

MASTER MONOGRAPH

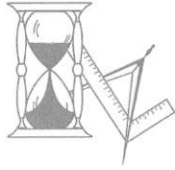
ROSICRUCIAN ORDER
AMORC



NEOPHYTE SECTION

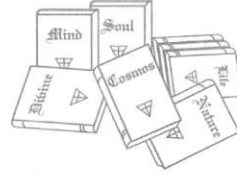
Atrium 3 Nos. 8 - 11

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Third Atrium No. 8

CONCURRENCE



This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion

In this monograph we present for the first time the doctrine of reincarnation—a doctrine you are asked to study without prejudice. In the following text written by Cicero, the Roman orator, politician, and philosopher, his concept of the immortality of the soul is described with considerable clarity and shows perfectly why he was convinced that the soul personality evolves from incarnation to incarnation—from life to life.

The soul, in fact, is of heavenly origin, forced down from its home in the highest, and, so to speak, buried in earth, a place quite opposed to its divine nature and its immortality. But I suppose the immortal gods to have sown souls broadcast in human bodies, that there might be some to survey the world, and while contemplating the order of the heavenly bodies to imitate it in the unvarying regularity of their life.

Nor is it only reason and arguments that have brought me to this belief, but the great fame and authority of the most distinguished philosophers. I used to be told that Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans—almost natives of our country, who in old times had been called the Italian school of philosophers—never doubted that we had souls drafted from the universal Divine intelligence. I used besides to have pointed out to me the discourse delivered by Socrates on the last day of his life upon the immortality of the soul—Socrates who was pronounced by the oracle at Delphi to be the wisest of men. I need say no more.

I have convinced myself, and I hold—in view of the rapid movement of the soul, its vivid memory of the past and its prophetic knowledge of the future, its many accomplishments, its vast range of knowledge, its numerous discoveries—that a nature embracing such varied gifts cannot itself be mortal. And since the soul is always in motion and yet has no external source of motion, for it is self-moved, I conclude that it will also have no end to its motion, because it is not likely ever to abandon itself. Again, since the nature of the soul is not composite, nor has in it any admixture that is not homogeneous and similar, I conclude that it is indivisible, and, if indivisible, that it cannot perish. It is again a strong proof of men knowing most things before birth, that when mere children they grasp innumerable facts with such speed as to show that they are not then taking them in for the first time, but remembering and recalling them.

—CICERO, 106-43 B.C.
"On Old Age"

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In our previous lesson we explained that all forms of matter, whether animate or inanimate, evolve according to their own nature. We can go further by asserting that the same is true of everything that is part of the immaterial world. In fact, all visible and invisible Creation owes its existence to the law of evolution, in that this cosmic law justifies the existence of the universe and of humanity. After having studied the cycles pertaining to each individual's physical and psychological life, it is important to now examine how the soul itself evolves. But first we must ask ourselves about the goal, both on the spiritual and material planes, that this evolution enables us to reach.

THE GOAL OF EVOLUTION: From a mystical and traditional viewpoint, the ultimate goal of humanity, as was pointed out, is to evolve toward perfection. In other words, our goal is to reach self-mastery and then to apply this mastery not only to our own life, but also to the lives of others by setting a fine example. Thus, by influencing them, we can contribute to their well-being. This goal may seem unattainable, for we have full awareness of being imperfect and we may doubt that we can some day become the master of all conditions and circumstances which are the source of our imperfection. Yet, such is the final objective that every human being must eventually reach—and it has been already achieved by certain great Initiates. Among those great Initiates, we naturally find the prophets, messiahs, and Avatars to which we have alluded several times, but we must also count those Masters who, independently of religions, devoted their whole lives to serving a particular mystical tradition. We will have the opportunity to return to this point in a forthcoming monograph in which we will discuss the lives and work of these Masters.

What does the state of perfection which humans are to attain on earth consist of? At our present level of evolution it is difficult to answer this question in that we can only imagine the virtues which characterize this condition. Yet we can state that it corresponds to a final fusion between our own soul consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness. When human beings achieve this fusion, their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual behavior is then totally compatible with divine laws and fully reflects the greatness, beauty, and wisdom of Universal Intelligence.



To give ourselves a notion of that perfection, we can consider such individuals as Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed—to cite only a few well-known examples—whose lives, after having received Illumination, demonstrated the effects produced by the state of consciousness they had attained. They were no longer subject to any selfish desire and they no longer experienced lust, greed, pride, jealousy, hypocrisy, and all those other faults which constitute the weakness of ordinary humans. Their entire being focused itself entirely on goodness and they used all their will to serve the God of their Heart and Realization. Living in perfect harmony with Cosmic Consciousness, they had at their disposal necessary powers to carry out their mission. The “miracles” attributed to them bear perfect testimony to this fact by proving that when enlightened individuals have reached the state of perfection or are close to it, they will become direct agents of the most sublime natural laws. Independently of the religions to which they gave birth, the way in which those great initiates lived can only arouse our admiration and give us the desire to elevate ourselves toward such a state of consciousness.

It is relatively easy to imagine the virtuous life we will lead when we have attained Divine Perfection. On the other hand, it is much more difficult to learn how to act so as to achieve this perfection in a single earthly life. When you take the time to consider the matter, how can we imagine that we can become perfect on all levels within only a few decades? In fact, from a purely logical standpoint, such an achievement is impossible. That is why the Rosicrucian Masters have always expounded that one cannot explain the evolution of soul consciousness without calling upon the doctrine of reincarnation. On the other hand, you must never feel compelled to share this viewpoint. We even want to point out that certain members of our Order do not agree with this doctrine in that it does not agree with their personal convictions. Yet it does not prevent them from being sincere Rosicrucian students and from contributing fully to the expansion of spirituality. Nevertheless, reincarnation has always been a part of the Rosicrucian teachings. It is therefore our duty to transmit to you the knowledge of mystical laws concerning it.



REINCARNATION: As far as one may go back in time, the teachings of our Order have always mentioned reincarnation, as it demonstrates the Hermetic law of Eternal

Return in the economy of life, the only law which makes it possible to understand how human beings may hope to achieve perfection some day. If you admit that your soul personality regularly reincarnates or returns to earth, it is easy to conceive that its consciousness evolves from lifetime to lifetime and that through memory it accumulates wisdom which, in the long run, will become as perfect as Cosmic Wisdom. We can even state that each person, despite all appearances, evolves in consciousness within the course of a single lifetime.

No one can deny that humanity learns many lessons in the great school of life. This same thought inspired this notable line by Tennyson: "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." As this saying expresses it perfectly, the passing of time gives rise to experiences which necessarily contribute to our evolution of consciousness and which, when properly understood and assimilated, elevate us in the understanding of fundamental truths. Starting from the principle that a single lifetime is not long enough to experience all lessons necessary for the transformation of the unregenerate aspects of our characteristic personality, it follows that the soul personality must live a number of lives to attain perfection, each one of them contributing directly to the blossoming of the soul consciousness.

Continuing our discussion then, we begin with the thesis that energy, which underlies all things, can neither be created nor destroyed. Consequently, energy is immortal; it always has been and always will be. It is an ever-present factor. In this atomic age, we have been shown that pure energy is the basis of all matter—that our bodies, when broken down completely into atoms and subatomic particles, represent only a mass of primal energy. This must also apply to the soul. Therefore, the whole essence of us is simply a total of universal energies which can neither be created nor destroyed.

