life, or whether it is the result of something that you have done in this present life, does not matter. You are working it out here and you are working it out now. It is the Here and Now is what is important, not any previous life."

Renegade priest

My most vivid past-life experience took place in 1968, spontaneously without any induction. I was in India at the time, staying at an ashram in the foothills of the Himalayas in a village called Shankaracharya Nagar, which is just across the Ganges from Rishikesh. There were a number of other Europeans staying at the ashram. In the room next to mine was Herb Schulz, a Canadian forestry worker.

Like Herb, I had spent the previous two weeks doing almost continuous meditation. It was my custom to meditate for 23 hours a day, coming out at around midnight, when I was least likely to be disturbed by other people. I would eat the cold meal that would be waiting for me in a box on my doorstep, read any letters from home that might have come, write brief replies, do some yoga exercises and then back into meditation. Herb followed a similar routine, except that he would come out for a while at about sunrise. After a couple of weeks of this regime, you can imagine that I was pretty spaced out. I ended my programme, when I heard noises from Herb's room mid knocked on his door and entered, to find him in tears. It doesn't matter why. I sat with him for a couple of hours, while he got through his crisis.

However, it had broken my routine, so I decided not to re-enter my rigorous meditation programme for the time being. I began to take meals in the communal dining room and went to one of the evening lectures that were given by the head of the ashram. I decided that I would limit my meditations to only three two-hour sessions a day.

One afternoon, a day or so after his crisis, while Herb and I were sitting in my room, rather idly gossiping, the subject of past-life memories came up. We had each done some exploration and were swapping anecdotes, when he said, "It's funny that you can remember only one life that seemed to have any kind of spiritual or occult relevance."

His memories included a number of such lives. I replied, rather flippantly, "Maybe it's because I was a black magician and did things too terrible to be remembered?" Remember, I was still tidily spaced out, after seven or eight weeks at the ashram, spending much or all of my time each day meditating.

As I spoke, I felt a tremendous shuddering pain through my body. I either fell or was thrown or threw myself out of my chair face down on to the floor, where I went into what seemed to Herb to be some kind of epileptic fit. I am not epileptic, and have never had a comparable experience on any other occasion. Herb did not know that, but he knew enough to leave me alone, and just moved furniture out of the way, so I would not hurt myself. Then he sat again in his chair and sat murmuring soothing words, waiting for me to come out of the fit.

As I lay twitching and jerking on the floor, I began to shout and complain, "They've staked me you know, but the silly idiots have missed my heart. I'm suffocating to death. My face is in the dirt and I can't breathe. If they were going to kill me, why couldn't they do it properly?"

My angry ranting went on for some time. Herb later told me that it was a terrible sight

Apparently, I looked as if I was pinned to the floor by something, like you pin an insect to a board, but I was wriggling and moving, but never doing more than turning round and round on whatever it was that had pinned me to the floor. My legs and anus were moving. "Like a beetle's legs," Herb later told me.

Later, we pieced together what seemed to be the past life experience that I had relived, not just recalled, but lived through again.

Arrogant rage

I was arrogant enough to resent deeply that the villagers had taken it on themselves to capture me and throw me into a shallow pit at the cross-roads, and to kill me by driving a stake through my body.

The predominant emotion was not distress or pain but rage that they dared to lift their hand against me, that they were stupid, ignorant and incompetent. "They could not even kill me properly," I kept on shouting.. "How dare they." On and on, until eventually it all subsided mid I fell into a deep sleep that lasted nearly 24 hours.

I have been involved with past life memory recall since then, both of my own lives, and as a facilitator for others, but I will never make the mistake of attempting to relive a past life. It is the memory of a past life that can bring benefit. To relive it adds nothing to the value of the memory and can cause considerable damage if not handled skilfully.