

Jan Erik Sigdell

Reincarnation,
Christianity and the
Dogma of the Church

Unmasking the Myth that the
Reincarnation Doctrine would be Unchristian

Translated from the original German text by the author
partly extended and improved

Original: *Reinkarnation, Christentum und das kirchliche Dogma*
Ibera, Vienna, 2001

You made me so special...

You made me so special
that the world you offered me
was lost between my hands.

Or did you make a mistake
and threw me into hell
were the humans live?

Tan especial me hiciste...

Tan especial me hiciste
que el mundo que me ofreciste
se perdió entre mis manos.

¿O fue que te confundiste
y me arrojaste al infierno
donde viven los humanos?

By the Spanish poet and artist Manuel Marquez Alba
personally given to the author in 1983
(who translated it)

Contents

Preface	Page	4
Preface to the English translation		5
Introduction		6
Chapter 1 THE THEODICY PROBLEM IN A NEW VIEW Free Will and Reincarnation as a Solution		10
Chapter 2 IS THE REINCARNTATION DOCTRINE UNCHRISTIAN – OR MERELY UNECCLESIASTICAL?		16
Chapter 3 ORIGEN AND THE MANIPULATION OF HIS TEXTS		27
Chapter 4 THE FALL OF THE ANGELS IN A MODERN VIEW		35
Chapter 5 DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE RIDDLES OF THE CREATION		42
Chapter 6 FROM ORIGEN TO JUSTINIAN		46
Chapter 7 ARE BODY AND SOUL INSEPARABLE?		50
Chapter 8 REINCARNTATION – WHY DOES THE CHURCH FEAR IT?		54
Chapter 9 ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPONENTS		60
Chapter 10 REINCARNTATION – WHY DO PEOPLE FEAR IT?		65
Chapter 11 DOES THE CHURCH WANT CHRIST TO RETURN?		67
Chapter 12 CRITIC’S ACCUSATIONS TO THE CHURCH		74
Chapter 13 CAN THE CHURCH RECONCILE WITH REINCARNTATION?		79
Chapter 14 HISTORY AND PRINCIPLE OF PAST-LIFE THERAPY		82
Chapter 15 AFTER-DEATH EXPERIENCE OF A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN		91
Appendix 1 REINCARNTATION IN JESUS’ TEACHINGS by Palle Wischmann		93
Appendix 2 THE PRESENT-TENSE LORD’S PRAYER AND ADDITIONAL PRAYERS		105
About the author		108

PREFACE

During many years, I used the opportunity of my travelling to gather facts and material in various university and institution libraries in Europe. Among these are facts of the history of the Church and about early Christianity, which will often be known to conventional theologians but have until now been set in a relation to the thematic of this book only by outsiders, and that to a very limited extent. It seems to me that one would prefer to have these facts forgotten or at least scattered without too visible relations, so that no one should easily get the idea to bring the pieces of the puzzle together to form a more complete picture. Now, however, an essential step towards this outcome has been undertaken – as undesirable as it may be to conventional theologians. Information and facts to many old and some new questions have been brought out and wiped free from the dust. Many of them were hitherto disregarded or unknown to the public.

As can be shown, reincarnation was not a foreign word for the first Christians and many Gnostics even taught it. This may have been one of several reasons why the Gnostics were labeled as heretics and many a time even made a fair game for the perverted version of the «Christian love for our brothers and sisters», which took their lives to an early end... The most important movement with a Gnostic origin was that of the Cathars, who were eradicated in genocide in the 13th century. The Cathars may have been the most Christian of all communities in history, and they taught reincarnation. The Bible does not contradict reincarnation. Bible quotations often brought forward against it do not withstand the scrutiny of checking the ancient Greek text of the New Testament. It is found that many an obscure or hardly understandable Bible passage can also be correctly translated otherwise. The alternative translation often results in a more logical and understandable sense, and the doctrine of the preexistence of the soul (maybe even in earlier incarnations) many a time finds an unexpected support. However, such translations are obviously not allowed by the Dogma.

This book contains a good deal of criticism against the Church. The critique is not directed against the true doctrine of Jesus, but against that what the Church has made out of it for the purpose of power and control. I regard myself as a Christian – as a Christian believing in reincarnation – and see true Christianity outside the walls of the Church. Many a time I ask myself, if the Christ of the Church is really the same as the one of the New Testament...

I would like to thank Palle Wischmann, Copenhagen, for his permission to include as Appendix 1 a somewhat shortened translation of a chapter in his excellent book *Kirkens dilemma* («The Dilemma of the Church»). Dieter Hassler (Germany) has gone through the manuscript of the German edition of this book and given many a valuable suggestion. He also improved the language of the text – my mother tongue is Swedish and the German text needed some improvement. Though I write German fluently, it isn't completely perfect, but on the other hand I can also read texts in several other languages, which has been of much value for this research work.

Dutovlje (Slovenia) in June 2001
Jan Erik Sigdell

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

During the work of translating this book to English, I have used the opportunity to improve the text at various places and to a minor extent add some new information. The English-language reader may find the many references to books in several other languages than his own of little interest. However, there is a wealth of literature in various European languages, which apparently has largely gone unnoticed in many Anglo-Saxon books on this thematic, apparently because many an author in the UK and especially in the US lacks the ability to read foreign languages. This is a more common problem in Anglo-Saxon literature than in mainland European, since European authors are more often multilingual. In some cases, but regrettably few, I have been able to find an English translation of a book I referred to in the original text. But I think that it is nevertheless useful to keep the references to the many books in other languages, and this for three reasons: (1) relevant information in many of these books is contained in my text as quotations and then the source should be indicated according to scientific praxis, (2) stating the source is important information for those readers who can also read other languages and can often find the literature referred to through university libraries, and (3) this shows that certain important information isn't an invention of mine but taken from a relevant source. Furthermore, I think that it is appropriate to show that there is very much more to the subject in world literature than only the texts available in English.

Dutovlje in August 2003
Jan Erik Sigdell

INTRODUCTION

The Dogma of the Church makes many a person turn away from Christianity. Presenting a threatening and punishing God to the world is bound to awaken repugnance in many of us. The picture of a Jesus who effectively forbids joy and requires a strict discipline and chastity makes it difficult to find an inner access to the real Christ. Claiming that the human being would be a sinner from birth conveys hopelessness. The continuous threat with eternal condemnation and a never-ending hell is a blasphemous contradiction against the love of God.

These images are distortions of the true doctrine of Jesus and contra-productive for a true Christianity.

Raising children according to such soul-injuring ideas causes much damage. For many, the development of a sincere belief was obstructed already in the childhood. Religious parents are not rarely despaired because their children turn away from religion. The reason will be in the contra-productivity of educating attempts, which are rather suited to make children right-out allergic to God and the Church [1].

Eternal condemnation

The false image of eternal condemnation includes an absurdity, which is known in theology but little talked about. As the situation actually is in this world, the majority of the souls would have to go to hell [2]. A wee heaven would be reserved for a handful of well-behaving souls. A continuously growing hell would therefore surpass a small heaven by orders of magnitude in terms of the number of souls. The creation would have badly failed... The final result would be an enormous superiority of an eternal hell – which would perpetuate evil! – and the little heaven would appear almost negligible in comparison... And since the common opinion seems to be that the few souls in it would apparently be unlovingly unconcerned about the fate of all the others, one could regard them as salvation egoists! On which side, then, would the true really hell be...? Could it be that the perspectives would then become reversed?

If God is love, it is obvious that he never wanted a creation according to such revengeful ideas. He could never have instituted an eternal hell and never condemn souls for all times. It is self-evident that he will at the end save every soul, this is only a matter of time. He will let a hell – if there is one – exist only as long as needed, as long as it serves a temporary purpose for souls gone astray. The parable of the lost son could refer to this.

Furthermore, the punishment in hell would only have a sense and meaning if the soul would be set free from there after a certain time, converted and healed! Such a punishment could only last for the necessary time. If it is then called purgatory or a time-limited hell punishment doesn't make much difference. An eternal punishment in hell could never have a reasonable relation to a crime, since an offence would under any circumstances have to be expiated in a *limited* time period! Otherwise this would degenerate to mere revenge. Does God really take revenge?

It seems that a.o. Adventists are of the opinion that God at the Last Judgement would destroy condemned souls and in this way eliminate hell. That would be still worse! If that were so, God would kill his own children, and actually the majority of them (see above)...

Why does God let all this happen?

An absolutely central question in Christianity, regrettably swept under the carpet over and over again, is: *Why does God let all this happen?* All the cruelties, the suffering, the diseases, the exploitation, the terror, the torture, the violence, the poverty, the misery, the murders, the rapes, the false imprisonments, the slave trade, the genocides... the list could fill pages...

Why has the Church repeatedly pushed this question aside? Because it doesn't have a good answer! In later medieval times it was simply declared that this would surpass the understanding of man. Then little more was said about it...

Yet this is a central question, which I will take up in this book. In the continuation of the question why God allows all this to happen lies the question about eternal hell – that is: eternal suffering in condemnation. The Dogma doesn't put «eternal condemnation» in a relation to this question. But logic requires that a relation be established! Suffering on Earth lasts – for the single person – «only» years or decades, but suffering in an alleged condemnation «*forever*»! Then more than ever the question arises: How can God permit such a thing?

The question of how suffering can be consistent with God's love is called the theodicy problem. I include the Dogma of «eternal hell» in it, even though theologians carefully detach it from the problem. I will deal with this question in the first chapter and offer a solution. I don't claim that this is a final solution, but my proposal takes a considerable step further than what has hitherto been suggested. It does, however, introduce a concept considered to be very heretic for the Dogma: the reincarnation doctrine in a Christian setting. What an atrocity for the dogmatists! But: do they have a more convincing solution of the theodicy problem? Do they have a more acceptable explanation for suffering?

Can a reincarnation doctrine really be Christian?

According to common opinion, the doctrine of reincarnation could never be *Christian*! Or could it? Research shows that it is not unchristian at all, but merely *uneclesiastical*. The idea wasn't alien to early Christians, even though a minority of them really believed in it. To this minority belonged Christian Gnostics, which the Church later condemned as heretics. In my view (with the exception of a few extremes in separate groups), they were the real first Christians. As I will show, Origen has obviously held reincarnation to be possible, or he has even taught it – whatever the Church may say about it with reference to texts that have been proven to be manipulated. I will give evidence for this manipulation, too.

The Gnostics claimed to have in their tradition also preserved teachings by Jesus to his disciples in the inner circle, which he didn't tell to the public and which therefore are not written in the New Testament. The Gnostics said that in that inner circle he had also talked about reincarnation.

What does the Bible say to that? As we will see, there is no Bible verse that in a clear-cut way speaks *against* reincarnation. There are many that support reincarnation ideas! Even passages that have not yet been recognized as such, since the translators have violated the sense of the original text. Many a passage can also be translated differently and by language correctly, but the Dogma *doesn't allow it...* If we go back to the ancient Greek text, many a Bible verse appears in a new light. Obscure passages become understandable – if we throw off the straightjacket of a preconceived Dogma that handicaps independent translation.

The question of justice

The question of justice is tightly connected with the theodicy problem. How can it be just that children are born suffering to this world – in hunger, disease, war, misery and perhaps hated already in a womb by a raped mother? How can it be just that many such a child hasn't one single happy moment? What have they done to deserve this? Original sin and vicarious suffering can only be seen as cynical mockery, if claimed as an explanation! Mockery of the suffering one as well as of God's justice!

How can it be just that the good person often has a difficult life and the unscrupulous scoundrel lives in wealth and abundance?

The Church wants us to believe that we would have only this one and single chance: this allegedly one and only life on Earth. The few years here would for «eternal times» decide if we go to heaven or hell. A minority would (according to Catholic teaching) have a reprieve in a purgatory and then go to heaven. But the majority would appear predestined for hell.

How can that be just? How could we immature souls be able to make a choice – and have to make it in spite of all diffusely different religious ideas and manipulative materialistic influences from our society? Transferred to the situation of a child, it would correspond to demanding a decision as an infant about a future profession and then be tied to this for all the life.

One soul is born in a deeply religious family and would – according to this view – have the best conditions for going to heaven. Another is born by a raped mother and may even be sexually abused as an infant. Disgraced, hated and rejected, it soon becomes a street child that is dragged into criminality, drug abuse and prostitution. It doesn't understand anything else. What just chance was given to such a child? Or was it predestined to hell already before it was born? Oh, you theologians, where is your love?

A third soul is in a mentally retarded body and understands nothing of all this. What chance was given to that soul?

A fourth is born in a culture where it has no opportunity to hear the Gospel. In earlier times, the Church claimed that such a soul would only for that reason have to go to hell. In that case, not even *the least* chance would have been given to it! Today, one is more careful with such obviously absurd statements... And if it would be so, all souls born *before* Jesus would now be in hell!