For example, compare your body and soul to a light bulb with an electric current coursing through it. The vital electric current, when the switch is cut off, ceases to manifest itself, but do we destroy the current? Does it cease to exist? No. We can say then that the current is immortal. What of the light bulb? If it eventually breaks down and decomposes, its form is being altered. Perhaps its complete identity is lost to us, but the energy that formed the atoms of which it was composed continues to exist. So



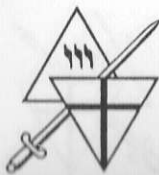
in a strictly logical and scientific sense, we can say that all things are immortal in substance, although not in form.

We cannot deny that our bodies are infused with a vital life force, a dynamic energy which expresses itself through the medium of a physical body. Call it an electric force, call it soul force, call it what you will, but it is an energy which courses through our bodies while alive and leaves when the body wears out.

Soul is usually assigned distinctive properties or attributes, these attributes commonly being those associated with the personality, ego, character, inner being, and so on. We often hear skeptics scoffing at the idea that the human has a soul which thinks, visualizes, remembers, and so on. To them the human is simply a physical organism and not a dual being at all. Yet, when we consider that our physical bodies are nothing but a cosmic or universal energy, why should it seem more possible for one form of energy—the physical—to have attributes of consciousness, memory, thought, and so on, than to conceive that another form of energy, invisible, but nevertheless present, should have these attributes?

Upon transition, we say that a soul personality merges once again with the Universal or Cosmic Soul. It does not lose identity as such, but loses the sense of realization as we know it on the objective plane. It is difficult to depict the state of the soul personality on the cosmic plane, for it cannot be compared to the state of consciousness with which we are familiar while incarnate on earth. Certainly it has no means of comparison—no objects, no separateness, not even a sense of time—all of which are necessary to self-realization.

It is incumbent upon the student of mysticism to take the cosmic viewpoint on this subject. We have said that time and space are conditions of objective existence—that they are part of the great illusion of the world we realize—that in fact they have no actual existence. Since time is defined as the *duration of consciousness*, then it follows that where no time exists, no consciousness exists. In the infinite, all is instantaneous. As far as the individual is concerned, the time between transition and rebirth can be compared to the time between falling asleep and awakening in the morning. One minute you are asleep, and the next minute the alarm is ringing.



This comparison is even more dramatically illustrated with people who are in a coma. When they awaken, whether it be three minutes or three months, they continue on with the activities in which they were previously engaged as though there had been no time interval whatsoever. Thus, as far as the individual is concerned, there is no long passing of time between states of consciousness. There is no waiting, no deliberating, no sense of loss with the tangible.

A loss of a condition, or status, such as self-consciousness should not be confused with a loss of Self, however. Just because Self has no means of realization after transition does not mean that it is lost. Here we may compare Self to a drop of water, which by itself has individuality—something apart from all other things around it. Yet when merged with a large body of water, such as the sea, it loses any sense of individuality, for it has given this up to the individuality of the larger unit. Nevertheless, the drop of water continues to exist, and at any moment could be thrown from the sea and again experience individuality.

The life forces that make up the essence of what is characteristically *you* will always seek to find expression in new but related forms. It is in these forms that self-consciousness is achieved. Self-consciousness is to *you* a continuing state—a world without end.

Reincarnation, like any other doctrine of immortality, is a concept which cannot be easily proved objectively. Yet this concept coincides with a universal order as we know it in that it satisfies the human desire for justice in the universe. It is consistent with other principles and laws of nature which we know.

If one doctrine such as reincarnation stands up to logical analysis, why do so many individuals find it extremely difficult to accept? The primary reason may be that people are not used to the idea—and when they do start thinking about it, it seems absolutely abhorrent to them that there might be even the vaguest chance of their entering *someone else's* body. They immediately picture themselves inside their old uncle with his stomach ulcers and tobacco-stained teeth; or inside some poor emaciated soul hobbling down the street; or inside some “missing link” type of creature; or even inside an animal!



We are so in love with ourselves—with all that we have identified as belonging to ourselves—that the idea of being bound or incarnated into some new strange entity does not appeal to us.

Yet, consider the epitaph which Benjamin Franklin wrote for himself:

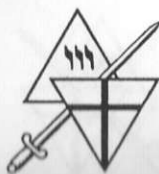
*The Body of B. Franklin,
Printer,
Like the Cover of an Old Book
Its Contents Torn Out
And
Stripped of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies Here
Food for Worms,
But the Work shall not be Lost,
For it Will as He Believed
Appear Once More
In a New and more Elegant Edition
Revised and Corrected
By the Author.*

Kahlil Gibran, in the popular book, *The Prophet*, wrote:

*Forget not that I shall come back to you.
A little while, and my longing shall
gather dust and foam for another body.
A little while, a moment of rest upon
the wind, and another woman shall bear
me.*

In “Hiawatha’s Departure” from *The Song of Hiawatha*, the poet Longfellow wrote:

*I am going, O my people,
On a long and distant journey;
Many moons and many winters
Will have come and will have vanished,
Ere I come again to see you*



One of the chief stumbling blocks to the understanding of reincarnation lies with the idea that we always think in terms of being someone else. *But we are always ourselves.* We are never anyone else. We do not incarnate into someone else's body; we did not previously live in someone else's body.

Many people believe in immortality but reject the concept of rebirth. These same people, however, believe in a doctrine of resurrection. That the soul should one day enter into a new and glorified body, as some religious doctrines expound, hardly contradicts a concept of the rebirth of self into a newborn infant more developed than the present state—certainly a glorified transmutation or resurrection with the added evidence of conforming to cosmic order.

In religious practice many people attempt to reconcile universal justice with everlasting hells and heavens, believing that there is a dividing line on either side of which all must fall. What a completely distorted view of universal justice such a picture gives! Yet this notion maintains its place in society because it takes the responsibility for the future off of peoples' shoulders. As long as individuals fail to assume responsibility for their thoughts and actions, as long as they hope to pacify their God and natural law through arbitrary doctrines and everlastingness—interpretations of mystical truths—so long will everlasting heavens and hells hold their sway, and so long will worldly authorities reserve the prerogative of sending people to either place.

There is either a universal order or there is none. If there is justice, we reap exactly what we sow—not everlastingness for even a whole lifetime of wrongdoing. It takes no little courage to accept a doctrine of causal relationship, but once we recognize an immutable universal order we should reconcile our lives to it.

CYCLES OF THE SOUL: Just as there are cycles in the evolution of our physical and psychological life, likewise our soul consciousness evolves according to precise cyclic periods. According to Rosicrucian tradition, 144 years (or 12 x 12) compose the ideal cycle between two successive reincarnations. This means that each cycle operating on the spiritual plane



differs in its duration from the cycle operating on the material plane, which is made up of seven-year cycles.

Our Order's teachings state that at the end of 144 years soul consciousness reincarnates in a new physical body, thus resuming an earthly life which, like preceding ones, contributes to its coming into awareness of Cosmic Perfection. Thus your current life is the synthesis of all those lives you have lived in the past. By analyzing your current personality and taking into account those impressions which may occur in the course of your meditations, you may obtain insight into what your preceding incarnations were like.

Let us use a few examples to illustrate the cycle of the soul's reincarnation. According to this cycle, a person who dies when 70 years old reincarnates 74 years later ($70 + 74 = 144$), the earthly duration during which this person's soul remains in the Cosmic as it awaits its return. If we now consider the case of an individual who dies at the age of 40, his or her soul will remain on the spiritual plane for 104 years ($40 + 104 = 144$) before reincarnating. As a last example, if a child leaves this world at the age of 7, the child's soul will have to wait until 137 years have elapsed ($7 + 137 = 144$) before experiencing reincarnation. Of course, as is the case for earthly periods of 7 years, the duration of the 144 cycle constitutes only an average in earth years. In other words, it is possible that a soul personality will reincarnate several earth years before or after the end of that cycle. In the Eighth Temple Degree we will discuss this matter in further detail.

