

Arnold Keyserling

The Phenomenology of Reincarnation

Arnold Keyserling, Professor of Philosophy in Vienna, visits England regularly to run weekends and give lectures. His work ranges from a deep intellectually-oriented understanding of conventional Philosophy : the I Ching; Astrology, to the personal experience of Being, Becoming, Knowing. In this article he describes the experiment of going into the memory of another incarnation step by step so that any reader is able to do this, with the aid of a helper. He then puts forward the theoretical framework, physiological and metaphysical in which he accommodates the questions this experiment gives rise to.

The subject of reincarnation has been a matter of discussion for many centuries, and is today mainly a question of faith: there are those who believe in it, and those who refuse it either out of religious tradition like the Christians, or out of scientific convictions like many scientists.

In the last 10 years, a new line of research has created a new approach, which has yielded astonishing results: transpersonal psychology. Under this heading, we understand all those fields which up to now have been occult and esoteric, but have come into focus as their existence can no longer be doubted. This is a phenomenological research, which reserves judgement as to the final conclusions, but accepts the phenomena as they are. And from this point of view, there can be no doubt that reincarnation constitutes a content of the human mind, if approached by appropriate methods.

The first method was developed at the turn of the century by Colonel Rochas in France: he discovered that those persons who can be induced into the state of deep trance will be able to remember their former existence down to the last details. My father, Count Hermann Keyserling, together with Prof. Carl Happich of the university clinic in Darmstadt, performed this experiment on a Danish medium: he was led firstly backwards to his birth: You are 20 years old - 15 - 10 - 5 - 2. He describes the actual circumstances in great detail. Before birth: he assumed the position of a foetus. Before conception: he visualised himself in blue light. Last incarnation: he was a soldier in the 30-year war, speaking German with difficulty, because of a broken jaw. He was led back through two more incarnation, the earliest attained one of a woman, in Nurnberg in the 13th century. The experiment was repeated three times, with exactly the same result, and published (Das Okkulte, Graf Hermann Keyserling and Carl Happich, Darmstadt 1922).

However, not many people were able to attain deep trance, and furthermore they did not keep their memory in the waking state - furthermore, people lost interest in the 1940's and only in 1960 the research started again, the pioneers being Stanislas Grof and Swygard. Grof established in clinical research, using drugs as well as hypnosis and regression techniques, that it was possible to lead practically everybody back to his birth experience, to conception and even to witnessing former historical periods, where he leaves the question open whether this is real incarnation or genetic memory, that we carry in our chromosomes. Roberto Assagioli with his psychosynthesis established active imagination as a means to probe the unconscious and to achieve a higher state of integration, A. Maslow determined the natural

positive role of the peak experience or God-consciousness as being inherent to every human psyche, and Swygard in Miami discovered a non-hypnotic way of entering into the experience of former incarnations.

I heard for the first time of the Swygard method from an American who I met in England. He told me that he had seen the landscape in an experience in Boston, where a lady, without hypnosis, led him back, in what seemed to be an existence in the 17th century, as a woman, belonging to the "people of the road". Later in Athens I met a Lebanese-American who told me that he knew the method and could practice it, although the experiment had not succeeded with him. He offered to perform the experiment with me, and although sceptical in the beginning I went through the exercise, and it turned out exactly as he had said: I witnessed what seemed to be a former incarnation in Prussia in the 18th century, as a country gentleman, with an interest in natural science and philosophy. The image started rather dim just as with an effort of recollection of, say, the first day in school, but as the experiment went on, the image became clearer, just like a photo appearing in the solution, and afterwards the memory became quite definite. Especially interesting for me was the moment of death, sitting in an armchair, leaving the body without any negative emotion, looking for some time at the same from above, and then roaming as an energy field through the universe. At this moment I asked myself what I had missed mostly in that existence: I had only functional communication with people, not essential communion. Furthermore, philosophy was only a hobby. So I formulated the intention to firstly make philosophy the central point of my new existence, and secondly

Usually the person has no difficulty describing, sometimes even feeling an illness, weakness, or the moment of being killed.. Usually there is no pain and no negative emotion, but I have heard that in some cases painful experiences arise. It seems that it is better to pursue nevertheless the experience, because if the person accepts to leave the body, the trauma might be overcome.