How could it be just that a soul would have to go to an «eternal» hell only because its body dies so soon after birth that there isn't even time for an emergency baptism? In that case, the Church would have to baptize each and every fetus already in the womb before it is aborted – as impetuously as it condemns abortion – instead of *sacrificing* it to the «sin» of the mother! – a new form of pregnancy counseling: baptism certificate instead of a counseling certificate? (This remark refers to discussions in Germany and a letter from the Pope to German bishops concerning the law requirement of showing a counseling certificate before an abortion is permitted.)

Mercy

One talks about mercy. Apparently, God has much more mercy than the Church itself wants to have... There is no doubt that God has mercy, but it cannot look the way it is described or viewed by the Church. It doesn't make us free from own responsibility and repair and it is certainly not a warrant for unloving actions for which we would be discharged... That Jesus died for our sins doesn't mean that we are now free to afterwards fetch our sins forgiven in advance, even though it appears that some persons calling themselves Christians tend to act that way towards their brothers and sisters in this world*.

How can justice be compatible with «God's mercy» if it in a trice makes a major evildoer free from responsibility and the need for repair – one who has caused immeasurable suffering to innumerable souls – only because the evildoer shortly before he dies confesses and kisses the cross of a priest call to his death-bed? Wouldn't true mercy have to require that he be given the opportunity to repair all that he has done? Wouldn't it have to put him on probation before he can be given a place in heaven? If one could in such a simple and easy way become free from a selfish life at the cost of others, such «mercy» wouldn't be just but a great business – a soul business that sweeps the guilt under the carpet, disgraceful to the divine world. The egoist who enriches himself would be far better off than a person who a life long was honest and believing. To live like that and convert at the end would be the optimal solution instead of wasting time for compassion and questions of conscience... Maybe he can then sit in the front row in heaven with all his honest victims far behind – or maybe they are in hell since they were so silly as to let themselves be deceived and repressed...

The Church has described the doctrine of reincarnation as contrary to mercy. But it is itself a great mercy! The loving mercy to be given a new chance by God, to be allowed to take the test once more and *actively* liberate oneself from guilt through repair and reconciliation. Not a magic formula that in a moment sweeps away all that was, but a path on which one has to elaborate the salvation oneself – instead of being eternally condemned. No single soul is lost forever, but it must complete

* It is striking that some who claim to be Christians understand the concept of «fellow man/woman» as valid mainly for the members of their own religious community. The teachings of Jesus, however, clearly show that there is no single person on this Earth who is less a brother or sister to us than anyone else... The central role of love in the doctrine of Jesus is treated in a step-motherly way! In my view, for example the Buddhist who lets love, tolerance and helpfulness rule in his soul understood it just as well. He only uses other names for concepts and spiritual dimensions.

the classes of the school and, if necessary, repeat a few of them as long as necessary until it can finally be promoted...

What I present in this book will probably be regarded as an arbitrary construction and even false interpretation – or as an amateurish layman theology. It may, as one so nicely says (in order to avoid taking it seriously), be classified as «trivial literature». One will prefer to deny and ridicule rather than deal with it. Possibly some will nevertheless take effort in trying to find disproof. Nothing else can be expected when one wants to judge this subjectively with the blinkers and the straightjacket of the Dogma and duly follow suit, whatever historical, philosophical and linguistic facts have to say. May therefore the reader form his own opinion...

The critique against the Church on these pages is in no way a critique against *true* Christianity! It is only a critique against an institution which misuses the teachings of Jesus for its own and worldly interests.

In conclusion, I would like to add a quotation. When the original manuscript was finished, I received a new edition of the British magazine *Reincarnation International*. In it, Max Payne remarked: «The whole history of the Church is one of bitter quarrels in which the winning side retrospectively pronounced itself orthodox while the defeated were pronounced heretics. Are we to assume that truth was always victorious in these bitter quarrels?» [3]

References

1. Erwin Ringel and Alfred Kirchmayr: *Religionsverlust durch religiöse Erziehung. Tiefenpsychologische Ursachen und Folgerungen* («Loss of Religion through Religious Education. Deep-Psychological Causes and Consequences»), Herder, Vienna-Freiburg-Basel, 2nd ed., 1986.
2. Marie Pia Stanley: *Christianisme et Réincarnation, vers la réconciliation* («Christianity and Reincarnation, Towards Reconciliation»), L'Or du Temps, Saint-Martin-le-Vinoux, 1989, p. 28-31.
3. «Reincarnation and Christianity», *Reincarnation International* No. 15, London, June 1998, p. 23-29 – a summarizing retrospective on a debate in several issues of the journal *The Christian Parapsychologist* with a discussion between Max Payne and John Hick.

Chapter 1

THE THEODICY PROBLEM IN A NEW VIEW
Free Will and Reincarnation as a Solution*

How can God allow all the suffering in this world? This is the basic question of a problem that has become known in theology as the theodicy problem. Today, the Church seems to leave this problem aside, probably because it cannot give a convincing answer.

The theodicy problem

This problem is old. In early Christianity, already Lactantius [1] (approx. 250-320) dealt with it and within the Church also Aurelius Augustinus (354-430) [2]. The name «theodicy» was given to it by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) who wrote an extensive work in French: *Essais de théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (1710) [3]. He created the term from the Greek words *Theos* (God) and *dikē* (justice, justification – cf. Rom. 3:5 in the Greek text). Leibniz' work is famous and much quoted, but today's scientists not rarely regard it as a bit superficial and a kind of patchwork [4].

The problem has been discussed already in ancient Judaism and that is reflected in the Old Testament, a.o. in the book Job. Hinduism and Buddhism have dealt with it and also, but less extensively, Islam. Many a reader may here want to object that Hinduism would be polytheistic and that Buddhism doesn't mention God. Who however knows Hinduism more closely knows that, even though a large number of gods and goddesses are mentioned, one also talks about *one* highest God: *Brahman* (neuter) (of which *Brahma* – male – is a manifestation). As concerns Buddhism, I am of the opinion that Buddha didn't talk explicitly about God since he knew that everyone who follows his path of spiritual development will eventually experience God. Such own experience is worth far more than any theory about Him!

Definition

The theodicy problem can be defined as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Basic postulates:</i> | 1. God is absolute goodness and love |
| | 2. God is almighty and all-knowing |
| <i>Fact of experience:</i> | 3. This world is full of immeasurable suffering |

In point 3 we must also include the question of justice. How can it be just that so often the good person suffers and the unscrupulous scoundrel lives in wealth? How can it be just that children are born suffering into this world and experience no single happy moment, but only pain, violence, hatred, abuse, misery, disease, hunger...? This question was already mentioned in the Introduction.

How can this be made to fit?

In history there are three ways for attempts to find a solution. One way is to declare that this question surpasses the understanding of man and cannot be solved by human thinking. To me, this seems a too simple excuse to be considered further. Those who suffer heavily can only understand such argumentation as mockery. It furthermore doesn't give a solution of the problem, but instead avoids it. We will therefore stick to the two more serious attempts. A good overview over different attempts to solve the theodicy problem according to these two ways can be found in *Encyclopedia of Religion* [5].

Denial of one postulate

One of the two remaining ways consists in the assumption that one of the above statements would have to be wrong. According to this, there would be three possible theodicies:

* Extension of a lecture given at the Goetheanum-Congress *Reinkarnation und Karma* («Reincarnation and Karma») in Berlin, Easter 1997.

- A. God is not absolute goodness and love, but also has a dark side
- B. God is not almighty and all-knowing
- C. Suffering in this world is an illusion

Does God have a dark side?

The theodicy according to A can be excluded. In my understanding, God *by definition* is absolute goodness and love, and if we would deny Him these qualities (even if in part), I couldn't conceive him as God. If he wouldn't take full responsibility for his creatures and if he would carelessly play with them, we would be right in turning away from him (according the ancient doctrine that we would be fallen angels). Such a «God» would rather be an entity who would need our pity, compassion and forgiveness rather than devotion.

There is, however, the idea that God would also carry evil in him, since to many a person the evil would otherwise appear unexplainable. I certainly do hope that our original creator does not secretly enjoy a manifestation of a cruel side of his being and that he doesn't with satisfaction watch how those suffer who turned away from him. I would then as a creature rather feel being in the role of the «monster» in relation to its «manufacturer» Frankenstein... (did Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley want to express such an aspect between the lines in her story about Frankenstein and his «creation»?).

Is suffering only an illusion?

The theodicy according to C has been much quoted. To this belong theodicies in Hinduism and Buddhism. But what a cruel and cynical mockery wouldn't it be to tell the agonized person on the bench of torture that all his suffering would only be illusion!? And wouldn't it be still more so in front of the millions of victims of the holocaust!? For this reason we need not deal further with such a theorization by those who have been spared suffering themselves.

In Eastern religions there is a philosophical discussion based on the question: «What is it in us that suffers?» One has come to the opinion that the true center of the human being actually couldn't suffer – it would only be an «observer» (Sanskrit: *sākṣin*). Only the ego suffers. Even though this statement does have its philosophical points, it is in real life not less mockery for the tormented...

Pain is, after all, really felt – even an «imagined» pain – whatever various theories may say about it. In the experience of pain, the questions of cause and reality become secondary.

Is God almighty?

The alternative B that God would not be almighty and all-knowing remains as the only one, which could be taken under a more serious consideration. I know that many a Christian theologian today tends to prefer this alternative since he can see no better. God would then have brought forth a creation over which he lost the control. He could now only with pain and compassion watch the misery that resulted. It may be the more acceptable of these three theodicies, but is yet a difficult one!

Is there really a God?

A forth «theodicy» would theoretically be that there would be no creator. This seems to be a common belief in conventional science, but it is interesting to observe that researchers working at the borderline of physics adhere much less to this idea.

The popular «big-bang»-theory is contradictory in itself. The main question would have to be: *What* «exploded» at time zero, from *where* did it come and *what was before*? If this question is left out, the theory is incomplete. We can only speculate about answers. It would, however, be difficult to conceive a hypothetical answer that wouldn't in some manner, at least indirectly, relate to the idea of a creator, i.e., some form of intention and intelligence.

It has been asserted that there would be no «before», since time wouldn't run linearly. Beginning and end would be identical. Time would move in a circle. We most certainly don't understand time correctly, but such a model would hopelessly rotate in a circle without an exit in which the definitely justified question about an origin would search in vain for an answer.

In a world without a God and without another explanation for suffering than coincidence and «statistics», in which it would also not be expected that the human being would survive death as a soul, the optimal behavior would be to live as selfishly as possible. Personal maximization of profit in terms of money, property, power and enjoyment without consideration would individually be the best way, since the human being would no more exist after death. There would be no consequences for him or her – no punishment, no bills to settle. There would be no guilt and no need for repair, since he or her would no more exist. There would be nothing left of the person that could regret or would have to have a bad conscience. I wouldn't like to live in such a world! It would be hard to imagine anything more meaningless.

Only if there is a God and we continue to exist without a body after its death can there be a sense and meaning with our existence. That human beings do have a conscience (not only from education) and compassion, and can experience love (also beyond partnership and erotics) is already evidence for a further dimension of being human.

The idea of the nitzschean God-is-dead philosophy earlier cultivated in certain circles at least in part leads to the same absurdities.

A fourth postulate

The other way consists in adding a fourth postulate instead of denying one of the three. The history of theodicy here has three alternatives:

- D. Suffering educates and refines
- E. A future, wonderful era will repair all
- F. Free will requires the possibility to also do evil

Does suffering really refine?

The educative theodicy D may have certain validity. But suffering can also embitter, make us more evil and be destructive. «What kind of education is it... that kills so many of the students?» [6].

Is an eschatological promise satisfactory?

That at the end a new and wonderful era would come, in which the one who has suffered would be compensated in a plentiful way and the perpetrator would receive a very different reward, is easily said – and too easily used as an excuse. It is, of course, very difficult to take such an uncertain «promise» at its face value. The fact of having suffered would not be eradicated but merely compensated. What would then be a plausible purpose of suffering?

The eschatological theodicy E, in the common way of viewing it, would support the idea that there would (for the perpetrator) be an *eternal* condemnation. This idea hardly leaves space for forgiveness and liberation through own development, transformation and repair and would therefore contradict God's love. He can in His love never have blocked the way of return forever, but it is self-evident that He will receive the lost son with joy after he has repented, expiated and wants to come back to Him! As the world looks, an eternal hell would, furthermore, keep continuously growing in numbers of souls and would since long have surpassed a little heaven with a handful of well-behaved souls. It would have grown to an overwhelmingly great majority. If this would be the case, one would have to regard creation as wrecked.

Does free will outweigh some of it?

Now only the theodicy of free will remains, which more than the others offer a solution of the problem. This means that God would, at some stage of the creation, have given his creatures a free will. And if the will is absolutely free, it *must* include the possibility to also do evil. Any restriction is a limitation of the freedom of will.

It has, however, been objected that God, if He is really almighty and all-knowing, could have created a way in which the creatures would be free and yet never do evil – even if *we* can hardly imagine such a way.