You may deduce, from what we have stated already regarding the Order's teachings, that the human soul does not go either to paradise or hell after death. As we have pointed out, such "places" are purely symbolic—or even imaginary—and do not correspond to any cosmic reality. Having traveled toward the Beyond, our soul personality gradually rises in the spiritual world toward its new abode. There it finds once more other souls, some of whom it has known well, and once again becomes conscious of

those salient experiences of the incarnation it has just lived on the mundane plane. The soul personality then meditates on any errors committed and the proper compensation for them in its future incarnation. In other words, while on the cosmic plane it prepares for its next earthly existence.



Rosicrucian Order_____ AMORC _____Neophyte Section
ATRIUM 3 Number 8

Although our intent is not to convince you of the validity of the law of reincarnation, we will devote the next monograph to texts written on that subject by various authors of various eras. You will thus find that this great universal law has always been evident to innumerable thinkers and that it consequently deserves your full attention.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,
YOUR CLASS MASTER

Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

In Western countries, relatively few people believe in the reincarnation of the soul personality. However, many persons, notably among Christians, believe in the resurrection of the physical body. That doctrine, as you know, states that at the end of time, when the Last Judgment is proclaimed, all those who have led a life consistent with goodness will be resurrected from among the dead and will live again till the end of time. As for the others, they will be damned for eternity.

It is not our intent to cast aspersions on the Christian faith, but such a doctrine seems to us incompatible not only with the spiritual laws inherent to Divine Justice, but also with those laws governing matter. How can anyone, in our scientific era, believe that a body reduced to dust for centuries may some day be reconstituted and receive anew the spark or breath of life?

The major drawback to this doctrine is that it attaches more importance to the body than to the soul itself. Quite obviously, only the immaterial part of a person can aspire to immortality, for all forms of matter are perishable and experience a total disintegration of their substance at one time or another. Consequently, this doctrine postulates that only our soul personality can and must know eternal bliss.

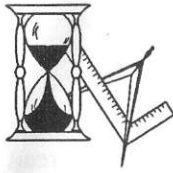
Moreover, supposing that the body which served us an entire lifetime can be resurrected, what would its value be to our inner evolution if it is reassumed with all its imperfections or deterioration due to disease, old age, etc? We sincerely feel that the prospect of being reborn in a new body, radiant with vitality, is more acceptable and responds more fully to the mission allotted to each of us: evolving soul consciousness from life to life, until our soul itself attains the perfection of the Universal Soul.

If you have not already done so, we suggest that you reflect upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the material body. Considering what you have learned in this series of monographs and taking into account your own convictions, consider how it raises many points which are opposed to the actions of both physical and metaphysical laws. Yet remember that you remain quite free to believe in this doctrine and to make it the basis of your spiritual quest. Our goal is to offer you a theme of reflection which fits in with this stage of your Rosicrucian studies.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ All visible and invisible Creation owes its existence to the law of evolution, in that this cosmic law justifies the existence of the universe and of humanity.
- ¶ The state of perfection corresponds to a final fusion between our own soul consciousness and Cosmic Consciousness. When human beings achieve this fusion, their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual behavior is then totally compatible with divine laws and fully reflects the greatness, beauty, and wisdom of Universal Intelligence.
- ¶ Such individuals as Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed were examples of the state of perfection which every person is to attain at the term of his or her earthly evolution. Their entire being focused itself entirely on goodness and they used all their will to serve the God of their Heart and Realization.
- ¶ Rosicrucians consider that one cannot explain the evolution of soul consciousness without calling upon the doctrine of reincarnation, for it constitutes the sole and unique law which makes possible an understanding of how we can hope to attain perfection some day.
- ¶ Just because self has no means of realization after transition does not mean that it is lost. The life force that makes up the essence of what is characteristically *you* will always seek to find expression in new but related life forms.
- ¶ A chief stumbling block to the understanding of reincarnation is the idea that we think in terms of being someone else. *But we are always ourselves.* We are never anyone else.
- ¶ Having been released from the body at transition, the soul personality attunes with the spiritual plane and there prepares for its next incarnation. Our Order's teachings state that after a period of time, soul consciousness reincarnates in a new physical body, thus resuming an earthly life which, like preceding ones, contributes to our coming into Cosmic Perfection.



Third Atrium No. 9



CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion

As this monograph is entirely devoted to texts dealing with reincarnation, we propose that you read this excerpt from a work by Max Guilmot. As emphasized by the author, children often behave in a way which, in itself, confirms the validity of reincarnation.

Reincarnation arouses distrust. One often hears: "If my consciousness had experienced several previous lives, I would remember them. Would I really have forgotten everything?" The objection is weak. Does one remember an event experienced during the first months of life on earth? Does one remember the experiences of early childhood? Does one even remember the places and faces dating back to only yesterday? Everything is erased, previous lives as well as the present life. Maintaining a constantly alive past within the consciousness would be, for the latter's progress, too burdensome a shackle. "Then, at least," one hears again, "let proofs of reincarnation be given to me!" That demand is unseemly, for a proof can only convince objective intelligence and not consciousness. Will one prove that a symphony is beautiful? In the psychic realm there is no proof, there is only evidence compelling the mind and the whole unfolding of which is equivalent, in the final analysis, to a demonstration.

Puzzling indications are scattered throughout the lives of very young children. Some of them are hardly old enough to speak, yet they use unusual words never heard anywhere. Where did that vocabulary come from? But then it will soon be erased by the words imposed by adults who pay little attention to the unusual talk of children. Some children tell a story—which is regarded as a fabrication—beginning with: "When I was grown-up . . ." This is followed by an incident from a previous life. Such a story is always charged with intense emotion for it must be deeply engraved in memory so as to filter from one lifetime to another.

A boy, barely old enough to talk, once affirmed that he had had a previous life and mentioned the persons he had known then. More particularly, he used to talk about an accident which had occurred at that time to a man crushed by a truck. His legs had been crushed and he died

shortly thereafter. Also, the child claimed that he belonged to a family other than his own which lived in a village located thirty kilometers from his current residence. An inquiry was begun and proof was obtained that there had been a man who had indeed been crushed by a truck twenty years earlier in the village in question. He had undergone surgery but had died after the operation.

Such memories from a previous life become quickly blurred forever, for both the family and schoolteachers make it their business to impose adult concepts upon children. What can be said also of the amazing drawings done by children who had no art background at all? The lines are bold, the outlines neat, the shading in the right place. Will we again speak of innate aptitudes? Instead of having them immediately upon birth—and by means of what miracle?—did not the child acquire them long before birth through psychic continuity between two lives? But surprise yields to astonishment when a child, having barely reached school age, masterfully directs a full orchestra. Where does this assurance which cannot be justified by rudimentary musical knowledge come from?

—MAX GUILMOT, 1921-
Toward the Beyond

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In accordance with what you were told in the previous monograph, we propose that you now meditate on texts referring to the doctrine of reincarnation. As you will find, these texts were drawn from considerably divergent sources. Some are from sacred writings which serve as the basis for extant religions. Others were written by individuals who worked in such diverse realms as politics, poetry, science, etc. Such a varied selection will enable you to understand that reincarnation is also a universal doctrine which, from most remote times, has been acknowledged by many nations and individuals. We wish to stress once again that you remain quite free not to accept this doctrine if it seems incompatible with your personal philosophy.

* * *

Homage to thee Osiris, O Governor of those who are in Amenti [heaven], who maketh mortals to be born again, who renewest thy youth.