Dethlevson, who worked mainly with hypnosis, reports the experience of a girl having an irrational fear of rats: having relived a former incarnation where she was bitten by rats in a dungeon, and then died, she overcame the trauma. According to his ideas, most traumatic situations come from former existences, and if the exact carmic situation is re-enacted, the person can find a way out, integrating so to say a new learning programme which helps him to regain hope.

26. You are leaving your body. Usually, one witnesses the same from above, feeling as a presence. Lingering on for some time, also accompanying the body to his grave, but after some time most people turn upwards.

The self-experience has many aspects: some people have only a presence which they can't describe, some have a geometric form, some experience enlargement to an immense size, than shrinking to a point, some have a quite definite shape like a cube or a ball or a cone; some see themselves like floating shawls or caps; often the "Landscape" seems like a surrealist painting. I personally experienced the after-death state much like the Beatles "Yellow Submarine", meeting for example a walking and living rubber glove. Everybody

feels extremely elated at that stage, an indescribable freedom. One sees other shapes, but usually is attracted to some light, sometimes the sun.

In front of this light, one asks oneself about the motivations, the Karma: what has been missing? Usually it is communion or love, sometimes also some real practical achievement. The light has compassion, is somehow like a person; the same experience is related by Moody from people having gone through clinical death, but having been recalled to life by medical help. Sometimes - in my experiences with protestant priests and orthodox Jews - one meets an Old Man, an archetype like Moses, who looks searchingly, and helps the person to realise his state of being.

I have conducted the experience with some 150 people and the phenomenology is extremely varied and rich. However, some common features emerge with everybody, and with those I will not try to construct a general scheme, an encompassing theory giving a provisory frame of reference.

After I had some experiences I became curious about the traditional views about heaven, earth, purgatory and the like. So I returned to Greece for another experience with the same Man, asking him to lead me after death beyond the sphere of the sun. In all my personal experiences, I ended up at the shores of the Baltic Sea, sometimes on the German side, sometimes on the Swedish side. So I decided this time to start in imagination from a roof in Greece. It did not help: very soon again I was in the North. But now after an existence in the 16th century, where I seem to have been a member of some esoteric sect belonging to a forest cult, I moved beyond the sun, and then I came to see some very strange people, of an indescribable beauty: they did not communicate through words but seemingly through love and music. Every movement they made was like a geometrical creation, and if I tried to approach them they just smiled without saying anything: and this smile had the same effect as the glance, the silent upedesha, of an Indian Guru! At this point, I asked myself: what about the traditional images of heaven in Christianity, Islam etc? I saw then clusters of being near mountain tops, a little holiday-colonies in the Himalaya! One being *Christian, one Moslem etc.*

Furthermore, philosophy was only a hobby. So I formulated the intention to firstly make philosophy the central point of my new existence, and secondly to achieve the communion, both of which have been realised in my actual life.

More important still was the realisation that many motivations were left-overs from former existences, activities where I had succeeded and which I tried to repeat without any success in this existence: it seems that the limbic system continues through the lives in the meaning of Karma; one tries to repeat what has given one pleasure and to avoid that which produced pain, even if the conditions are no longer there. The next six months I liberated myself from these false ambitions, and also from the super-ego structures originating in my parents and the actual conditions of my childhood and youth. I found this process very rewarding, simplifying my existence, and therefore began to use this technique also with my students.

Firstly I wanted to invite the trainer to Vienna, but this turned out to be too expensive, so I started to practice the experiment myself, which was immediately successful. In London I came across a description of the experiment in a book by Glaskin, "Windows of the Mind", Later I also found the writings of Swygard himself, and was glad that I had not read this earlier: as interesting as the experiment is, his so called revelations concerning the nature of the universe, parapsychological experiences, and the like, seemed to me as fanciful theosophy.