For each target of development God would in his omnipotence have created a way to reach the target without suffering. We would, however, be free to choose the path of suffering if we want to (even though it is hard to imagine what could motivate us for such a choice).

The theodicy of free will alone is an insufficient explanation of suffering caused without a perpetrator, for example through natural catastrophes or epidemics. Such objections cannot be overlooked if we take a closer look at the theodicy F.

One may also ask how free the will is if the one voluntary choice is regarded as right and the other is punished with suffering.

A paradox?

The theodicy of free will could to many involve a paradox, which can be resolved. On one side, God is all-knowing, on the other side, the will can be *absolutely* free only if even God wouldn't know what we would choose! But wouldn't God in his omnipotence be able to create the very circumstances, which make this possible? Couldn't He have said: «If the will is to be really free, I will create circumstances such that even I will not know the outcome of things.» Wouldn't He be able to do that? He would then have renounced a bit of his omniscience in order to enable free will.

Extension of the theodicy of free will

As concerns the above-mentioned objections to the theodicy of free will, there is a way out which – as it seems to me – has not yet been explicitly proposed in this context. If God has enabled the freedom of will, he will have admitted the possibility that it could also be used for evil, should the freedom of will be real. But he can prevent that souls *that haven't deserved it* are hit by evil! The one who abuses the freedom of will raises his hand to strike, he even delivers the blow, but God has arranged it such that the blow fails its target – unless it hits someone who needs the experience of being hit... Why would he need that? Of course, because he himself has hit others in the past! «What you do unto others will be done unto you» (cf. Math. 26:52, Luke 6:31, Gal. 6:7-8, Rev. 13:10). Then such an experience is not a punishment, but a lesson, so that the soul can learn how it hurts and will not repeat what it did – unless it doesn't in another way find insight and repentance about the wrong it did.

God would then in His omnipotence and omniscience have arranged it such that if someone chooses to do evil, his attempt will either fail or victims will be brought to him who need to experience on their own skins what *they themselves once did to others*. Because if it is really true what is written in the Bible that we will ourselves experience what we have done to others, this can only take place when we become victims of corresponding new perpetrators... And in this world there is regrettably not the least lack of potential perpetrators!

The justice of God would, however, never allow that a soul would suffer *undeservedly*.

Here we meet the concept of karma (the consequences of one's own actions), which is clearly included in the Bible quotation above, no matter how little theologians of the Church like such a comparison with Eastern doctrines... But karma is here put in a new context: as a completion of the theodicy of free will, which contradicts the objections mentioned. The word comes from the Sanskrit *karman* = «action, deed», formed from the root *kr*, which in the widest sense means «to do».

We must not, however, let ourselves be deceived into reproaching the one who suffers that he would deserve it! This attitude – which at least allusively is there in the East (one doesn't want to interfere with another's karma) – is unloving. Such a failure in love towards our fellow man or woman will all the more bring us a corresponding karma! The lesson of suffering for the soul can only be amplified if it also experiences love, compassion and benevolent help – the very thing it wasn't itself able to give before!

The above-mentioned objection that the will wouldn't really be free if one choice is rewarded and the other punished now appears in a new light. This is actually not a matter of punishment but of learning from experience. If someone has caused pain to others, it is not only a lesson but also a needed completion of experience that the perpetrator will have to feel the same pain himself. Before, he had a one-sided experience of a certain situation between two (or more) persons: the experience of being a perpetrator. This experience is incomplete. The experience of the other side, the side of the victim(s), is backlogging in order to make the whole experience complete.

It is a matter of learning by experience that the free will cannot be «absolute» but must always be «relative». «Absolute» free will here means enforcement of one's own will without any consideration of others. Such a will is destructive. The «relative» free will, which includes others in the consideration and doesn't selfishly seek one's own best, but the *common* best, is the constructive target of development. This ethical free will seeks one's own best only within the frame of independence, in a choice that no one else has to pay for.

The ostensible impression that one choice is punished and the other rewarded is actually wrong! It is, instead, a matter of a basically neutral principle: our actions have corresponding consequences for ourselves in any case. Good actions have good consequences and evil actions have evil consequences. It is this *quality* of the consequences that we have chosen *ourselves*! If we choose to act in the one way or another, we automatically also choose the corresponding consequences. The freedom of will does not extend to also choosing not to have unpleasant consequences: all or nothing! We cannot pick the raisins out of the cake and throw the rest away. We have to eat all of what we have baked.

Now someone may object: will the victim then not have to become a perpetrator himself, unless he already was one? Maybe there will really be certain situations in which this would be appropriate. An example could be that someone *subjectively* feels a victim because he fails to understand a just motive of a «perpetrator» and hates him without a real reason (then the hatred is the action!) – even though the latter didn't mean any evil and the «pain» has more to do with hurt selfish pride or with losing in a just competition. Thus the «victim» may himself have to experience a situation in which he is hated for a just cause or attacked by jealous losers. Otherwise the objection would presuppose that there could be suffering and victimhood without a preceding cause: suffering for no reason. That is not compatible with justice. If we assume that there is no unjust victim experience (that is not the consequence of own deeds), also this objection appears in a new light.

Furthermore: if the victim would – again – become a perpetrator, this would mean that his soul wouldn't have understood the lesson and would need to repeat it.

Preexistence and reincarnation

One rarely observes that an evildoer in his lifetime experiences himself what he did to others. If the above-mentioned word of the Bible is to be true, this will then have to occur after his death. According to the doctrine of the Church then in a purgatory or in an *eternal hell*. What kind of a justice would it be if a soul who has done evil during a few decades would have to suffer for it *in all eternity*? What is the justice in suffering for all times without a chance for repentance and return? And where is the justice in the case of children born into suffering, who experience nothing else and no happy moment? Where, then, is the deed upon which follows such own suffering? Certainly not in the mother's womb – even though this absurd possibility was actually considered by theology (from earlier rabbinical sources). How could «evil thoughts in the womb» (this was the allegation of medieval theology) in any way justify decades of suffering violence in the childhood? And more than «evil thoughts» wouldn't be possible in the womb, if even that...

If such suffering as a child is to be a consequence of own deeds (otherwise it would clearly be utterly unjust!), it could only result from a soul state *before conception*. Thus this reasoning, as a consequence, leads us to preexistence.

Because if a soul would be created only in the moment of conception, such suffering of children could never be justified in any possible way. The allegation of vicarious suffering is in itself a gross injustice. The allegation that the child would have to suffer the sins of the parents may appear valid in

our world (since as a result of lovelessness of the environment this often *seems* to be the case), but this would raise new and difficult questions about justice. Here, too, we arrive at an acceptable and conceivable solution only if we assume that such a relation between a child and its parents is merely apparent – but that in the background there is as a main reason an earlier history of the child's soul in a previous existence.

If we therefore have to assume preexistence of the soul, a new question arises: if the soul existed already before conception, how could it do such evil that it will have to experience such suffering when incarnated? Would this be possible in a condition without a physical body? Maybe. But it would certainly much more possible in another incarnation before birth! This so much more since this world has such a multitude of unscrupulous perpetrators, who will also need to have their future experiences on their own skins (so that the one who suffers may very well have been one of them). If both bad deed and suffering are here in great excess in *this physical world*, why then abstract the question and make it complicatedly artificial such that an evil deed in this world could have its consequences, and that suffering in this world could have its cause, *only* in a world beyond? Why should not for one and the same soul *both* cause *and* consequence be in *this* world? That *this would be the case* is far more logical – and thus we come to reincarnation.

This concept of reincarnation is, however, not one of an eternal wheel of rebirths without an end, but of a stairway upwards which eventually comes to an end in a spiritual resurrection.

Why, then are incarnations needed?

If evil was done in an incarnated state and therefore requires the experience of corresponding consequences, such consequences will also have to follow in an incarnated state. In the disembodied soul-state experiences of a corresponding kind can simple not be had, which bring lessons needed for soul development and maturation. There is no hunger, no poverty, no disease, no disability, no jealousy, no humiliation, no quarrel, no racial discrimination, no religious conflict, no sexual conflict, no power struggle, no claim of possession, no deprivation of liberty, no physical pain, no enmity, no greed... one cannot be killed, beaten, betrayed, tortured, locked up, repressed, abused, raped, discriminated and so on. Such experiences are simply not possible in a spiritual world. There are no perpetrators there. In the state of the soul between two incarnations, the separation between the egoistic conscious self and the unconscious self ceases to be. There is no more an unconscious self there, since it is no longer unconscious. The ego has to subordinate to our real self, the soul – or better: our Higher Self. In the incarnation, however, the ego has the greater power over us and the soul is forgotten. The consequences of what we have done have to be experienced on the level on which the actions took place.

How do we know that? From testimonies! Even though many don't want to hold it for true and regard them as fantasies, we actually do have testimonies from near-death experiences and rare cases of spontaneous memories of past incarnations, from past-life regressions, from statements of various religions and philosophies and from spiritual messages. Even if it isn't easy to separate the chaff from the wheat here, the great quantity of testimonies and their extensive conformity is in itself evidence that a reality lies behind, which is hidden to us.

References

1. Lactantius: *De ira Dei* 13.
2. Aurelius Augustinus: *De liber arbitrio* I 4, *De ordine* I 1 and *Epistolae* 215.
3. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz: *Versuch der Theodizee über die Güte Gottes, die Freiheit des Menschen und den Ursprung des Übels* («Essay on Theodicy about the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil»), Meiner, Hamburg, 1996 (new edition). English translation: *Theodicy*, Bobbs-Merrill, 1966.
4. «Theodicy» in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by James Hastings, vol. XII, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1921, p. 289-291.
5. «Theodicy» in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade, vol. 14, MacMillan, New York, 1987, p. 430-441.
6. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, see above, p. 433.

Chapter 2

**IS THE REINCARNATION DOCTRINE UNCHRISTIAN
– OR MERELY UNECCLESIASTICAL?**

The idea of reincarnation has been made *unecclesiastical*, but it is not unchristian. It is not difficult to demonstrate this but one has in all times denied the facts.

Die only once?

The reincarnation doctrine is rejected by the Dogma of the Church. Does also the Bible reject it? Here, most theologians reply *ad nauseam* with one single Bible verse – there really seems to be no other that appears to be a direct objection*: «And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment» (Hebr. 9:27). Once die – therefore: live only once...**

What does «once» mean here? We have to go back to the ancient Greek text to investigate it. Greek dictionaries offer a variety of possible translations of the word *hapax* that is used here: 1. «once, one (single) time», 2. «at some time», 3. «once for all» [1], but also 4. «at once» and 5. «once (in relation to repetition)», i.e.: «once more, once again» [2,3]. Thus this objection is untenable! The verse can even be seen as a possible allusion to re-embodiment...

Other Bible quotations by opponents

Other Bible passages, which are sometimes referred to by opponents, are even in the translated version such that a rather indirect «objection» is still more a question of reading and interpretation (a.o. [4: p. 132-133]). I here only deal with the New Testament and with what has been put forward as objections in various books [4] – because the New Testament is *the* basis of Christianity. Such an «objection» is said to be Luke 23:39-43, where Jesus tells another crucified man: «Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.» What is here supposed to contradict reincarnation is enigmatic. First, this concerns one single soul, which, second, could reincarnate again from paradise, until it can finally stay there forever. Furthermore, the man was innocent (Luke 23:41) and future incarnations may so much more be expected for the guilty. But there was a second man crucified at the same time, who behaved differently. The «objection» doesn't fit to him! Furthermore, Jesus words here contradict the Dogma of inseparability of body and soul.

Another «objection» would be Acts 17:31: «Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness...» Until that day comes, the souls of humanity have in the meantime had more than enough time for a number of reincarnations... Then 2 Cor. 5:1-4 is referred to. Here, a house in heaven is talked about, which awaits us when this earthly house is dissolved. It could, nevertheless, need several incarnations of a soul before the building of the heavenly house is completed and it can stay there...

2 Cor. 5:8 mentions that we are willing to be absent from this body, to be present with the Lord. This, again, doesn't exclude reincarnation – until that condition is finally reached – and also contradicts the dogma of inseparability of body and soul (cf. Chapter 7)! 2 Cor. 6:2 says: «... now is the day of salvation.» This is also not a clear contradiction to reincarnation, since with this, the path to salvation has just begun and may pass through a few more incarnations – in the meantime, this «day» lasts 2000 years... And what about the ones who are not yet ready to walk this path? Until they can go home, they will certainly need further incarnations! Gal. 2:16 and 3:10-13 mention the salvation through Jesus and not through the law. In Eph. 2:8-9 a similar statement is made. Here, again, we can ask the delicate question about the ones who are not yet further than that they still adhere to the

* Quotations from the Bible are here taken from the King James Version.

** Bible quotations must, of course, be seen in their context. It has been argued against believers in reincarnation that they wouldn't do this – but the adversaries themselves don't do it when they use Bible quotations in the intent to club arguments down! How could a quotation be seen in its correct context when we are only offered a dogmatically pre-determined translation alternative and the others are hidden from us?

law. The assertion that they would be lost forever is a blasphemy against God's love! (Cf. Appendix 1.) Phil. 1:23-34 again mentions the desire to be away from this physical body (already dealt with in relation to 2 Cor. 5:8).