Nebensi, the lord of reverence, saith: "I am Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, [and I have] the power to be born a second time; [I am] the divine hidden Soul who createth the gods"

[Osiris in his character as a great king among men asks:]

How long . . . have I to live? [Answer:] It is decreed that thou shalt live for millions of millions of years. [Osiris:] May it be granted unto me that I pass on unto the holy princes, for indeed, I am doing away with all the wrong which I did, from the time when this earth came into being.

—*Book of the Dead*, c. 2000 B.C.

"Wherefore, Arjuna, has this dejection in matters of difficulty come upon thee, so unworthy of the honourable, and leading neither to heaven nor to glory? Do not give way to weakness, O King! That does not become thee! But cast off this mean effeminacy of heart, and arise, O tormentor of thy foes! . . .



"Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom! The wise grieve not for dead or living. But never at any period did I, or thou, or

these kings of men, not exist, nor shall any of us at any time henceforward cease to exist. As the soul in this body undergoes the changes of childhood, prime, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter; a sensible man is not troubled about that. But the contact of the elements, O son of Kunti! which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which come and go, and are temporary, these do thou endure, O Bharata! For that man whom, being the same in pain and pleasure, and ever constant, these elements do not afflict, O best of men! is fitted for immortality”

—*The Bhagavad-Gita*, c. 1500 B.C.

From one Soul of the Universe are all Souls derived Of these Souls there are many changes, some into a more fortunate estate, and some quite contrary. And they which are of creeping things are changed into those of watery things, and those of things living in the water to those of things living on the land; and airy ones into men. Human souls that lay hold of immortality are changed into holy powers. And so they go on into the sphere of the Gods And this is the most perfect glory of the soul.

Not all human souls but only the pious ones are divine. Once separated from the body, and after the struggle to acquire piety, which consists in knowing God and injuring none, such a soul becomes all intelligence. The impious soul, however, punishes itself by seeking a human body to enter into, for no other body can receive a human soul; it cannot enter the body of an animal devoid of reason. Divine law preserves the human soul from such infamy.

—Hermes Trismegistus, c. 1250 B.C.
The Key (Corpus Hermeticum)

Souls whose Inner Light continues dim,
Who have not yet beheld the Light of Truth,
Unto this Home of Falsehood shall return,
Surrounded by false Leaders, Egos false,
By those who think and speak and act untrue.

—*Gatha Spenta-Mainyu (Yasna 49.11)*, c. 1000 B.C.



Most souls being at present in a state of transmigrations, God requites a man now for what his soul merited in a bypast time in another body, by having broken some of the 613 precepts Thus we have the rule:—No one is perfect unless he has thoroughly observed all the 613 precepts. If this be so, who is he and where is he that has observed all the 613 precepts? For even the lord of the prophets, Moses our Rabbi—peace be on him!—had not observed them all He who neglects to observe any of the 613 precepts, such as were possible for him to observe, is doomed to undergo transmigration (once or more than once) till he has actually observed all he had neglected to do in a former state of being.

—*The Talmud, Kitzur Sh'lu*, c. 4th century B.C.

Socrates: What do you say of him, Meno? Were not all these answers given out of his own head?

Meno: Yes, they were all his own.

Socrates: And yet, as we were just now saying, he did not know?

Meno: True.

Socrates: But still he had in him those notions of his—had he not?

Meno: Yes.

Socrates: And this knowledge which he now has must he not either have acquired or always possessed?

Meno: Yes.

Socrates: But if he always possessed this knowledge he would always have known; or if he has acquired the knowledge he could not have acquired it in this life, unless he has been taught geometry; for he may be made to do the same with all geometry and every other branch of knowledge. Now, has any one ever taught him all this? You must know about him, if, as you say, he was born and bred in your house.



Meno: And I am certain that no one ever did teach him.
Socrates: And yet he had the knowledge?
Meno: The fact, Socrates, is undeniable.
Socrates: But if he did not acquire the knowledge in this life, then he must have had and learned it at some other time?
Meno: Clearly he must.
Socrates: Which must have been the time when he was not a man?
Meno: Yes.
Socrates: And if there have been always true thoughts in him, both at the time when he was and was not a man, which only need to be awakened into knowledge by putting questions to him, his soul must have always possessed this knowledge, for he always either was or was not a man?
Meno: Obviously.
Socrates: And if the truth of all things always existed in the soul, then the soul is immortal. Wherefore be of good cheer, and try to recollect what you do not know, or rather what you do not remember.

—Plato, 427(?)–347 B.C.
Meno

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.



Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

—*The New Testament, Matthew 17:9-13*

They [the Essenes] condemn the miseries of life, and are above pain, by the generosity of their mind. And as for death . . . our war with the Romans gave abundant evidence what great souls they had in their trials . . . They smiled in their very pains and laughed to scorn those who inflicted torments upon them, and resigned up their souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again. For their doctrine is this, that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that the souls are immortal, and continue for ever: and that they come out of the most subtile air, and are united to their bodies as to prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement; but that when they are set free from the bonds of flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward . . . These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes about the soul, which lay an unavoidable bait for such as have once had a taste of their philosophy.

—*Flavius Josephus, A.D. 37-100*
The Jewish War, Book 2

“And what view do you take of the soul?” [asked Apollonius of Tyana]. “That which Pythagoras imparted to you, and which we imparted to the Egyptians” [replied Iarchus, a wise man of Kashmir]. “Would you then say,” said Apollonius, “that, as Pythagoras declared himself to be Euphorbus, so you yourself, before you entered your present body, were one of the Trojans or Achaeans or someone else?” And the Indian replied, “Those Achaean sailors were the ruin of Troy, and your talking so much about it is the ruin of you Greeks. For you imagine that the campaigners against Troy were the only heroes that ever were, and you forget other heroes both more numerous and more divine, whom your own country and that of the Egyptians and that of the Indians have produced . . .”



—*Philostratus, A.D. 170-245*

The following passage is a convincing proof that [Origen] holds the transmigration of souls and annihilation of bodies. "If it can be shown that an incorporeal and reasonable being has life in itself independently of the body and that it is worse off in the body than out of it; then beyond a doubt bodies are only of secondary importance and arise from time to time to meet the varying conditions of reasonable creatures. Those who require bodies are clothed with them, and contrariwise, when fallen souls have lifted themselves up to better things, their bodies are once more annihilated. They are thus ever vanishing and ever reappearing."

—St. Jerome, c. A.D. 410
"Epistle to Avitus"

[Iamblichus] declares that there is a form of soul appropriate to each form of living creature, and that these forms differ from one another. He accordingly wrote a monograph in which he argued that there is no transmigration of souls from men into irrational beasts, nor from beasts into men, but only from one beast into another, and from one human being into another. And it seems to me that, for this reason, Iamblichus, more than all the others, both hit upon Plato's meaning and lighted on the truth itself. This stands to be established by many and different proofs . . .

—Nemesius, 4th century A.D.
De Natura Hominis

As the rains turn the dry earth into green thereby yielding fruits, similarly God brings the dead into life so that thou mayest learn.

And he sent down rains from above in proper quantity and He brings back to life the dead earth, similarly ye shall be reborn.

[Those who doubt immortality] are dead and they do not know when they will be born again. Your God is peerless and those who have no faith in the ultimate have *perverse* hearts and they want to pose as great men.