But where does the experiment come from? Possibly Swygard discovered it himself, but later I found parts of the exercise in the Indian tradition relating to Vijnana Bhairava Tantra. Anyway, it is the method which counts as a phenomenological introduction and therefore I will now proceed to explain the necessary steps.

Have the person who wants to undergo the experiment on the floor, with or without a small cushion under his head. Then you massage his legs from the knees downwards, concentrating also on the toes and ankles; later the front, the position of the "third eye". Glaskin has two people massaging simultaneously: I found out that one is enough.

Now you sit behind the person's head and give him the following instruction, to which he has to answer. There is to my knowledge no hypnotic state induced.

1. In imagination prolong your feet by two inches, and tell me when you have done.

(Some people imagine this visually, so people have the sensation of growing with their sense of touch, some people visualise the new length, it all will come to the same result. But it will be difficult with those who have no body experience; then a preliminary relaxation exercise is indicated).

2. Return to your original size.
3. Now you grow two inches extending your head and neck
4. Return to your original size.
5. Grow ten inches by extending your feet.
6. Return to your original size.
7. Grow by ten inches through your head and neck
8. Return to your original size.
9. Grow through your feet by 20 inches.
10. Leave your feet as they are, and grow through your head by 20 inches.
11. Blow up your body in all directions by 20 inches, as if you were a rubber doll. (If necessary,) shrink back to your size and repeat once more.

Usually this part of the exercise up to the blowing up takes about 20 minutes.

Now comes an exercise in memory:

12. Describe the front door of your house in detail. Be as exact as possible, in order to get used to visualizing the memories.
13. Stand on the top of your house, and describe the scene on the street. This leads to another kind of imagination, it will become timelike. What time of day is it? Do you see any cars, any people?
14. Now move up into the air 500 feet, and look towards the sky. *(Here the technique which I am using is different from the one explained by Glaskin: he has the subject looking down to the earth. Strangely enough, his people never experience the time between two existences in details; so it seems that this has to do with looking upwards to the sky and not downwards to the earth.)* If the heaven is cloudy, you move up higher in imagination up to the layer were you are above the clouds, if necessary at the level of jets.
15. What time of the day is it? How is the sky, light or dark blue? Where do you feel the sun?
16. If the first experience is daylight: change the heaven into a clear night with stars.

Do you see the moon? Where is it? Is it full, half?

17. Change the heaven again into clear day.
18. Change it again into a night sky, describe the constellations if you know them.
19. At this point, ask the experimentee: who is doing the changing from day to night, and let him realize that it is himself, no magical happening. He is doing it with his imagination.
20. Change it again into the clearest possible day, at noon. *(If a person is unable to make clear day and starry night, usually the experiment will not succeed. About 20% in my experience fail, either because they are too excited, or too afraid; but even those can have the full experience at a later date).*
21. The decisive state: Now you return to earth, and you will land in another time, existence - the one which helps you to understand your actual life. Take your time, and tell me as soon as your feet touch the ground.

It seems that the changing of day and night sky "fools" our brain to think that we are in another existence. Some people take a long time to get down. Do not be impatient. If they land before their house from which they started in imagination, the experiment has failed; you can try it again by moving once more higher up and repeat the three changes of night and day, ending on a day.

At all times, the person is aware that he is lying also on the floor or on a couch: he develops double awareness.

22. As soon as the person says, that he feels his feet on the floor: What shoes are you wearing? Are you barefoot? Trousers or a skirt? Are you a man or a woman, a boy or a girl? How old are you?

(This is absolutely essential to be answered). Even if he is not sure, he has to give an answer, and will find out later whether it is correct or not. He has to ask himself continuously: what shoes am I wearing, are they brown or black, until the image clarifies. I had the impression that the images are moved by will power from the back of the head to the front, just as in one of the Yoga Exercise aiming at developing Brumadhya Chakra.