Hebr. 10:12-14 claims that Jesus, having sacrificed himself for our sins, would be waiting to have his enemies to be made his footstool! Where, then, is the *love for the enemies*, which He taught us? If apostles could write such things, they were certainly not entirely free from stains... or the text tradition has been manipulated. But what would here contradict reincarnation is a mystery.

Rev. 20:11-15 describes the last judgement, also over the ones in hell, contradicting the Dogma of its eternity. Until this day comes, the souls of humanity have in the meantime had 2000 years time to incarnate again repeatedly! In verse 15 is written that who is not found in the book of life would be cast into «the lake of fire». Could this mean a new reincarnation cycle? The Greek text has *lím̄nēn tou pyrós*, which can certainly be translated as «lake of fire». However, *pyrós* also means «wheat, sowing», which may lead our thought to *a new sowing of souls in a new cycle!* In the «ocean» of a new creation! The ocean is an image of the primal creation in many mythologies, also in the biblical – cf. Genesis 1:2: «And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters» and 1:6: «Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...» Here, again, the text in the Bible could be taken to *support* the idea of reincarnation...

Jesus' talk with Nicodemus in the ancient Greek version

A special indication that reincarnation would not be as alien to the New Testament, as has been claimed, is found in the talk with Nicodemus. Jesus said: «...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.» Nicodemus asks him: «How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?» (John 3:3-4, cf. John 3:7).

Nicodemus doesn't think of the possibility that it could be the womb of a *new* mother! His question shows that he was thinking of a physical and not a spiritual rebirth. One has interpreted back and forth what the here used Greek word *anōthen* is supposed to mean. It can indisputably mean two things: [to be born] «anew, again, once more» as well as «from above». It could also mean «from inside», «from earlier» and «from the ancestors»* [3]. In order to avoid interpretations in the sense of reincarnation, the translation «from above» is commonly preferred in modern versions of the Bible. But only the translation «again» can be correct, because this is how Nicodemus understands Jesus! According to scholarly literature [5], there is no corresponding double-sense word in Aramaic, and thus Jesus will have used a single-sense word with this meaning. If he had used a single-sense word meaning «from above», Nicodemus couldn't have understood him the way he did.

The common theological explanation is that Nicodemus would have misunderstood Jesus because of the double sense of the Greek word. This is, of course, nonsense, since they didn't talk in Greek, but in Aramaic! Such an attempt to explain it can only be seen as a misleading artifice.**

Theological literature insists in asserting that *anōthen* would be a translation of the Aramaic word *mile'ēlā* (מִלְעֵילָא), in Hebrew *milema'elah* (מִלְמַעְלָה), the single meaning of which is «from above» [6,7]. Since the original text in Aramaic is not available to us, such an assertion is easy to make... This dogmatic predetermined interpretation backwards doesn't in any way prove that it couldn't just as well have been *another* word that means «again» – for example *tineyanūt* (תִּינְיָנוּת) or 'ôd (עוֹד) [8,9].

* In the Bible itself it is translated differently in different verses as «from above», «from the beginning», «at all times» and (Gal. 4:9) «again.»

** Should anyone want to claim that they would have spoken with each other in Greek, this would nevertheless be contradicted by the subsequently discussed backward interpretation by the Dogma since it deals with the translation from Aramaic. Some seem to have the opinion that Jesus knew Greek, but with Nicodemus he will certainly have spoken in their own language. Why should they have a conversation in a language that is foreign to both?

Jesus then says: «...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God» (John 3:5). Various theologians consider «of water» to be a later insertion [10]. What surely remains here is then only «of the Spirit», which doesn't contradict that Jesus could be talking about a soul or spirit that is born again in a new body. The Aramaic word for water is said to also mean «semen», so that one could understand the text as «...of semen and spirit...», i.e., «...of procreation and spirit...» [11].

The common interpretation of the here uncertain word «water» relates to baptism. One would have to be baptized before one can enter heaven. This will be doubtful at this place, since – at the time of this conversation – the baptism had not yet become a Christian sacrament. It is – apart from Jesus' own baptism through John – only later in the Bible that we read that the disciples had begun to baptize (but not Jesus himself). It is not before his reappearance after the crucifixion that he gives his disciples the mission to baptize all in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Math. 28:19) (cf. [12]). The latter must not necessarily mean baptizing with *water*. John the Baptist said: «I indeed baptize you with water... but he that cometh after... shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire» (Math. 3:11, cf. Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, Acts 1:5, 2:4, 11:16, 19:5-6). «Jesus talk with Nicodemus... becomes referable to baptism only for the Christian reader» [13], i.e., long after that talk...

It is uncertain if John has really baptized actively. According to the Jewish tradition, he might rather have been a *witness of baptism*, a witness of a symbolical self-cleansing [14].

The mission of baptism in Math. 28:19 is, however, by many theological researchers regarded as a later falsification [15]. The Greek word for «baptism», *báptisma*, is a word that doesn't appear earlier than the text of New Testament and it is derived from the word *báptō*, which means «to immerse». To «immerse in the Holy Spirit» and to pour a handful of water on the head can be quite different things...

It was Paul who gave a theological and symbolical meaning to the baptism [12]. «Jesus seems neither to continue John's baptism nor to put another mission of baptism in its place... «baptism» in Jesus' words becomes a simile for what he was sent for, his death» [16, enhancement there, cf. also 14].

One could, however, also understand «water» as referring to the physical part, the body with its blood and «*water of life*», its aliveness brought about by the soul – and not *only* to baptism – and «spirit» as referring to the soul. Thus the words could also be understood as «be born with body and soul» – assuming that Jesus really did use the word «water» here.

Another expression that might be considered is «the washing of regeneration» in Titus 3:5, in the New American Bible translated as «the bath of rebirth». The Greek word used here is *palingenesia*, which was sometimes used by Greek philosophers when they talked about reincarnation. This will be dealt more with later.

«The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit» (John 3:8). Here, the Greek word *pneuma* has been translated in *two different* ways in one verse of the Bible! *One* meaning is «wind», *another* is «life-giving principle» or «breath of life» in the sense of the soul, and in a *figurative sense* also «spirit» [17]. The same word is at the end of the quotation translated as «[born of the] spirit». Furthermore, the translation of *phōnē* with «sound» is here a bit indirect, since the word commonly refers to the «voice» of a living being. We can therefore clearly understand it as follows: «The soul goes as it listeth and thou hearest its voice [whispering], but canst tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth [afterwards]: so is everyone born with a soul.» Who would not think of preexistence, hearing these words, and maybe even of reincarnation?

This essentially important passage contradicts a common assertion that Jesus would be talking about a rebirth *in this lifetime* and that Nicodemus would have understood him that way [4: p. 36]. Apparently, Nicodemus didn't understand at all what Jesus was talking about, since he was told: «Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?» (John 3:10). What should he have known? This is not stated in the text. Could it be that he should have known about reincarnation?

The man born blind – a reincarnation?

Various further verses in the Bible could be mentioned here, which indicate that reincarnation isn't a very alien idea to the New Testament. Next, I will take up the story of how Jesus healed a man born blind. This has been much discussed in literature, but a newer aspect of interpretation has to do with the extension of the theodicy of free will. That reincarnation was there in the belief of people at that time is reflected in the question: «Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?» (John 9:2).

Who asks in such a way beyond doubt is thinking of a preexistence of the soul before it was born. Otherwise his formulation of the question would have no sense. In order to be born blind as a consequence of one's own sin – the one alternative in the question – such a sin must have been committed before birth. Who asks the question will probably have thought of an earlier incarnation rather than a spiritual preexistence.

How does Jesus react to the unmistakable hint in the question? He doesn't reject the thought that is so obvious in the question (and misses an opportunity if he would want to object to it). Instead, he says: «Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him» (John 9:3).

It has repeatedly been tried to see a rejection of the idea of reincarnation in these words, but the verse gives no logical basis for it. The most we can reach is that *in this special case* the suffering seems not be the consequence of an earlier offence [18]. Badewien asserts: «Jesus breaks through the model of sin and punishment that is presupposed in the question of the disciple» [19], but this is quite a willful interpretation. Moder-Frei sees it a bit more correctly: «Jesus is not interested in the *why*, but in the *for what*». Yet she maintains: Jesus «decidedly rejects the idea of reincarnation with his answer» [20]. This must be taken as a compulsory interpretation dictated by the Dogma. However, she admits: «It might be that the soul of the man born blind existed before his conception and then committed a sin in that state. But preexistence of the soul is not the same as reincarnation» [20]. She also refers to the absolutely absurd rabbinical idea (discussed in Chapter 1) that «the child could have made itself guilty in the womb of the mother». But there would also be passages, which «contradict the concept that a child could make itself guilty already in the motherly womb» [20].

Which works of God does Jesus refer to? Could it be the divine guidance of destiny through karma, which lets no one suffer without a reason? Why would Jesus then say «Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents...»? With reference to Siémons [21] this could be understood in such a way that it wasn't the very man, the person sitting there in a body born blind – who had sinned, *but the one who his soul was in another incarnation*. Looking at it this way, he (in the worldly view) then was another person than the one born blind, but with the same soul.

Siémons quotes with a somewhat ridiculing critique a certainly implausible idea of the French anti-reincarnationist philosopher and mathematician René Guénon, who suggests that the man born blind would be providently punished for future sins. Should then Jesus have given him a complimentary ticket to sin? Such as: «Now you had your punishment, so now go ahead and sin!» Some attempts to evade a possible reincarnationist interpretation lead to unexpected absurdities...

Was John the Baptist Elias?

Jesus said about John the Baptist: «And if ye will receive it, this is Elias^{*}, which was for to come» (Math. 11:14) – «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... Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist» (Math. 17:10-13).

This much discussed Bible quotation can undoubtedly be taken literally to mean that John was the reincarnation of Elias. As an attempt to disprove this, another quotation is brought forward: «And

* I here use the more international and modern form «Elias» rather than the older and more colloquial form «Elijah», used only in English.

they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No» (Joh. 1:21). But when Jesus says that he really was Elias, should we not believe Him more than John? And John is in any case right with his reply. He *is*, in the moment he is asked, really not (no more) Elias, but John! This still doesn't exclude that he *could have been* Elias. Maybe he knew himself what Jesus knew about him and answered consciously in this sense. Maybe he knew about his past as little as we know about our past lives and answered accordingly.

But the very fact that people ask this question to John the Baptist shows that they considered it possible that John could be the reincarnation of Elias!

Theology refers in this case to the Bible report that Elias wouldn't have died like we others but have arisen to heaven with his body (2 Kings 2:11 – in another way of counting: 4 Kings). Therefore, they say, he couldn't reincarnate in a new body, since he would still have his old one, but his spirit could merely have «overshadowed» John the Baptist. According to our understanding of heaven as a spiritual abode, a physical body like the ones we have couldn't exist there* (cf. 1 Cor. 15:35-44: «...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body»). This means that Elias would have become like the others in heaven who have no physical bodies. The difference between «reincarnate» and «overshadow» may therefore not be essential... If anyone can reincarnate from heaven, Elias must also have been able to do it out of the transformed state he must have acquired there. And furthermore: if his *spirit* would be with John to allegedly «overshadow» him, where then was his physical body, if he still had one?

As a support of the idea of «overshadowing», another verse of the Bible is often referred to, according to which John would «...go before him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elias...» (Luke 1:17). It is hard to see a contradiction in this against the possibility of reincarnation. On the contrary, this verse could support the reincarnistic interpretation!

Another attempt for an objection [4: p. 38] is that Elias appeared together with Moses to Jesus and His disciples on a mountain (Matth. 17:3, Mark 9:3). Here is no contradiction, since at the time when this occurred, John the Baptist was already dead. Therefore, Elias was – in the reincarnistic interpretation – no more in the body of John and could certainly appear in his old shape!

With Origen, we may also ask how a not previously existent soul that was created in the moment of its conception could be able to *recognize* the soul of Jesus and for that reason leap in his mother's womb, as John did (Luk. 1:41 and 44) [22]. This would rather be expected from the returned soul of Elias.

One of the best-known authors of Swedish literature is Victor Rydberg. He wrote an extensive treatise: *The Biblical Doctrine of Christ*, which was published only in Swedish and Danish, but the Swedish text, first published in 1862, with time came out in five revised editions and several new printings [23]. The learned and well-read author exhibits important discrepancies between the Dogma and the Gospel. In an extensive appendix: *On the preexistence of man*, he with reference to rabbinical sources gives evidence of the following: it was a general opinion in Judaism at that time that Elias would through a «second coming» prepare the way for the Messiah and anoint him. That is what John did! The Bible tells us about John the Baptist, that he would be the voice that says: «Prepare ye the way of the Lord» (Math. 3:3, John 1:23). Most Jews, however, didn't know that Elias had returned in the shape of John, which according to Justin the Martyr would be the reason why they didn't see the expected Messiah in Jesus.