—The Koran, c. A.D. 650



The position adopted by the successive luminaries who followed the Prophet, was to affirm the belief in reincarnation but not to propagate it as a teaching for the masses. This attitude was due to psychological reasons. The emphasis in Islamic teachings has throughout been on the purity of action A subject like reincarnation demands a subtle mental attitude. It entails understanding of the higher planes of consciousness, the laws of cause and effect and the working of the laws of evolution. The monarchs had no interest in such subjects. Like so many other teachings, reincarnation was confined to the study and attention of the outer and inner students of Sufism [However] there is no danger for a Muslim being called a heretic if he believes and expresses himself in favour of reincarnation.

—Murtuza Husain Abdi,
“Reincarnation—Islamic Conceptions”

There have been thousands of changes in form and each has always been better than the previous. Look always to the form in the present; for, if you think of the forms in the past, you will separate yourself from your true Self. These are all states of the permanent which you have seen by dying. Why then do you turn your face from death? As the second stage has always been better than the first, then die happily and look forward to taking up a new and better form. Remember, and haste not. You must die before you improve. Like the sun, only when you set in the West can you rise again with brilliance in the East.

—Jalalu'l-din Rumi, 1207-1273
Mathnawi



Belief in rebirth should engender a universal love [because] all living beings and creatures, in the course of their numberless lives and our own, have been our beloved parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends. And the virtues our creed encourages are those which arise from this universal love—tolerance, forbearance, charity, kindness, compassion If belief in afterlife is accepted, religious practice becomes

a necessity, which nothing else can supplant, in the preparation for one's future incarnation By whatever name religion may be known, its understanding and practice are the essence of a peaceful mind and therefore of a peaceful world. If there is no peace in one's mind, there can be no peace in one's approach to others, and thus no peaceful relations between individuals or between nations

—The 14th Dalai Lama, c. 1500

The Body of B. Franklin,
Printer,
Like the Cover of an Old Book
Its Contents Torn Out
And
Stripped of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies Here
Food for Worms,
But the Work shall not be Lost,
For it Will as He Believed
Appear Once More
In a New and more Elegant Edition
Revised and Corrected
By the Author.

—Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790

Well, I feel that soon I shall have done with my earthly life. Now, since I am convinced that nothing existing in nature can be annihilated, so I know for a certainty that the more noble part of me will not cease to live. Though I may not be a king in my future life, so much the better: I shall nevertheless live an active life and, on top of it, earn less ingratitude.

—Frederick the Great, 1712-1786



Change while it imports dissolution, involves at the same time the rise of a *new* life—that while death is the issue of life, life is also the issue of death. This is a grand conception; one which the Oriental thinkers attained, and which is perhaps the highest in their metaphysics. In the idea of *Metempsychosis* we find it evolved in its relation to individual existence; but a myth more generally known, is that of the *Phoenix* as a type of the Life of *Nature*; eternally preparing for itself its funeral pile, and consuming itself upon it; but so that from its ashes is produced the new, renovated, fresh life Spirit—consuming the envelope of its existence—does not merely pass into another envelope, nor rise rejuvenescent from the ashes of its previous form; it comes forth exalted, glorified, a purer spirit. It certainly makes war upon itself—consumes its own existence; but in this very destruction it works up that existence into a new form, and each successive phase becomes in its turn a material, working on which exalts itself to a new grade

—G.W.F. Hegel, 1770-1831
The Philosophy of History

It is the secret of this world that all things subsist and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again Nothing is dead; men feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries, and there they stand looking out of the window, sound and well, in some new strange disguise. Jesus is not dead; he is very well alive: nor John, nor Paul, nor Mahomet, nor Aristotle; at times we believe we have seen them all, and could easily tell the names under which they go.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803-1882
“Nominalist and Realist”



All the Egyptian converts to Christianity . . . believed in [reincarnation], as shown by the writings of several. In the still existing symbols, the human-headed bird flying towards

a mummy, a body, or “the soul uniting itself with its *sahou*” (glorified body of the Ego . . .) proves this belief. “The song of the Resurrection” chanted by Isis to recall her dead husband [Osiris] to life, might be translated “Song of Rebirth,” as Osiris is [in this case] collective Humanity The funeral prayer of the priest over the deceased [was:] “Oh! Osiris (here follows the name of the Osirified mummy, or the departed), rise again in holy earth (matter), august mummy in the coffin, under thy corporeal substances.” . . . “Resurrection” with the Egyptians never meant the resurrection of the mutilated mummy, but of the *Soul* that informed it, the Ego in a new body.

—H.P. Blavatsky, 1831-1891
Theosophical Glossary

Brief were my days among you, and
briefer still the words I have spoken.
But should my voice fade in your ears,
and my love vanish in your memory, then
I will come again,
And with a richer heart and lips more
yielding to spirit will I speak.
Yea, I shall return with the tide,
And though death may hide me, and
the greater silence enfold me, yet again
will I seek your understanding

Forget not that I shall come back to you.
A little while, and my longing shall
gather dust and foam for another body.
A little while, a moment of rest upon
the wind, and another woman shall bear
me.

—Kahlil Gibran, 1883-1931
The Prophet



If for mastering the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? For if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent.

Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me. It is by offering that cup that I expect to draw them close to me. I cannot think of permanent enmity between man and man, and believing as I do in the theory of rebirth, I live in the hope that if not in this birth, in some other birth I shall be able to hug all humanity in friendly embrace.

—Mohandas K. Gandhi, 1869-1948

* * *

These texts have been chosen primarily because they deal with the subject of reincarnation. However, we must also recognize that these beautiful writings were composed by individuals who were especially inspired and that such inspiration is in itself proof of the truth emanating from them. You, too, will undoubtedly find that each of these texts will act as an inexhaustible source of meditation for you in the future.

In our next monograph we will continue our study of the human soul and of its evolution, such as mystics, and more particularly Rosicrucians, have conceived it for centuries.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

As a practical application of this monograph we propose that you write a composition presenting your understanding of reincarnation and the convictions you have about this doctrine. Depending upon your preferences, the composition may be in prose or poetic form. Its length matters little, as the quality, beauty, and depth of a written work is not simply measured by its number of words. Also, do not feel obligated to write this piece all at once. You may want to proceed in stages and thus allow yourself to be guided by the inspiration of the moment. Moreover, you should not try to make it an intellectual project, for your ideas must above all reflect the intelligence of the heart and translate the emotions that such a subject may arouse in you.

When you have completed your composition, file it in your study notebook. Later, when reading your composition over again, you will find that it will bring forth wonderful memories and in your mind you will return to the very day when you finished it.

Δ ∇ Δ

Summary of This Monograph

The texts presented in this monograph constitute in themselves a summary of the wisest words ever spoken or written concerning reincarnation. Accordingly, we leave you with the task of studying them again attentively and of making your own synthesis of the important points you wish to retain in connection with today's study.



Third Atrium No. 10

CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



Ralph Maxwell Lewis, former Imperator of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, wrote extensively on philosophical subjects such as karma. By reading the following excerpt from his writings, you will gain a greater appreciation of this all-important mystical doctrine.

Rosicrucian mysticism also employs the doctrine of karma, but its application is considerably unlike that of its Oriental predecessors. To the Rosicrucian, karma is commensurate with the law of causality. For every effect, there must be both an active and a passive cause. Every act, mental or physical, brings about a result which has a value related to the cause itself. Thus, if one sets into motion a series of creative, morally good acts, they will ultimately redound to the benefit of the individual.