I saw in my first experience with astonishment that I wore black shoes with silver buckles, white stockings, green velvet trousers and a uniform: later I recognise it exactly in the film "Barry Lyndon", which happened to use the exact dresses of the period).

23. Let him be 18, a man, and standing in a clearing of a forest: the same day, 10 p.m. Where are you? Usually either in a room, or in an Inn.

Can you see anybody? For most people, they feel the presence of others, but have difficulties in visualising.

The next morning, 11 a.m. This will give you a clue about his or her profession or activities. Keep him or her talking as much as possible, but do not force his images, try to follow their sequence.

24. Now you lead him through his life: You are 12. Describe what you see.

25. 30. 35. 40. Take the sequence as you like. 50. 60. 70. 80. As soon as he or she says I do not see anything:

25. Now you come to the moment of your death. Are you lying, sitting, standing, or in another position?

I went into this same experience with others, those able to get in their visions beyond the sun: also they had the experience of indescribable beauty, and very often came back with the intention to become like such a person. The vision of hell and purgatory did not appear in the experiences I conducted. The people who hallucinated such experiences were undergoing psychoanalysis, thereby having lost the naive attitude, and mixing dream imagination with memory. I presume that S. Grof is right in affirming that the visions of hell and purgatory have to do with the trauma of birth, the stages of labour, of getting out of the womb, and the terrible pain of the first breath.

It is naturally possible to do these experiments simply out of curiosity, like a game. However, if we delve into the deeper meaning of these phenomena, there appears a very different world view, which is more in tune with the ancient religious traditions than with the actual so-called scientific or ideological philosophies.

In the Vedas is written: of the four worlds in existence, Man only knows one: and only if he attains the three others, will he achieve realisation. What are these four worlds?

The answer has been provided by modern brain physiology. The mutation from animal Man to conscious Man can today be defined exactly: in man, the brain acquires four completely different functions: In the frontal area neocortex, is the seat of attention, continuously changing direction (two times per second) between observation of outer or inner objects, and memorisation. In the first instance, the attention is directed towards an experience, and the being is empty. In the second instance, the attention is clouded towards experience, and forms a memory, in the form of a conditioned reflex

The left hemisphere of the cortex is tuned in a linear way to reality. Here is situated the center of speech and of sense experience. All science, all digital information belongs to this field, which, for the last centuries, constituted

the only acceptable reality: this is the world which is known to every living person.

The hind portion of the brain contains between the center of seeing and the body feelings the seat of mental representation, a mental screen where all memories are integrated to form an ego structure: what we call ego, is nothing but the sum of all memories of a person; for example the capacity to drive a motor car, or to know French.

Thus this world seems to be real in the same sense as the second one. However, this is not the case: the reality of the I, the ego, makes it necessary to consider oneself responsible for everything that one does, but also for everything which happens to oneself. The average person looks for the cause of his situation either in outer life-conditions, or in other people to whom he traces his suffering. This causal thinking subordinates the personal being to reality, and therewith sees man as part of a scheme, a system; creating, in religious terminology, a false deity.

The fourth world is that of potentiality, of possibility, of dreams and imagination, of impulses and their satisfaction: it is the realm of the right hemisphere of the cortex, discovered only in the last ten years in all its amplitude. Jaynes has shown that in correspondence to the center of speech-communication in the left hemisphere there is a localisation of inner voices, inner visions, which can be activated by electronic stimulation.

Man's consciousness is based on speech: no wonder therefore that the impulses appear in verbal form, and likewise the instincts. For most human history, being in tune with these voices constituted the correct behaviour; it was only after the fifth century B.C. according to Jaynes that people started to consider their conscious deliberations and judgements as more valid than the inner voices: just think that the Greeks of the classical period valued the unconscious utterances of the Delphic Oracle - peasant women in trance - on the same level as their own logical conclusions!

The prevailing theory in the 19th century postulated that the drives, the instincts and the dreams are epiphenomena of the body. However, psychoanalysis has demonstrated that the drives are independent, have their causes in themselves which can not all be traced to sense input, but are of an energetic origin. Energy is not an attribute of the matter and of the body, but is something independent, submitted to its own laws and structures. The best conceptual explanation we find in the teaching of the Yaqui master Don Juan.