«Whom say the people that I am?»

Jesus once asked his disciples: «...Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again» (Luke 9:18-19, cf. Luke 9:8, Math. 16:13, Mark 8:27-28; Mark localizes the occasion to Caesarea Philippi, Luke gives the impression that this happened in Bethsaida). According to Jewish sources, it is highly prob-

* Unless the «heaven» would be an extraterrestrial civilization and the gods would be astronauts... Also this theory is around. If the Church insists that Elias would have kept his physical body in heaven, it could easily promote such ways of thinking!

able that there were many in Israel at that time who believed in reincarnation (cf. Chapter 8). When some assumed an again risen old prophet in Jesus, this is obviously what they were thinking of.

The incarnation of Christ

No one will have dared to assert that Christ would have been created in Mary's belly and hadn't existed before. The mainly silent opinion is instead that Christ, preexistent from the beginning, incarnated – but not *re*incarnated. Thus Jesus himself said: «...Before Abraham was, I am» (John 8:58). One reason for the persistent adherence to the doctrine of the «immaculate conception» is, of course, that the Church always wanted to drag the conception through sexuality – created by God! – through the mud. Another may be to put Jesus' birth in an exceptional position. He alone would be incarnated, but we are not (allowed to be)... The evangelist John wrote: «And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us» (John 1:14). Paul wrote: «For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell» (Col. 1:19).

Another heretic question will be strictly forbidden by the Dogma: could it then be that Christ had already incarnated in this world before? As one of the major figures in the Old Testament? Or even as one of the most important spiritual teachers in the East? What this could lead to would be disastrous for the Dogma... it would have to seriously reconsider its relation to other religions...

When Christ returns and if He will then again come in a physical body, this will clearly be a case of reincarnation!

The wheel of (re-)birth

A concept that sounds quite Buddhist actually does appear in the Bible. In James 3:6 is written: «And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature». The New American Bible has: «...setting the entire course of our lives on fire». Translations in other languages have «...wheel of development», «...wheel of life» and similar things. We again have to turn to the ancient Greek text for a clarification, which uses the words *trochón tēs genéseōs*. *Trochós* has only one meaning: «wheel, round disk.» Any other translation is at least figurative. The related word *tróchos* may mean «turn, revolution», but this is no contradiction. *Genéseōs* is derived from *genésios*, «belonging to the tribe» or «...to the birth». The latter fits well with the «body» we are born with, which is said to be defiled by the tongue (cf. [24]). The literal meaning «wheel of birth» sounds very similar to the Buddhist term: «wheel of reincarnation».

It is remarkable that the German translation of the book by Albrecht [4] plays similar tricks with translation as the translators of the Bible do with the texts of the New Testament. The original book [4: p. 38] more correctly has «wheel of genesis», but the German text has «wheel of the ancestral one» (whoever that is supposed to be...), which seems intended to further obscure the meaning...

What is the meaning of saying that the tongue would defile the body and turn the wheel of birth? Obviously evil talking! False interpretation, distortion as well as lies, gossip, defame and slander of others add to our karma [24]. Manipulations of translations fall in this category...

When the ancient Greek talked about reincarnation, they sometimes used the word *palingenesía*. This very word is found twice in the Bible, however – how could it be otherwise? – interpreted differently [25]. «Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration...» Math. 19:28) and «...by the washing of regeneration» (Tit. 3:5). The German Bible and several other translations here have «rebirth» instead of «regeneration». Of course the interpretation as a spiritual regeneration or rebirth is admissible, but is the other one – that as reincarnation – truly impossible, or simply not allowed?

There are many more verses in the Bible, which could give evidence for a possible belief in reincarnation among the people at the time of Jesus, and they have been discussed repeatedly. Since I have nothing new to add to them, I refer to literature (a.o. [24, 26-28]).

Has Jesus taught reincarnation to his disciples?

It is indicated in the Bible that Jesus spoke of many things in the inner circle which he didn't mention in the public, which were therefore not recorded in the New Testament – cf. John 16:12: «I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now» (cf. Mark. 4:11, 4:33-34). Is there really clear proof that he did *not* teach a concept of reincarnation to his disciples? The Gnostics claimed that he did...

A Gnostic text *Pistis Sophia* [29] is stated to contain the record of talks with the disciples which Jesus had when he reappeared to them after the crucifixion. In this text, reincarnation is taught several times. It will be quite obvious that the Church doesn't acknowledge authenticity to this book but instead claims that it would be the invention of a Gnostic, allegedly Valentin. This might convince those adhering to the Dogma but neither the one opinion nor the other can be proven. The Gospel testifies the reappearance of Jesus.

In this Gnostic text, an interpretation of the following passage in the Bible is given that will be contrary to the Dogma but nevertheless renders it more understandable: «Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing» (Math. 5:25-26, Luke 15:28-59) [29: p. 191:19-33 and p. 185:13-19]. The Gnostics related these verses to reincarnation, and that one has to reincarnate again until one has reconciled with the enemy. What is striking here is the use of the word «prison», since Gnostics and also Origen regarded the body as a prison for the incarnated soul (cf. Chapter 3).

The word «prison» also appears at other locations in the Bible where it lets us think of the same meaning. In 1 Pet. 3:18-20 we are told that Christ came and «preached unto the spirits in prison» – to *us*, being incarnated souls? One might in the same sense consider the meaning of «prison» in Math. 18:30, 25:36-44, Rev. 2:10 and other verses. And how should we understand «prisoner of Jesus Christ» (Eph. 3:1, 2 Tim.1:8, Phil. 1:9,23) or «prisoner of the Lord» (Eph. 4:1)? Maybe as an *incarnated* one belonging to Jesus?

Are the Bible verses reliable?

Mainly esoteric defenders of reincarnation have repeatedly asserted that the Bible texts would have been falsified in earlier centuries. Passages referring to reincarnation would have been removed. Their opponents deny this insistently. Until now there have been little real historical basis for such allegations – even though it is known that so called *correctores* have been given the task of correcting the texts. The question is to what extent they have intervened in the texts – only correcting the language and historical facts, or even changing textual contents according to the Dogma (like it has been proven that the translators of Origen's texts did, see Chapter 3)?

I will not deal further with this thematic here. Today's texts give us sufficient possible references to reincarnation, in any case when tracing them back to the ancient Greek text. Interventions in the form of a dogmatically preconceived *translation*, which hold back alternative but linguistically correct translations as being forbidden, is already manipulative and sense-modifying! This leads further to the question to which extent the ancient Greek texts agrees with still more ancient Aramaic texts, where the Greek version is a translation of them. But these Aramaic texts are today withheld from us and hidden – as far as they still exist – in the Vatican library.

Since a number of years we have an extensive testimony in the work of the exceptionally learned German Church historian and critic Karlheinz Deschner. He wrote a monumental work on the history of the Church, which is, however, ignored in theological circles [30]. But also other critics have raised these questions. Cf. Gal. 1:7: «...but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.» Some especially valuable and culturally based corrections can be read in the books by the Jewish professor Pinchas Lapide (cf. [14]).

Was there a reincarnation belief among the early Christians?

Another much discussed question is if there was a belief in reincarnation among the early Christians, or not. The Church denies it, but source literature gives us another picture. More will be written about this in the next Chapter (cf. [33]).

The Gnostics claimed to have had access to a part of the tradition of what Jesus had taught in the inner circle, and they maintained that he had taught reincarnation. «Some Gnostics saw for example the salvation through Christ as a salvation from the wheel of reincarnation» [20]. The Church regarded the Gnostics as heretics (competing with its Dogma), but to me they belong to the first Christians (not counting some excessive groups with somewhat extreme opinions). In fact, there were hardly any other Christians than the Gnostics before the Church was established! There were a few somewhat different expressions of the Gnostic doctrine and different Gnostic communities.

The Cathars, who in the 13th century were cruelly murdered in a genocide up to the last woman and the last child (Christian love for our fellow man and woman in the practice of the Church...), had their belief in reincarnation from the Gnostic tradition. They lived strictly according to Jesus' teachings of love for all beings in the creation. They were therefore vegetarians and even refused to kill an animal.

The belief of the Cathars was derived from a Gnostic movement in the Balkans: the Bogumils. There is here (for reasons having become actualized today) an interesting historical connection to the Muslims in Bosnia, even though the Gnostic background has oozed away in the sands of history. Many believe that the Muslims of Bosnia come from the earlier Turkish rule. But there is also another and different origin! One later wanted to force the Bosnian Bogumils to subdue to the Catholic Church, but they then preferred to instead become Muslims!

Another Gnostic religion, which taught reincarnation and survived longer than the Cathars, is the one of the Manichaeans.

Further verses indicating the preexistence of the soul, its reincarnation or karma*

Verses indicating preexistence:

- Eccl. 6:10: «That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man.» The new German «Unified Translation» has: «Whatever someone has been, ... it was recognized that he will only become a human being.» This obviously refers to what he has been before he was born.
- Jerem. 1:4-5: «Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.»
- Rom. 9:11-13: «For the children being not yet born, ... Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.» How could God hate Esau if this is not because of something that was before he was born?
- Ephes. 1:4: «According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.»
- Solomon's Wisdom 8:19-20 (today apocryphic, earlier in the Bible): «Then I was a child of good manners and was given a fine soul. Since I was of good upbringing, I grew up having an undefiled body.»
- Gospel of Thomas Log. 19 (apocryphic): «Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being.»
- Gospel of Philips II,3,64,10-12 (apocryphic): «The Lord said, «Blessed is he who is before he came into being. For he who is, has been and shall be.»»

Verses indicating reincarnation:

- Psalms 90:3 (other counting: 89:3): «Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.» Return to God? Then it indicates preexistence. Return to Earth? Then it indicates reincarnation.
- Matth. 18:3: «Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.» To become like little children could be understood as become newborn, being born again «in the flesh». Bauer [24] explains «converted» as coming

* This addition was not included in the German version.

from the Aramaic *tub* which means «return, come back». German Bible versions has «umkehren» which is a double-sense word and means both «convert» and «return». Already Clemens of Alexandria explained this verse in the same sense (*Admonitions to the Heathens*, IX,82): «Because if you don't become like children and are born again, as the Scripture says (Matth. 18:3, John 3:5), then you will not come to the father and enter heaven» [24]. The Greek text has *strafēte kai gēnēsthe hōs tà paidia* or: «turn around and become as the children» or even «...become procreated as the children».

The common interpretation of becoming like children is to become as innocent, trusting and even unsuspecting and unquestioning as children usually are. Who of the representatives of the Church would fulfil such a requirement for entering the kingdom of heaven? Since hardly a Christian behaves according to the standard interpretation, the one above *makes more sense*...

- Rev. 3:12: «Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.» He shall no more incarnate?
- Solomon's Wisdom (see above) 1:16-2:22: «The ungodly struggle for it... with words and deeds... then they are rough people and say: ...Our time passes like a shadow and when we are gone there is no return... So they imagine and fail. Their wickedness has blinded them so that they don't recognize God's secret judgement.» They don't believe in a return – in being born again in «the flesh»?

Verses indicating karma:

- Gen. 9:6: «Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.»
- Num. 14:18 (cf. Deut. 5:9): «The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.» The Gnostics understood «generation» as «incarnation». The latter interpretation is supported by Deut. 24:16: «The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.» This contradicts the interpretation as vicarious suffering!
- Prov. 22:8: «He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity.»
- Job 4:8: «Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.»
- Hosea 10:12-13: «Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground... Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity.»
- Obadiah 15: «... as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.»
- Matth. 5:7: «Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.»
- Matth. 6:14-15: «For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.»
- Matth. 7:1-2: «Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.»
- Matth. 7:17-18: «Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.»
- Matth. 23:12 (cf. Luke 14:11 and 18:14): «And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.»
- Matth. 26:52: «...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.»
- Luke 6:37-38: «Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.»
- John 5:14: «...sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.»
- Rom. 7:9-10: «For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.»

The Gnostics understood this as a reference to reincarnation [27]. That the «sin» is «revived» could be understood as a «revival» of old deeds in the form of karma in a new incarnation..

- Cor. 9:6: «...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.»
- Gal. 6:7: «...for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.»
- Rev. 14:13: «...and their works do follow them.»

Most of these verses have been referred to by Kirkegaard [11] and Orbe [27]..