The law of causality, Rosicrucians teach, in mysticism as in science, permits no deviation. The effects must follow. From mistakes pain may often be experienced. The pain, however, which may be associated with the result of the act is not an intentional result. It is inevitable. It follows from the necessity of the cause, but it is not intended as a punishment. It is not a matter of retribution. From such pains, or they may be pleasures, man learns the consequences of his causative acts. He knows what to expect when he puts them into effect. Many persons may object to moral codes. They may find the codes not consistent with reason. They may find them illogical, but man cannot argue with or refute the effects of his own acts, which he experiences. He knows they are inevitable, and he must adjust his life to them. Karma thus provides each individual with an intimate experience with Divine Cosmic laws. It is an experience which he must have in his own consciousness. It is not related to him by others. Karma thus removes blind faith, doubts and skepticism, and provides knowledge as to right living instead.

There is no excuse for wrong conduct, even ignorance. There are major and minor karmic consequences which we create by our acts. Each day, in fact, we create almost innumerable minor karmic consequences. For example, we may eat something, and because we do, as an effect, we may

suffer indigestion. We may use our eyes too much and thereby strain the muscles, and we experience an annoying headache. Such suffering is not a punishment inflicted by nature. It is not a retribution but the natural sequence of the law of causality. It is equivalent to adding a number of digits, by which process we arrive at a sum and which sum proceeds from the mathematical necessity of the digits themselves, not because there is any mind insisting on or compelling or providing that sum.

Major karmic effects exist in the violation of Cosmic laws and Divine principles. Such a violation would be an intentional injury to others for selfish ends. It is not always necessary that the individual must bang his head, figuratively speaking, against a stone wall in order to learn from such action that it is wrong and painful. We do not always have to experience an effect to know what follows from the cause. We have been given a spiritual barometer, which is the moral sense we possess, or conscience. This barometer informs us whenever our acts, or contemplated acts, are contrary to Cosmic laws and principles. In effect, this may be experienced as a reluctance to continue certain acts or to proceed along the lines of action which we have in mind. If, however, we proceed in opposition to the promptings of this barometer of conscience, we then of course experience the effect, which may be an unpleasant one and a bitter lesson to learn.

—RALPH MAXWELL LEWIS, 1904-1987

The Sanctuary of Self

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In previous monographs we were introduced to the law of reincarnation such as it has been expounded for centuries in the Order's teachings. Naturally, we will have the opportunity to return in more detail to the study of this doctrine, but what has been discussed already constitutes a sufficiently solid basis for understanding the principles on which the evolution of the soul rests. Our present goal is to examine the evolution of consciousness from lifetime to lifetime—in other words, how our soul consciousness progresses toward perfection in the course of its earthly incarnations. Therefore, we will begin the study of another great mystical law: karma.

KARMA: You have probably already heard about karma. However, before discussing the Rosicrucian conception of this cosmic law, let us quickly review what Oriental philosophy teaches us about this law.

The word *karma* is from the Sanskrit noun *karman*, which in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy refers to the whole ethical consequence of a person's acts as deciding his or her lot in the future existence—hence, loosely, destiny or fate. In accordance with Theosophical teachings, karma refers, physically, to action; and metaphysically to the law of retribution, the law of cause and effect or ethical causation. Karma is also known as the law of compensation in the West.

There is no right and wrong interpretations of this cosmic law. A Rosicrucian student's understanding is subject to change with introspection and insight. Although karma in its original concept refers to the moral effect of an act committed for the attainment of something which gratifies a personal desire, karma neither punishes nor rewards.

Buddhism teaches that karma is that moral kernel of any being which alone survives death and is the seed of the life to come. Rosicrucian mystics also view karma as the balancing of the scales of action through the law of attraction. In other words, the adage "live by the sword, die by the sword"

indicates that a swordsman is attracted to the use of swords in another life, but then, in conformance with the law of averages, he is bound to be injured sooner or later and gain a personal understanding of cause and effect.



As moral or ethical causation, karma may be understood as an “As ye sow, so shall ye reap” compensatory action which can be guided by one’s underlying motives as in the Hermetic statement: “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Rosicrucian students know that psychic energy follows thought. Our thoughts precipitate reactions which lead to an effect. And yet karma may be understood at greater depths; that is, through an evolving soul consciousness we may rephrase the Golden Rule: rather than having others do unto us as *we* would have them do, we try to do unto others as *they* would have us do. Perhaps a simplistic definition of this most profound of cosmic principles may lie in our individual attempts to balance our actions in accordance with the scale of life directed by the still voice of conscience.

The basic question we must consider now is the following: What is the purpose of karma? From a philosophical and mystical standpoint, its purpose is to contribute to the evolution of our soul personality, or more exactly, to the consciousness which is its own. This occurs when we come to understand how our behavior has fallen short of the Pythagorean ideal called *harmonia*. For example, when our actions become harmful to ourselves, whether involuntarily or through ignorance, our life is as a consequence thrown out of balance, causing grief, suffering, and injustice for all concerned. Above all, the Law of Karma is just. From a cosmic standpoint there is no injustice, in that everyone experiences a destiny consistent with the harmony or harm he or she may have initiated, whether involuntarily or otherwise.

KARMIC LAW: Karma is a law whose action influences our lives. On the other hand, we may not always understand the source of certain hardships we face in this particular lifetime. Yet, from the moment we admit that these hardships most probably have a karmic cause and when we do everything in our power to overcome them, they lighten of their own accord and eventually disappear from our life.

At this point we must stress a matter of great importance in Rosicrucian philosophy. Although each person must ultimately “reap what he or she sows,” that definitely does not mean that all of one’s hardships in life are self-inflicted through ignorance or evil intent. Some of life’s obstacles arise because it is impossible to live on the earthly plane without having problems to overcome or without enduring any number of



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material imperfections in our incarnation. Therefore, we must not attribute all of our misfortunes or those of others to the unfolding of negative karma. Rather than speculating on ultimate causes of painful situations we sometimes experience, it is better to face them with courage and act now so as to overcome them. By proceeding thus, we are certain to set into motion positive forces which will in time manifest themselves correspondingly in our life.

As you can see, by knowing that our whole life is consistent with the actions of karma we are given an advantage over those who ignore it. This fact has led the Masters to say that "it is from ignorance and from ignorance alone that man must free himself." From the moment we have the conviction that the only way of being truly happy is to evolve toward perfection by acting as positively as possible in our current life, we create the conditions of our happiness and prepare a future consistent with our fondest hopes. Therefore, it is important to work on the self to overcome our faults and place our abilities in the service of others. Such work enables us to create a greater degree of harmony between our outer and inner selves. Finally, there comes a day in one of our incarnations when this harmony is so perfect that we experience a degree of Cosmic Consciousness—in other words, an experience taking the form of an illumination of our own consciousness. From that moment, we may consider that we are as close to the state of perfection as a human being may manifest it on this earth plane.

We hope that these general considerations of karmic law have enabled you to understand more fully the process followed by the human soul personality in its evolution. During your next sanctum period we will continue this discussion by examining those links existing between reincarnation, karma, and free will.

With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,
YOUR CLASS MASTER



Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant

As is the case for the doctrine of reincarnation, relatively few persons in the Western world admit karma's validity. This is generally the case because this principle places people face to face with their responsibilities and makes them the author of most of the hardships they encounter in daily life. It takes a certain courage and moral integrity to recognize that we are often the cause of our own misfortunes. It is much easier to place the source of our mishaps with other individuals, society, or bad luck.

However, whether we wish to admit it or not, we are to a large extent the master of our own destiny and responsible for most painful incidents in our existence. As long as we do not recognize this truth, we cannot overcome the trials facing us. By ignoring the fact that their major cause is within us, we seek in vain to overcome them by looking outside ourselves.