Man is constituted by two independent halves: the Tonal and the Nagual. The Tonal has its basis in sense experience and their rationalizations in thinking. The Nagual is based on the floating world of dreams, on imagination, on the drives. The Tonal opens the door to the experience of sense reality and civilisation.

The Nagual is approached through the threshold of dreams, and reveals an unknown world where anything is possible: the world in which we partake in our imagination, from where the fairy-tales and myths originate. This world is as concrete as the physical one. As long as man regards the Nagual as produced by the Tonal, he will never experience its essence. He has to

"shrink" the Tonal, limiting it to the world as it is, then the way to the Nagual is open.

All matter originates from energy. The quality of matter is given through sense experience, the quality of energy appears only when attention is turned toward its perception. In the waking state, the ego is identified with matter, and uses energy, imagination for clarification and action. In sleep, the ego is identified with the floating images of energy, and creates matter in form of images. One could also say that in waking the action of the ego is centrifugal, goes from inside to outside and in sleep and dream centripetal, from outside to inside.

The energyfield, the bioplasma can exist without the body: it is experienced as the "double", the perception is limited to the structure. However, in the state of death as we describe it above, the energy field seems to be without capacity of realisation, just like a spectator, which idea was often interpreted as the last judgement; as purgatory; the different experiences clash and produce a state of despair, linking up to the moment the equilibrium is reattained.

The compensatory quality of dreams is one of the main discoveries of psychoanalysis. It is easy to see that most theological and philosophical systems spring from this cause, explaining an otherwise unbearable situation in rational terms. Once the Nagual gets accessible one realises that all factual description of this floating world is illusionary; and on the other hand, each one is possible. I have no doubt that Swedenborg was as sincere about his heavenly experiences as the Alexandrine Gnostics; he only did not realise that they constituted one possibility, not the absolute truth. The mythology was much nearer to the facts when its protagonists took the myths as patterns to be enacted in the world, as rituals enabling man to reattain the pristine state of innocence: in other words when he is able to see the world as it is, as the material of his self realisation.

Shrinking the Tonal means to accept reality in all its aspects as the field of reality, without placing wishes and imaginations or rationalisations into it: this constituted in Don Juan's terms the "attitude of the warrior". Every situation is given, and man as a subject and a will is situated between Nagual and Tonal, between potentiality and reality; once he has attained this zero point - by stopping the world between its centrifugal and centripetal movement - then he is on a spiritual path, the way of knowledge.

All such ways begin in the wilderness and end there: there is no static aim, only a dynamic one. Neither Tonal nor Nagual constitute man's essence: he is between both. But this betweenness he can only realise actively, dynamically, by identifying himself with evolution, growing in experience from less to more. Man is his Karma, his ego is constituted by all his memories. During life, he forgets or represses his memories in view of the manifold experiences, during death periods he is passively submitted to them, undergoes a state of purgatory, or psychical integration.

In physics, the link between matter and energy is information, responsible for the preserving quality of a being. Such information is usually static: in man, the ego can only exist dynamically. The state of being is intensive

only when becoming. Owing to the nature of consciousness, attention and memorisation alternate continuously. Once man starts to identify with memory - with a certain behaviour pattern or structure - he no longer exists, he is dead while living. Any kind of ego image will lead to this terrible state; and man keeps this false existence up by continuous internal dialogue, and even many societies are built up on such images. Newspapers are there to reinforce the private mythology, the world view, and often also the sciences take on the same role, that of appeasing the natural anxiety.