References

1. Gerhard Kittel: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* («Theological Dictionary to the New Testament»), vol. 1, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1933, word ἄπαξ.
2. E.A. Sophocles: *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1900.
3. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott *A Greek-English Dictionary*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, improved ed. 1996.
4. Mark C. Albrecht: *Reincarnation*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove ILL, 1982. The German translation mentioned in the text here is: *Reinkarnation – die tödliche Lehre*, Schulte + Gerd, Asslar, 2nd ed. 1989. This book is an exceptional collection of untrue ideas, distortions, misinterpretations, misleading and unfactual statements and misunderstandings about reincarnation!
5. Rudolf Schnackenburg: *Das Johannesevangelium* («The Gospel of John»), Teil I, Herder, Freiburg, 1986, p. 381.
6. *The Interpreter's Bible*, Bd. VIII, Albingdon Press, New York/Nashville, 1952, p. 504.
7. Gerhard Kittel: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1, see above, word ἀνωθεν. Here quite unconvincingly the translation of the word *anōthen* as «again» is described as untrustworthy. That it would «not at all correspond to the way Nicodemus was treated by Jesus» doesn't *at all* agree with the interpretation here! An interpretation that is objectionable to the Dogma but linguistically founded.
8. Julius Fürst: *Hebräisches und chaldäisches Schul-Wörterbuch über das Alte Testament* («Hebrew and Chaldean School Dictionary over the Old Testament»), Otto Holtzes Nachf., Leipzig, 1905.
9. Michael Sokoloff: *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, Bar Ilan University Press, Ramat-Gan, Israel, 2nd printing 1992.
10. Schnackenburg, see above, p. 383.
11. Karl Aage Kirkegaard: *Reinkarnation er forenelig med kristendom* («Reincarnation is Compatible with Christianity»), Sankt Ansgars Forlag, Copenhagen, 1999.
12. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Mircea Eliade, vol. 2, MacMillan, New York, 1987, p. 61.
13. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* («Lexicon for Theology and the Church»), ed. by Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, vol. 9, Herder, Freiburg, 1964, col. 1312.
14. Pinchas Lapide: «Von Johannes, der nicht taufte», in *Ist die Bibel richtig übersetzt?* («About John who didn't baptize» in «Is the Bible Correctly Translated?»), vol. 2, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh, 2nd ed. 1996, p. 69-70.
15. Karlheinz Deschner: «Die Taufe» in *Der gefälschte Glaube* («The baptism» in «The Falsified Belief»), Knesbeck & Schuler, München, 1988, p. 99-122, with references to works by well-known theologians.
16. *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* («Religion in History and the Present»), ed. by Hermann Gunkel and Leopold Tscharnach, vol. 5, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1931, col. 1004.
17. Gerhard Friedrich: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (see above, founded by G. Kittel), vol. 6, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1959, word πνεύμα.
18. Ernst Sehringer: *Reinkarnation und Erlösung* («Reincarnation and Resurrection»), Rudolf Fischer, Pforzheim, 1988, p. 28-30.
19. Jan Badewien: *Reinkarnation – Treppe zum Göttlichen?* («Reincarnation – Staircase to the Divine?»), Friedrich Bahn, Konstanz, 1994
20. Elfi Moder-Frei: *Reinkarnation und Christentum. Die verschiedenen Reinkarnationsvorstellungen in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem christlichen Glauben* («Reincarnation and Christianity. The Different Concepts of Reincarnation in Confrontation with the Christian Belief»), EOS, St. Ottilien, 1993 (thesis)
21. Jean-Louis Siémons: *La Réincarnation. Des preuves aux certitudes* («Reincarnation. From Proofs to Certainties»), Retz, Paris, 1982, p. 211.
22. Origenes: *Vier Bücher über die Prinzipien* («Four Books on the Principles»), translated and commented by Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 2nd ed. 1985, I 7,4, p. 241.
23. Viktor Rydberg: *Bibelns lära om Kristus* («The Biblical Doctrine of Christ»), 12th ed., Bonniers, Stockholm, 1923.
24. Hermann Bauer: *Wiedergeburt – oder auf ewig verdammt?* («Reincarnation – or Condemned Forever?»), Frick, Pforzheim, 1993.

25. Joseph Dey: *Παλιγγενεσία. Ein Beitrag zur Klärung der religionsgeschichtlichen Bedeutung von Tit. 3,5* («Παλιγγενεσία. A Contribution to Clarifying the Religious-Historical Meaning of Tit. 3,5»), Aschendorff, Münster, 1937, p. 30-31 (thesis).
26. James Morgan Pryse: *Reincarnation in the New Testament*, reprint by Health Research, Mokolumne Hill, CA, 1965.
27. Antonio Orbe: «Textos y pasajes de la Escritura interesados en la teoría de la Reincorporación» («Texts and Passages in the Scripture of interest for the Theory of Reincorporation»), in *Estudios Eclesiásticos* («Ecclesiastic Studies») 33, Madrid, p. 77-91, 1959. An extensive and especially valuable collection of Bible verses from the argumentation of the Gnostics.
28. Jerry L. Rothmel: *Reincarnation: Does it make sense?*, School of Metaphysics, Windyville MO, 1976 (Address: School of Metaphysics, National Headquarters, HCR #1, Box 15, Windyville, MO 65783).
29. The *Pistis Sophia*, together with *Die beiden Bücher des Jeú* («The Two Books by Jeú») and *Unbekanntes altgnostisches Werk* («An Unknown Ancient Gnostic Work»), vol. 1 in the series «Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften» («Coptic-Gnostic Texts»), ed. by Carl Schmidt, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1981.
30. Karlheinz Deschner: *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums* («Criminal History of Christianity»), vol. 3: «Die alte Kirche. Fälschung, Verdummung, Ausbeutung, Vernichtung» («The Old Church. Falsifications, Stupefaction, Exploitation, Extermination»), Rowohlt, Reinbek, 1990. I consider the title to be wrong; it should rather be «Criminal History of the Church»!
31. Robin Lane Fox: *The Unauthorized Version*, Penguin, London, 1992, especially Chapter 10: «Original Scripture?».
32. Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln: «The History of the Gospels» in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, Dell, New York, 1983, p. 327-329.
33. ADDENDUM. There is always a certain risk involved when referring to an author who has been branded as controversial or labeled negatively by official institutions. If such a reference is abused, this is mere strategy... An author who is considered controversial is Elizabeth Clare Prophet. I am not a member of her organization and therefore little informed, but rumors of controversies have also reached my side of the Atlantic. But who would I be to cast the first stone? I once found her book *The Lost Teachings of Jesus I. Missing texts: Karma and Reincarnation* (Summit University, Livingston MT, new printing 1988, co-author Mark L. Prophet) and was disappointed since it contains very little concrete information and few real facts. Later, I found another book by her, which appears to be worth reading. It seems to be well researched and gives good aspects on the question of reincarnation and Christianity. It is: Elizabeth Clare Prophet and Erin L. Prophet: *Reincarnation: The Missing Link in Christianity*, Summit University, Corwin Springs MT, 1997.

Chapter 3

ORIGEN AND THE MANIPULATION OF HIS TEXTS

There have repeatedly been various controversies about Origen. It has been claimed that he would have supported the idea of reincarnation or even have taught it – so said also some of his contemporary opponents. The dogmatic theology asserts the opposite, but lacks proof, since his original texts have been destroyed and remaining translations have been proven to be censored. It is undisputed that he taught the preexistence of the soul. Historical facts and still available texts indicate, however, that he with high probability actually was a supporter of the belief in reincarnation. This will be shown in this chapter.

It spooks around in literature that Origen – and with him his doctrine of predestination – would have been condemned through anathemata as a heretic at the Council in Constantinople in 553. One will have liked the world to believe this. What really happened has been clarified from the end of the 19th century on by researchers of Church history. The true story is, however, hardly paid attention to. In reality, the declaration of heresy occurred before the Council and without the agreement of the Pope.

Besides Origen, some other – mainly Greek – fathers of the Church have given positive statements concerning the idea of reincarnation. A few examples are:

Gregory (Gregorius) of Nyssa (approx. 334-395): «Because the view that the soul after its separation from this body would move into others is not in insurmountable contradiction to the resurrection, for which we hope» [1].

Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus) (354-430) (rejecting the ideas of Plato and Plotin that the human soul could also incarnate as an animal): «Nevertheless, as has been said, Porphyrius has thought much more correctly about this, that the human souls at least can only descend into human beings, while he unhesitatingly abandoned animal prisons» [2]. (As concerns the expression «prison» for the body of an incarnated soul: see Chapter 2 and below.)

Tertullian (Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus) (approx. 160-220): «If there is any ground for the moving to and fro of human souls into different bodies, why may they not return into the very substance they have left, seeing this is to be restored, to be that which had been?... But this we would do chiefly in our own defense, as setting forth what is greatly worthier of belief, that man will come back from man – any given person from any given person, still retaining his humanity; so that the soul, with its qualities unchanged, may be restored to the same condition, though not the same outward framework» [3].

Here, the interpretation prescribed by the Dogma wants us to think that this would refer to a restoration of the old body after the end of this era. But it appears more logical to think of a reincarnation in this same material world, though in another body (new «outward framework»)!

Good collections of quotations can be found in literature [4-6].

That various fathers of the Church rejected reincarnation *as an animal* is in the dogmatic interpretation usually «suitably» extended and so described as if they would have rejected reincarnation *on the whole*.

Manipulations of Origen's texts

The most famous of the fathers of the Church was **Origen** (Origenes, 185-253 or 254), whose *Peri Archōn* in various text passages has some positive remarks concerning reincarnation, but no clear statements in its favor. The Church claims that he would have rejected reincarnation. Is this true? His more than 2000 writings were nearly all burnt in the 6th century, so that we cannot today judge it from his original texts. What we have today of *Peri Archōn* is, besides some fragments like quotations in other texts, only the Latin translation by Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia (approx. 345-approx. 410), and parts of an earlier translation by Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus (340-419 or 420) into the same language.

Rufinus openly admits in his preface that he has «corrected» the text in order not to run into conflict with the Dogma! So what did he change? It is obvious that any positive statement about reincarnation – if there were such in the original text – would contravene the Dogma and would therefore necessarily have been «corrected» by Rufinus...

Rufinus writes in his preface about the earlier translation by Hieronymus: «...and since in the Greek a number of minor offences are found, he smoothed and purified all when translating so that the Latin reader will find nothing that deviates from our belief. We here also do the same...» To his own translation, Rufinus continues: «This means that we take care not to reproduce such things in the books of Origen which deviate from his own opinion and contradict him.» And further: «...as I believe to have shown that his books at various text passages have been disfigured by heretics and malevolent persons... Where we therefore found something in his books that contradicts his own orthodox teachings about the trinity, as he has given them at other places, we have assumed this to be falsified or unsuitable. In such a case we have either left it out or formulated it according to the norm, which we found frequently stated by himself. When, however,... some things were too obscurely expressed, we have, in order to make the corresponding passage more understandable, added for explanation what we... found... in other books by him. Yet we have not stated anything of our own, but only returned his own statements to him – even though they may have been given elsewhere» [7].

In a separate preface to book 3 of *Peri Archōn*, Rufinus writes: «...I have not translated what appears contrary to other statements by Origen and to our belief,... have I for the sake of brevity considered it suitable, to leave certain things out» [7].

Hence the strategy for justifying this censorship is the assertion that parts of the text have from allegedly manipulated versions been brought back to Origen's original version, at least in their sense. We will soon see the truth about this!

To which extent Rufinus has interfered with the text material has been revealed through the translation of another writing by him: his comments to letter to the Romans. 28 papyrus sheets with Origen's original text were found In Taura in Egypt in 1941. They have been translated and commented by Jean Scherrer [8]. The comparison with Rufinus' text became very revealing, indeed – to such an extent that Scherrer frequently uses the word «translation» in quotation marks when he refers to Rufinus' text. «It becomes indisputable that Rufinus has a tendency towards diffuseness... His translation becomes a rewriting» [8].

Rufinus has

- inserted text passages which Origen didn't have
- excessively simplified complex formulations
- displaced text passages
- left text passages out which Origen had
- modified text passages, in a few cases even to such an extent that Rufinus' version states the *opposite* of what Origen had written!

«This insufficiency of the translation mainly manifests in passages of a theological or philosophical character» [8]. Scherrer first gives some examples which deviate but yet are less deformed, and comments: «However inaccurate the translation sometimes may be in the passages we have just examined, nothing lets us doubt the character of authentic origenistic thought. But there are others in which this very authenticity becomes questionable» [8]. Then follow much worse examples.

«There is a personal, profound and frequent intervention by the translator in his translation... it is a mixture of authentic origenistic elements, remodeled origenistic elements and non-origenistic elements» [8].

No basis for the allegations of the Church

With this text tradition, herewith proven to be manipulated in a way that with all probability and with Rufinus' confession is valid also for *Peri Archōn*, the Dogma has no realistic basis for its assertion that Origen would have denied the idea of reincarnation! It has itself destroyed the proofs... Instead

we must read the text with care and wherever a passage appears illogical or contradictory suspect an intervention. The same is, of course, valid for all other translated texts of Origen, which are equally unreliable as evidence or objection.

Very early, already when the original writings still existed, Origen was criticized for having supported the idea of reincarnation! His critics and opponents of that time have fortunately in that manner preserved some text passages for future generations, which have disappeared in Rufinus' translation or were to be found in no more existing texts (which may, however, still be preserved in the Vatican library). They have done it in literal quotations or retold it in their own words.