In the coming days you may wish to analyze some significant experiences in your life and try to determine what role you may have played in bringing them about. As you proceed with this analysis, strive to be as just as possible. In other words, avoid being too indulgent with yourself and finding excuses for yourself. On the other hand, do not be too severe either for, as explained in this monograph, the problems we encounter are not always of karmic origin, nor are they automatically the consequence of our past behavior. Such an examination will be extremely useful, as it will force you to ponder the past months or even years of your life, possibly making you aware of certain lessons that will contribute to a happier future for you.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ Karma corresponds to the law of cause and effect which occurs constantly in our daily life. According to this law, any thought, word, or action on our part generates an equivalent reaction.
- ¶ Although we sustain the consequences of our errors, we also benefit from the good actions we have performed in the past. It is important to understand, therefore, that karmic benefits also occur.
- ¶ Every time we are the cause of a painful situation for someone else, we endure hardships ourselves. Such situations should prompt us to reflect on the nature of our behavior so that we can understand the cause bringing about these hardships and the harm we have caused the other person. We thereby learn valuable lessons in life.
- ¶ From a cosmic standpoint there is no injustice, in that everyone experiences a destiny consistent with the harmony or harm he or she may have initiated.
- ¶ Karma is a law whose action influences our lives although we may not always understand the source of certain hardships we face in this particular lifetime.
- ¶ We must understand that the hardships we experience are not all of karmic origin. Therefore, we must not attribute all our misfortunes or those of others to the unfolding of negative karma.
- ¶ When we act to the best of our abilities to overcome the problems facing us, we progressively transform our karmic debt or hardship into a karmic benefit. Then, in this life or another, we will finally know the happiness to which we aspire.



Third Atrium No. 11

CONCURRENCE

This Week's Consideration of a Famous Opinion



Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the great 18th century mystic, wrote extensively about the reasons for the "Fall of Man" and he clearly defined the path that people must follow to regain the state of perfection which was theirs before that "Fall." According to Saint-Martin, each individual is constantly faced with two paths: that of Error and that of Truth. In applying his free will positively, a person can follow the latter and merge into the "Good Principle." Although the following quote is relatively difficult to grasp in a single reading, we think that it agrees perfectly with today's study.

And, in fact, if he is entirely separated from the Light, how will he, alone, light the torch that must serve him as a guide? How, with his own faculties, will he be able to attain a knowledge which will remove his doubts? These glimmers and appearances of reality which he believes he is discovering in the delusions of his imagination, do they not vanish under the most simple examination? And having brought forth phantoms without life and without substance, does he not feel compelled to replace them by a new state, which soon thereafter follows the same course, and leaves him involved in the most agonizing uncertainties?

Fortunate, nevertheless, if his weakness were the only cause of his mistakes! His plight would then be far less deplorable for, unable by nature to find serenity except in truth, the more painful the trials would be and the more they should serve to bring him back to the only end suitable for him.

But his errors still have their source in his reckless will; one perceives that, far from employing to his advantage the small fund of strength remaining to him, he almost always directs it against the Law of his Being. One perceives, I repeat, that being retarded by that obscurity surrounding him, it is by his own hand that he places the blindfold upon his eyes. Then, not being able to catch the least glimmer, despair and fear overcome him, and he throws himself into dangerous paths which remove him forever from his true course.

It is, therefore, by this mixture of weaknesses and imprudence that the ignorance of man perpetuates itself. Such is the source of his continual inconsistencies, so that, wasting his days in useless and vain efforts, one should be little surprised that his work does not produce any fruit or only leaves behind only bitterness.

. . .

Truly, if the principle of good is essentially just and powerful, our troubles are an evident proof of our wrongdoings, and consequently, of our liberty: so that, when we see man subjected to the action of evil, we can assert that he has freely exposed himself to it and could have defended himself against its influence and remained separate from it; so let us not look for any other cause for his misfortunes than that of having voluntarily deviated from the principle of good with which he would have continually enjoyed peace and happiness . . .

But, he suffers only because he strayed from the principle of good; for it is only from the instant that they are separated from this principle of good that Beings become unhappy. The sufferings of the principle of evil can only be a punishment because justice, being universal, must act upon it as it acts upon man; but, if he experiences punishment he has then freely deviated from the law that was to have perpetuated its happiness; it is therefore voluntarily that he became evil. This is what prompts us to say, that if the Author of evil had made a legitimate use of his liberty, he would never have separated himself from the principle of good, and evil would yet have to be born; by the same reasoning, if today he could employ his will to his advantage and direct it toward the principle of good, he would cease to be evil, and evil would no longer exist.

—LOUIS CLAUDE DE SAINT-MARTIN, 1743-1803
Of Errors and Truth

Dear Fratres and Sorores,

In previous lessons we explained that our goal is to evolve toward perfection and that this process requires innumerable reincarnations on earth. We also stated that we can become aware of our past errors and perfect our conscious evolution from life to life thanks to the accomplishment of karmic law.

These two doctrines of reincarnation and karma cannot be easily dissociated. We each live presently on the earth plane because we have not yet attained perfection and because many lessons still need to be learned before we experience the state of consciousness which will make us a Master Adept. Yet the day will come when we will complete an incarnation in which we no longer have any negative karma to compensate. This incarnation will then be the last one for us, for we will have attained the state of the Rose-Cross and will no longer be obliged to live in the material world.

FREE WILL: Having made these preliminary observations, let us now pursue our current study by considering the problem of free will, for it is directly linked to karma. If you participated fully in the exercise given in last week's Practical Application—the purpose of which was to analyze some of the hardships which you have experienced—you probably found that many difficulties had their source in poor choices you made. Such a finding is both logical and normal, for most major problems we face during our lifetime are consequences of a negative application of our free will. Starting from this principle we will reach the conclusion that the best way to live happily is to use our freedom of thought, speech, and action in a positive and constructive manner.

At first glance it may seem easy to use our free will properly and thus contribute to our own happiness. However, in observing life all around us, we can see that it is often difficult to always act in accordance with cosmic laws. The question we may ask ourselves, therefore, is this: Why do we find ourselves confronted by such problems? This question naturally admits several replies, in that the causes of hardships and problems we encounter are many.



We must first recognize that we are incarnate beings and, consequently, subject to error, hence the Latin

expression: *Errare humanum est* ("To Err is human"). We are frequently mistaken in our judgments and make decisions which ultimately lead to unfortunate choices. We find three major reasons for this state of affairs. In the first place, our mental processes are limited and not admitting this keeps us from questioning our reasoning faculties. No human being can claim to be infallible in his or her reasoning, memory, abstraction, discernment, etc. In the second place, most individuals have not developed their intuition adequately or paid it sufficient attention. However, as was mentioned in Postulant Section, our intuition constitutes the best guide in avoiding many errors. Finally, in the third place, our knowledge is also quite limited when compared to what we should know when dealing with various states of affairs. To give more accuracy and value to our judgments and choices we must learn to question our reasoning, develop our intuition as much as possible, and widen our field of knowledge, notably where universal and natural laws are concerned. One of the major goals of AMORC's teachings is to help the student attain this triple objective.

Independently of the three points we have just considered, the difficulty in applying our free will positively also comes about because each individual, according to race, culture, political ideas, religious beliefs, and degree of evolution, has a different comprehension of good and evil. In the area of religion, for instance, Christians may consider the eating of meat on Holy Friday to be blasphemous, whereas the faithful of other religions consider the matter to be irrelevant. On the other hand, Jews often have a special veneration for Saturday, the day of the Sabbath, which they devote to prayer and meditation. To their understanding, any type of profane activity on this day is a blow aimed at the Divinity.

Moslems observe a month of fasting during Ramadan, an obligation which is part of no other religious tradition. They are convinced that if, during that period, they were to eat or drink between sunrise and sunset, they would experience misfortune and would incur punishment from God. For Hindus, the mistreatment of a cow is a sacrilege, for they are convinced that this animal is an incarnation of some of Vishnu's attributes. Buddhists, on their part, consider that complaining about one's condition, even it only for an instant, is an offense and insult to the Supreme Good.