Tonal and Nagual are experienced: the two other constituent parts of the brain have to be evolved. Maslow speaks of "Deficiency values" and "Being values". If there are no more complaints, no more lacks or wants, development stops: important is the ascending level of complaints. Someone striving for the bare necessities of life has a lower level of complaints than someone suffering that he does not find the book to help him on, or the method to achieve a higher integration. Contentment is stagnation, only striving is dynamic. The idea of a last judgement is again a static misinterpretation of the values, referring to a static image of man: Karma in reality is the given structures at every moment which can only be assumed if man considers himself responsible for everything he does, and all that happens to him. This is not a lofty ideal, but pure realism: it means accepting the death existence on a par with the life existence. The Karma proceeds through many incarnations, up to the moment the potentialities of the earth existence are integrated in being.

But what is Being? The B-values are joy, fulfilment, creativity, wellbeing communion, love, wisdom in the sense of integrated knowledge; everybody has moments of these, - the so-called peak experiences, satori, cosmic consciousness.

These moments appear by themselves with everybody. Actually civilisation takes them to be exceptional; but in fact, they are the moments of real existence: man become God-like, attains his source of being. Just like the cells of the body are part of the Organism, our consciousness is part of cosmic man, of God. We are not God as individuals, but we partake in God in the moment we realise his intention. In biological terms: there is only one purpose in Evolution: to help every being to attain and keep up his structure, to attain fulfilment and to be creative, these three aspects are in all God-concepts, whether Vishnu, Shiva and Drahma, or Son, Holy Spirit and Father. Divinisation is not lack of humility: it means to attain the source of consciousness and evolution.

The posterior function of the cortex, the faculty of thinking is integrated as soon as the ego image gives way to the dynamic evolution of knowledge, which can only be attained if man is on a path, always passing on his achievements to others in order to be open for new experiences and realisations. The front orbital functional center is based on the force of attention. Attention means emptiness, and emptiness constitutes the state of deep sleep.

In normal deep sleep, the body is not dead but regenerates. In intentional deep sleep in waking - Antar Mouna, inner silence or meditation - man attains God-consciousness, joy, Sat-Chit-Ananda. This state is as attainable as waking and dreaming or communication; but as with thinking, it has to be

intentional in order to be effective. And the main hindrance to partake in cosmic consciousness -to have the courage to achieve emptiness as constant being - is the wrong structure of the thinking brain, condemning man to a state of illusion, of Maya.

The opposite concept of Karma is Dharma. Sanatana Dharma is nothing but religion, living in tune with Power, as Don Juan terms the eternal presence. But everybody has his personal way to attain Sanatana Dharma through Swa-Dharma, by understanding and accepting his personal ways and tasks. The way to infinity leads through the door of the finite, man does not attain liberation as an infinite being, but through his limitations, by changing those into a tool of realisation.

Many traditions are negative towards rational thought, as it leads most people into false ego images. Attaining the limitless state for moment in meditation is always possible: but as a state, it will not change man, only give him orientation where to go to. In order to live out of Power, man has to transform his thinking into accordance with reality, he has to tune his mind, not only personally, but also collectively.

Transpersonal psychology has enlarged the field of conscious experience to such a degree that religious and philosophical systems are unable to cope with it; the world is much richer than any tradition has presumed. Therefore emerges a new philosophical task: to create a language, a conceptual frame which would be able to encompass all the new experiences, and furthermore to give to every individual the possibility to create out of those elements of consciousness his own personal synthesis, his own way of life. The time of collective philosophies and religions is over: only the individual centered in his creativity will be a partner to spiritual and natural evolution, a friend of God.

John Rowan

Men's Consciousness

Ever since the start of the Women's Liberation Movement, men have been wondering what to do about it. Recently I have been designing a research project to find out more about men's consciousness, and how it has changed in those men who have been most opposed to the Movement, and have been reading a number of books designed to enlighten men. This brief rundown is an attempt to review these books so as to make others' search a bit briefer than mine.

Five of the books are American, and three British. Unfortunately the British ones are uniformly poor, so we may dispose of them first. Andrew Tolson's *The Limits of Masculinity* is a semi-sociological book which lays a good deal of stress on the difference between middle-class and working men. But the vaguely Marxist bias of the book leads to a superficial discussion, dealing almost entirely with men's attitudes to work. The author's experience of two years in a men's group in Birmingham does not appear to have had