We may take a statement by Theophil of Alexandria as an example of such a quotation: «How are we supposed to understand his [Origen's] statement that souls are repeatedly fettered to bodies and again separated from them...?» [7: p. 279].

Fallen angels

Origen writes in *Peri Archōn* that we are, in a way, fallen angels. We once out of weariness of the good [7: I 3,8, p. 183-185*] or laxity or inertia [7: FN** p. 183-185; I 5,3 p. 205; II 9,6, p. 413] turned away from God. We were therefore displaced to lower forms of existence (or states of consciousness) on different levels in a hierarchy under Him [7: p. 203-205]. Those of us who sank to the second lowest level became souls, which for punishment were inserted into bodies like into prisons [cf. 7: I 1,5, p. 109 and p. 273-279]. The soul is a dress for the body [7: II 3,2, p. 303].

An important section of Chapter 5 in the first book of *Peri Archōn* has been left out, according to references in other sources [7: FN p. 203]. In Chapter 8, Origen furthermore had «a very extensive treatise» on the soul and of becoming an animal, which is missing in the handed-down text we have today [7: FN p. 263]. Another text by Origen: *On the Resurrection* has become completely lost to us [7: FN p. 421].

Even though the level of the human beings in this hierarchy is in some text passages described as the lowest, other passages yet mention one more level below it: that of adversaries and demons [7: I 6,3, p. 225; cf. I 7,5, p. 247]. Body and soul are not described as being an inseparable unity on the level of the humans. Instead the soul is inserted in the body, which would be dead without it, and it holds the body together and keeps it alive [7: I 7,4, p. 239; II 1,3 p. 289, III 6,2, p. 649; IV 2,7, p. 721-723; cf. the second quotation from Hieronymus on p. 249].

Through the fall of these entities, God became obliged to create the material world as an abode for them [7: p. 273 and 277; II 3,1, p. 301].

On what level the fallen rational being (*nous*) dwells and which state of being it acquires depends upon its virtue and wickedness [7: I 8,2, p. 255; III 1,21, p. 549; III 1,23, p. 555-557; III 1,24, p. 561; III 3,6, p. 601].

In any case preexistence - also reincarnation?

It is indisputable that Origen taught the preexistence of the soul. He even discriminated between *two* kinds of a soul of a human being: a higher soul that is truly preexistent and another soul that is formed at the conception [7: III 4,2, p. 607-613]. In the light of modern psychological discoveries,

* As concerns references to [5] in comparison to other translations of *Peri Archōn* in modern languages, it is to bear in mind that [5] has, as far as possible, been completed or supplemented through inclusion of fragments by Hieronymus and several others. This is its important advantage over other versions! [5] is simply the most complete version available, and this is the reason why I also in the English-language version of my book still refer to this scholarly work by two professors at the University of Heidelberg, though it is in German. References to book, section and verse, such as «I 5,3», enable finding the quotations in other translations. In a comparatively incomplete translation, however, which is based on Rufinus' text *alone*, some of the references to [5] may not be contained. Furthermore, the page numbers in references to [5] are always uneven, since the even-numbered pages have original texts in Latin, or – wherever possible – in Greek and the opposite pages with uneven numbers have the translation.

** FN means «footnote».

we could no doubt compare this view with the presence of an unconscious and a conscious (ego-related) self, resp. But did Origen also teach reincarnation?

In the dogmatic interpretation of the text, a possible new incorporation of a soul is normally described such that it could only take place at the end of the present era, in a new creation [7: II 1,3, p. 291]. At the end, all souls return to God [7: II 3,5, p. 315; II 3,7, p. 327; III 5,5, p. 635; III 6,1, p. 647], and there is no eternal hell [7: FN p. 439].

Do Origen's teachings only relate to eons and eras of creation and hence to a rebirth in a new creation after the end of this world? Or is this also something that Rufinus and Hieronymus have «smoothed» (see above)? The already mentioned contemporary criticism of Origen would rather suggest the latter. At many places in the handed-down version of the text, one may well assume that with the formulation «this world» Origen meant «the actual physical life» of a human being. What, then, could he have meant with a «future world» (in the choice of words of the Latin translator) – could it be a new incarnation?

In the forms of existence, which the angelic and demonic entities have, there doesn't seem to be a time limit for its continuance within an eon. This is certainly very different for a human being! The physical life in a body normally lasts less than 100 years, which is only a fraction of an eon. What should then become of a human soul for all the rest of the eon – in comparison enormously long and almost appearing as endless? Is it supposed to «sleep» somewhere during millennia, until an angel comes and blows its horn? This folkloristic view, based on the Dogma, is obviously absurd. The living existence of a human soul must clearly continue somehow after the death of the body. It will not be put in «narcosis» and kept «on stock» in an immense mass storage of souls for a future new creation.

The fate of the soul after death

What does Origen say will happen to the soul after it has left the body?

1. The ones who were good enough ascend and become spiritual beings on a higher level [7: I 8,4, p. 261]. They no more have a physical body of the earthly kind [7: II 2,2, p. 299; II 3,2, p. 305-311; II 8,3, p. 395; II 10,1-4, p. 421-427; III 6,4-7, p. 653-663] or they have no body at all [7: II 3,7, p. 325].
2. The ones who were bad enough sink a step lower and enter a «purgatory». This is, however, not a cleansing «fire» into which the soul is thrown, but it has to do with coming to one's own insight about wrongdoing, evil things and injustices during the embodiment. This insight «burns» like a fire in the soul [7: II 10,4, p. 429-431]. Hieronymus talks about a «fire of consciousness» [7: FN p. 249]. The concept is therefore not the same as the one, which arose later in the Dogma of the Church (cf. Chapter 13). Some who descend to the lowest level may even become demons [7: III 1,23 and FN p 557; cf. p. 273]. In order to avoid that, some souls choose to rather enter animal bodies [7: I 8,4, p. 263-265].

The lowest level will be the «hell» that the Church talks about. It isn't eternal in Origen's description, but will be dissolved at the end of this world. A soul that has descended to that level will not have to stay there until the end. Could it be that the Dogma has «rounded up» this Gnostic concept of a lowest level to «eternal» in its duration, since – even if it wouldn't last forever – it would last as long as the material creation remains? Has it therewith postulated that a soul, which has descended to that level, would have to stay there until the end of this material creation – «rounded up» also «eternally» – instead of the time needed for conversion? Maybe this «rounding up» was adopted because otherwise the uncomfortable question could arise if a soul released from «hell» could again become a human being?

There is nothing mentioned in the available handed-down texts about what happens to the soul that *isn't yet good enough for a higher level nor bad enough for the lowest* – i.e., to the great majority of the souls... The learned and wise Origen cannot have left this third alternative out, which is striking through its absence! It can only have been removed from the text. It would have to be:

3. The other souls become human beings again. That is: reincarnation!

This alternative will very probably be described in the above mentioned «very extensive treatise» on the soul, which became lost due to censorship – otherwise one would hardly have seen a reason to remove it in its entirety! Hieronymus translates (the passage is missing in Rufinus' version): «Now, a periodically repeated entering in the bodily state cannot be excluded.» Rufinus' interpretation than gives the impression that this would refer to future worlds: «It cannot be doubted that matter again comes to be after certain periods of time, that bodies are formed and the multiplicity of a world is built up anew...» «Unsmoothed» (see above) this could mean: «...that after certain periods of time the soul again enters in the material existence, takes on a body and begins a life in the multiplicity of this world...» Later in the text: «One should also know that many a rational creature up to the second, third or fourth world persists in its original condition and leaves no space for change in itself...» (i.e., it doesn't develop) [7: III 6,3, p. 651-653, cf. II 10,8, p. 437] «Unsmoothed» this easily leads the thought of the reader to the Bible verse that speaks of «the third and fourth generation» (Exodus 20:5). Christian Gnostics understood «generation» as «incarnation» in this verse. Justinian (in his letter to Menas, see below) quotes the following fragment: «...it then follows conclusively that the existence in the body is not an original condition but comes to be in certain time intervals as a result of certain incidents among the rational beings. These beings (then) need to have bodies. The bodies are again dissolved into non-existence when the improvement is completed; and this takes place continuously» [7: IV 4,8, p. 813]. In Rufinus' version at another location in the text: «...would it appear consistent that the corporeal, which in intervals of time is created out of nothing...» [7: II 2,1, p. 297]. Comment by the German translators: «(in intervals of time): this seems to suggest a periodical existence... This thinking doesn't fit well in the actual concept, could it be the rest of a consideration, which Rufinus has deleted?» [7: FN, p. 297].

This discussion of the doctrine of Origen is admittedly not a *proof* that he has taught reincarnation, but it indeed makes such a thought very near at hand. The argumentation is here certainly not more inept than that of dogmatic theology when it strives to show the contrary. Here, the reasoning is based on facts and logical conclusion beyond the manipulated text tradition (as far as this is today possible). The reasoning of the Church, however, is mainly based on a dogmatic view of today's text version in a corrupt tradition – a ground of sand to build such thoughts on.

Theology and Church under the emperor Justinian

The emperor Justinian (482-565), an ascended son of a Macedonian farmer, is known to have been exceedingly cruel, unscrupulous and inconsiderate. This holds even more for his wife Theodora (497-548) [9] who made a career that was unique in history. She was born as the daughter of a bear-keeper Akakios in the circus of Constantinople and as a child acted in the circus herself. In her youth, she participated in orgies and prostitution. It is told that she, already as a young girl, practiced sodomy with sons of the noble visitors to the circus [9,10]. It is also reported that she in her youth didn't have intercourse with a man like a woman, but «like a boy with the miserable» [9] (obviously meaning anal intercourse, maybe to not become pregnant or maybe to not lose physical signs of virginity). She was extremely and inconsiderately selfish and spent much time with the care of her beauty, which she occasionally exhibited in showing herself naked without inhibitions. No form of enjoyment was alien to her and she never had enough of luxury and pomp.

Theodora will have been the most beautiful woman in Constantinople and Justinian desired her, but couldn't marry her, since the law prohibited a man of a position above the level of the senate to marry a common woman, especially an actress. After the death of his mother, Justinian changed the law and could finally marry Theodora in 523. Another tradition holds that he would have ennobled her so that he could marry her. He became emperor and she empress in 527. Both had spies in the town and who was against the couple or in some other way didn't «fit» could soon die a very unnatural death. The liquidation of opponents with time took such an extent that it came to an uprising in 532, which was soon battered down.

Deschner writes: «...while she earlier passionately enjoyed coitus, she now passionately enjoyed having people tortured. She went every day to the executioner's chambers and greedily watched the

tortures» [10]. She had had an illegitimate son before she married who had been given away to Arabia. He now came back to his mother – and «disappeared» without a trace... Her tyranny could be compared to that of the psychotic Caesar and the emperor became her puppet.

It is said that a monk was one day given audience by the emperor [9]. As he was about to enter the hall, he was like struck by lightning and ran away. He then told that he had seen the lord of the demons sitting on the throne «...with a mild appearance, softly lowered eyebrows and a lowered voice, he ordered to kill thousands of innocent persons, destroy towns and incorporate all the property with the treasury of the state» [10].

The Church was for both a tool for power and they wanted to make it a monument of their selfish splendor. Whoever in questions of theology and of the Church had another opinion than that of the emperor couple would have to fear for his life. Theodora and Justinian had even had the two predecessors of Vigilius, the Pope of that time, murdered with the assistance of the latter. Under such dangerous conditions, the attention was a few times deflected away from delicate questions through propositions to focus on some specific question. One such delicate question was if Jesus had had a human or a divine body. The emperor pair adhered to the Monophysite doctrine, which states that Jesus' body would have been divine. Others maintained that it would have been human. In order to deviate the attention from this, it was suggested to condemn Origen's doctrine of the preexistence of the soul. It came to anathemata against Origen at a synod. It was later, for another reason, also suggested to the emperor to call to a Council, which took place in 553, in order to discuss a very different matter. More will be told about this below.

It can be assumed that any form of reincarnation concept would be an atrocity, especially to Theodora. After her unique career, her glory could only be increased through proceeding to the highest position in heaven. A rebirth as a common human being would be utterly unacceptable to her. At that time, there were monasteries in Palestine in which Origenism was still taught – to which preexistence and possibly also reincarnation belonged. This was reported to the emperor pair.

The anathemata against Origen and the Council in Constantinople

By order of the emperor Justinian, the patriarch Menas had called to a session of a kind of continuous synod (*synodos endēmousa*) in Constantinople, at which in 543 anathemata against the origenistic doctrine were set up. The wording of the first anathema is: «If anyone supports the invented preexistence of the souls and the monstrous restoration that follows from it, he is anathemized» [cf. 7: p. 825*].