GOOD AND EVIL: It is not only in the field of religion that the concept of good and evil assumes an arbitrary character. In social life we find innumerable examples proving that there exists a considerable divergence of opinion regarding many matters. Thus, some people consider it quite immoral to try to become rich, to borrow or to bet money, to gamble, etc., whereas others consider such acts to be a legitimate part of existence. In a different area, one often hears some people asserting that hunting and fishing should be prohibited, giving as their reason that in modern society people no longer need to resort to such practices in meeting their nutritional needs. Others contend on the contrary that such activities contribute to the equilibrium of nature and that we have every right to intervene in that regard.

When considering the great problems of society, such as capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, vivisection, etc., disagreements become even more marked, for they are linked directly to the moral sense each person gives to what he or she considers to be good or bad. The purpose of these monographs, of course, is not to pass judgment on the highly controversial points just raised, for that would force the Order to become involved in debates on subjects which are not relevant to the study and practice of mysticism. Rather, our present aim is to indicate that we humans tend to be divided when it comes to defining what is good and what is not.

We must recognize, however, that there are general norms which make it possible to establish distinctions between fundamentally destructive behavior and fundamentally constructive behavior. Moreover, when you refer to the moral codes of most major religions, you find that many of them take the form of virtually identical commandments. The best known and most widely quoted ones include the prohibition against killing, theft, and lying. No one can deny that these three interdictions are fully justified, for the mutual trust and respect which must prevail among people rests on them to a large extent.



Certainly, in considering individual cases one can contend that a person may be forced to commit a crime, theft, or grave lie by necessity, but only a court of justice can recognize any extenuating circumstances which legitimize such acts. In general, however, we normally

consider such acts to be antisocial and therefore harmful. On the other hand, some forms of behavior, by virtue of their very nature, are without any doubt considered to be good. Thus, being tolerant, generous, helpful, altruistic, etc., denote a definite benevolence and, consequently, a certain degree of inner evolution. No sensible individual can claim otherwise.

From a mystical standpoint, good may be defined as the entirety of thoughts, words, and actions which contribute directly or indirectly to the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of humanity. Evil, on the contrary, embraces everything that jeopardizes this well-being. Therefore, a form of behavior can be evaluated as being good or bad only when considering its effect on others. From that standpoint, the notion of good and of evil, although it seems individual and relative, does indeed concern the human collectivity, for the way in which we apply it in our daily life necessarily affects our family, professional, and social environment. It means that everyone we encounter in a day's time acts as a mirror which reflects our outer behavior. As for our inner attitude, our own conscience is its judge as it ceaselessly strives to demonstrate in what way it is good or evil. If you acknowledge this, you will understand that the best way to apply your free will positively consists in acting for the good of others while remaining always in harmony with yourself.

One more point needs to be mentioned before closing today's study. As you have certainly noticed, many persons classify commonplace objects as being good or evil by ascribing a positive or negative nature to such things. For example, some consider television to be something quite useful, whereas for others it is something that is terribly annoying. In fact, the whole matter of whether something is good or bad is irrelevant because, in its capacity as an object, it is neither. Rather, we need to understand that the way in which we *use* this object makes it useful or harmful to our existence. In the case of a television, it can be an appreciable source of information and entertainment or it can turn the viewer into a slave who watches any program, no matter how poor in quality, that appears on the screen. Let us take another example. The primary purpose of a knife is to cut food and other items, although unfortunately it has been used to kill. Thus the fact of ascribing good or bad qualities to an object rests essentially on a poor comprehension of good and evil, for those two



notions concern mostly the way in which we apply our free will. Recognizing this fact forces us to admit that our responsibility is great with respect to all the choices offering themselves to us in our daily life.

Between now and your next sanctum period you should study this monograph once more and meditate on the mystical link existing between the application of free will, karma, and reincarnation. The diagram appearing in this monograph's Practical Application will help you in carrying out your meditations.

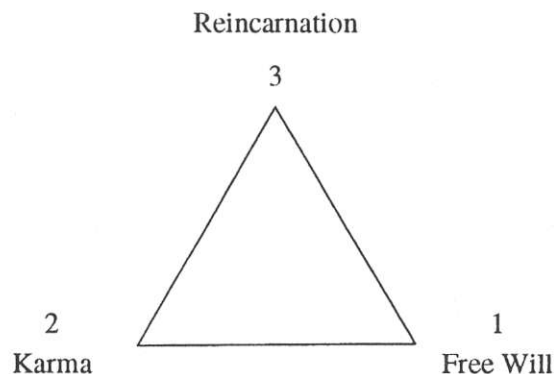
With all best wishes for Peace Profound,

Sincerely and fraternally,

YOUR CLASS MASTER

Practical Application

Whatsoever thou resolvest to do, do it quickly. Defer not till the evening what the morning may accomplish.—Unto Thee I Grant



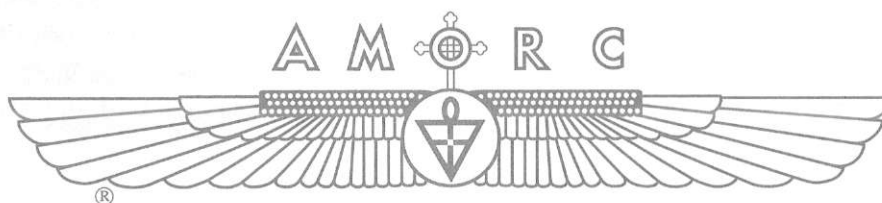
The purpose of this diagram is to demonstrate that each of our earthly lives is the outcome of a process of cause and effect which is consistent with the Law of the Triangle. As we explained in this monograph, reincarnation occurs because we have not yet reached perfection in our preceding life and because many more lessons remain to be learned before we experience the state of consciousness leading to Mastership. In accordance with the goal of conscious evolution, we must reincarnate until the application of our free will is totally consistent with cosmic laws and until we no longer have any karmic debt to compensate.

Summary of This Monograph

Below is a summary of the important principles of this monograph. It contains the essential statements which you should not forget. After you have carefully read the complete monograph, try to recall as many as you can of the important points you read. Then read this summary and see if you have forgotten any. Also refer to this summary during the ensuing week to refresh your memory.

- ¶ The doctrines of reincarnation and karma cannot be easily dissociated. We each live presently on the earth plane, because we have not yet attained perfection and because many lessons still need to be learned before we experience the state of consciousness which will make us a Master Adept.
- ¶ To give more accuracy and value to our judgments and choices we must learn to question our reasoning, develop our intuition as much as possible, and widen our field of knowledge, notably where natural and universal laws are concerned.
- ¶ Each individual, according to his or her race, culture, political ideas, religious beliefs, and degree of conscious evolution, has a different comprehension of good and evil.
- ¶ There are general norms which make it possible to establish distinctions between fundamentally destructive behavior and fundamentally constructive behavior. That is why many moral codes recur in the form of commandments which are practically identical in most major religions.
- ¶ From a mystical standpoint, good may be defined as the entirety of thoughts, words, and actions which contribute directly or indirectly to the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of humanity. Evil, on the contrary, embraces everything that jeopardizes this well-being.
- ¶ No object is good or evil in itself. Rather, it is the way in which we *use* an object which makes it useful or harmful to our existence. Recognizing this fact forces us to admit that our responsibility is great with respect to all the choices offering themselves to us in daily life.

*Consecrated to truth
and dedicated to every Rosicrucian*



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