One of various conceivable forms of preexistence is obviously reincarnation. The Greek words, which have been translated as «monstrous restoration», are *teratōdi apokatástasin*. The word *apokatástasis* in other contexts signifies the restoration of God's creation in its original holy order, in which all souls are reunited with God. This is not monstrous, but wonderful and cannot be meant here. What is meant in the anathema? *Maybe be the restoration of a new body for the soul, which for the Dogma would truly be «monstrous»* [11]! This is then another piece of evidence that Origen would have written positively about reincarnation. At that time, original texts still existed. Most of them were burnt in the second half of the 6th century – maybe in order to destroy further evidence.

The emperor even supports such an interpretation of the first anathema himself in his *edict* against Origen: «A part of the spiritual beings is, in his opinion, fallen in sin. They are for punishment banned into bodies. According to the measure of their sin they are even imprisoned a second, a third or more times in a body. After completed purification, they return to their earlier condition, free from sin and physical shape» [13: p. 46].

As concerns these anathemata, there were two versions in 543. One that Justinian set up in his written order to Menas and one that was set up at the session of the synod. The Pope was *forced* to sign the latter [12: p. 50 and 17; 11: vol. 3]. That these anathemata were not set up ten years later at

* [5] states the year as 553, referring to [10] – more about this later – and translates in a somewhat «moderating» manner as «fantastic» instead of «monstrous». However, most other works translate as «monstrous» or «terrible». Other authors also refer to [10] but support the following description of the events [11-13].

the Council has been shown by later theological source research [12-14]. The version of the synod was afterwards added to the documents of the Council of 553 and was found together with the latter in one single case in Vienna at the end of the 18th century. Protocols from the council kept at other locations do not contain the anathemata. It therefore appears most probable that these anathemata don't belong to the protocols. The Council dealt with the «Three-Chapters» question and not with Origen.

The «Three-Chapters» question had to do with the posthumous condemnation of three bishops of the 5th century for allegedly heretic texts, which weren't even origenistic. Pope Vigilius didn't agree with the intent to condemn them, also not with condemning someone after his death, which was contrary to the custom of the Councils. He was therefore taken by force from Rome. Soldiers of the emperor seized him in a Church as he was about to give the communion to the people and brought him aboard a ship, and this was the beginning of a long and forced journey to Constantinople. When he had finally arrived there, he sought refuge in a Church, where the soldiers again seized him. Ancient sources report that they grabbed the poor old man «at his arms, his legs and his beard» [13] and pulled so strongly that a thin pillar, to which the Pope was holding himself, was about to break. He then was brought to the imperial palace and put in a luxurious prison.

The actual part of the palace was under reconstruction and the Pope could escape through a break-through in the wall. He then from a hiding-place exchanged letters with the emperor, who answered in a very rough language but at the end declared to do no harm to the Pope if only he would return. The Pope went back to the Byzantine capital, but staid away from the Council. A further reason for him was that the Western bishops were largely underrepresented and the Eastern Church had a strong predominance. 159 eastern bishops had been invited but only six western.

Waiting for the arrival of the Pope in order to open the Council, the emperor during the first meeting produced the now ten-year-old anathemata against Origen – even though they may have been *written down anew* – and requested from the bishops present to sign them. The majority will undoubtedly have done so more out of fear for the cruel emperor than out of conviction. The text was presented to them and signed by them *before* the Council was declared open and then obviously wasn't a subject for the Council itself. These anathemata are therefore in any case not a decision by the Council [12-15] and certainly don't fall under its alleged «infallibility» [12: p. 137-138].

The Pope was deposed

Due to the extraordinary consequences for the Pope of refusing to attend to the Council, the following may also be told for the sake of completion. It was only at the second meeting that the emperor declared the Council open without the presence of the Pope, which is against the rules for Councils. At the seventh and second last meeting, the emperor ordered to delete the name of the Pope from the diptychs, which is equal to a removal from office! This will be a unique case in the history of the Church. He was then condemned to compulsory labor in the mines [13: Part III, p. 135]. After subsequently agreeing to the decisions of the Council in two letters to the emperor – without a word about Origen or any anathema against him – he was set free, but died in 555 in Syracuse from a biliary colic on the way home.

The Christian is allowed to believe in Reincarnation

Thus neither the belief in preexistence nor the idea of reincarnation has ever been condemned by the Church in an official Council.

No Pope has ever *ex cathedra* agreed to such a condemnation nor pronounced one. The Pope of that time, Vigilius, seems not even to have known about these actions of the emperor before the Council was officially opened, and apparently also not the immediately subsequent Popes. The Church has never forbidden the Christian to believe in reincarnation! The Bible doesn't forbid it, either – rather the contrary... if it is read with a sound human intellect and without the straightjacket of the Dogma.

Catholic theologians today often express themselves with some caution as concerns the question of reincarnation, even though they don't agree to it. Thus it has, for example, been said that God is almighty and therefore can put a soul in a new body, if he wants to [16]. Evangelical theologians, however, are often more strictly rejecting and disapproving.

References

1. Gregor of Nyssa: *Gespräch mit Makrina* («Discussion with Makrina»), in: «Bibliothek der Kirchenväter» («Library of the Fathers of the Church»), Josef Kösel & Friedrich Pustet, Munich, 1927, p. 302.
2. Aurelius Augustinus: *Gottesstaat* («Divine State»), vol. II, in «Bibliothek der Kirchenväter» (see above), Joh. Kösel, Kempten and Munich, 1914, p. 130.
3. Tertullian: *Apology*, in «The Ante-Nicene Fathers», vol. III, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, T&T Clark, Edinburgh and Wm.B. Eerdmann, Grand Rapids (Michigan), p. 53 – in the same volume is also *A Treatise on the Soul* by Tertullian, in which he also attacks various ideas of reincarnation, especially in the form of animals, but doesn't in principle disapprove with reincarnation as a *human being*: p. 207-217.
4. Hermann Bauer: *Wiedergeburt – oder auf ewig verdammt?* («Reincarnation – Or Condemned Forever?»), Frick, Pforzheim, 1993, p. 132-141.
5. Joseph Head and S.L. Cranston: *Reincarnation, an East-West Anthology*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton ILL, 1961.
6. Joseph Head and S.L. Cranston: *Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery*, Julian Press, New York NY, 1977.
7. The best translation today in a modern language of Rufinus' version is beyond doubt: *Vier Bücher über die Prinzipien* («Four Books on the Principles»), translated and commented by Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 2nd ed. 1985. What is especially important here is the reconstruction, as far as possible, of lost parts of the text.
8. Jean Scherrer: *Le Commentaire d'Origène sur Rom. III.5-V.7* («Origen's Commentary to Rom. III.5-V.7»), Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, Cairo, 1952.
9. Procope de Césarée (Procopius of Caesarea): *Histoire Secrète* («Secret History»), translated by Pierre Maraval, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1990.
10. Karlheinz Deschner: *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums* («Criminal History of Christianity»), vol. 2, Ch. 7, Rowohlt, Reinbek, 1988. The title of this work is in my view ill chosen and should have been: «Criminal History of the Church»!
11. Professor Görgemanns (cf. [5]) in a private correspondence considered this question interesting but stated the opinion that with an «existence before birth» one without a body (Greek: *nous*) would be meant and that the «monstrous restoration» would be the idea to return to that condition. An idea that can hardly be called «monstrous»... In my view, the explanation in this Chapter will be more probable, since it is far more «monstrous» to the Dogma. Existence before birth includes, as one alternative, reincarnation.
12. Charles Joseph Hefele and H. Leclercq: *Histoire des Conciles* («History of the Councils»), Letouzey et Ané, Paris, vol. II, section 2, 1908, p. 1182-1196 and vol. III, section 1, 1909, p. 1-132.
13. Franz Diekamp: *Die origenistischen Streitigkeiten im sechsten Jahrhundert und das fünfte allgemeine Concil* («The Origenistic Controversies in the Sixth Century and the Fifth General Council»), Aschendorff, Münster, 1899 (thesis). Diekamp's text is a bit unclear at this point and leaves the question about dating to 543 quite open and is therefore not as clear an evidence for dating the anathemata to 553 as is maintained in [7: FN, p.825]. Allegedly, Diekamp would have cautiously held himself back from too far-reaching conclusions.
14. Ferdinand Prat in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. XI. p. 311-312, ed. by Ch. Herbermann, Appleton, New York, 1913.
15. G. Fritz in *Dictionnaire de la Théologie Catholique* («Catholic Theological Dictionary»), vol. 3, part 1, Letouzey et Ané, Paris, 1938, col. 1580-1585.
16. The priest and professor Andreas Resch, Innsbruck, in a TV interview about the reincarnation belief in an Austrian youth program.

Chapter 4

THE FALL OF THE ANGELS IN A MODERN VIEW

Is the concept of the world that modern physics has compatible with the one sketched in the previous chapter? This chapter is an attempt to bridge the two worlds. The considerations may partly be rather abstract and may be hard to enjoy for some readers, since such parts rather require a bit of «mathematical» thinking. But that's how modern physics is... This is therefore unavoidable if such a bridge is to be built.

Dimensions of cosmos

Our modern physics is already calculating with various abstract mathematical models, which are based on theoretical concepts of a cosmos with more than three dimensions. In certain cases, physics even assumes that the world actually does have more dimensions.

We are living in three dimensions – actually rather in two and a half, since we have little control of the third dimension. In fact, we live on the curved two-dimensional surface of a sphere. Certainly, we can climb mountains and rope down in ravines, but this doesn't mean that we are free to move in the third dimension. Mountains and ravines are not more than folds of the surface we live on and just more sharply bent and twisted parts of its basically two-dimensional world. Birds are far ahead of us in their mobility in the third dimension, and also the fishes (even though only in the sea). To make us mobile in the third dimension, we need flying devices as «crutches» and they only temporarily give us this mobility.

However, the third dimension is directly perceivable for us and easily grasped with our senses.

The fourth dimension is different. We cannot perceive it. There is a theory that time is part of the fourth dimension. But there will doubtlessly be much more to it than time. We can indirectly observe time through changes and courses of events but we cannot move in it. We even don't know what time really is. It is most probably not the simple linear course, which, however, serves very well as an approximation in science and technology.

There are several indications of a fourth dimension, which not only scientific works report about but even the media. Tachyon experiments belong to the more classical examples. Tachyons are electrons, which move faster than light and therefore probably in a fourth dimension, at least in part. June 6, 2000, I read a note about a new experiment in a newspaper. Allegedly, a ray of light was sent at 300 times the (normal) speed of light through an experimental chamber. It was told that it actually left the chamber on its other side *before* it was sent into it and hence moved backwards in time! This requires an enormous measurement accuracy and will rather be a possible interpretation within a tolerance range. If it is true, the light ray must for a part of its path have moved through *the fourth dimension*.

A riddle in modern physics could possibly be solved if a further dimension is taken into consideration. This could actually have a certain similarity with the fact that many things having to do with the human being become more easily explainable when the existence of a soul is taken seriously. The various elementary particles known today are insufficient for explaining how matter is composed. It seems that a yet undiscovered particle is missing, which is called Higgs' particle. This is the case as long as we adhere to a three-dimensional model, but maybe no more if we assume a multidimensional universe! Could the calculation then fit better? Until now, modern physics calculates with higher dimensions mainly in very abstract contexts. In this case, one might arrive at a too unavoidably concrete indication that our universe really is multidimensional. Until now, this is rather taken as a speculation, a model of thinking or a matter of mathematics, and not as an actual reality.

Still higher dimensions than the fourth are still more difficult to conceive for us. Here, the perceptibility by means of our organs of sense fails completely. Yet this doesn't exclude that they may be perceivable, but then by beings with other organs of perception than the ones we have. But we can at least calculate successfully with higher dimensions in mathematics and theoretical physics.

Multidimensional life

If the cosmos – only as an example, since we cannot know it – would have nine dimensions, it is not only imaginable but also even very probable that there are beings in the creation who live in other dimensions than we do. Because it would be just as illogical to assume that only «our» three dimensions are populated – simply because we know nothing else – as it would be to assume that of innumerable planets in the cosmos only our Earth would be populated by a civilization of living beings. Some entities might even live in all nine dimensions. But there could also be beings like us who live in *other* three dimensions than the ones we know. Let us assume that we live in the three «lowest» dimensions 1, 2 and 3. There could then easily be beings who live, for example, in the three dimensions 4, 5 and 6. We couldn't have any contact with them, since our organs of perception are developed for the dimensions 1, 2 and 3. The beings in the dimensions 4, 5 and 6 could probably not perceive us, either.

But a being that – still only as an example – would live in the dimensions 3, 4, 5 and 6, or in the dimensions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, could probably perceive us, but we would probably not be able to perceive it directly. There could also be beings living in «higher» dimensions than «ours» who, nevertheless, have organs of perception with which they could perceive us. We wouldn't even suspect their existence.

As a consequence, our *consciousness* is three-dimensional. There could, however, be beings with a multidimensional consciousness.

If the creation has many more dimensions than our three, it would even be highly improbable that there would be no forms of life in dimensions we don't know. It would, actually, be quite hypocritical to assume that only «our» world would be «populated» – being merely a limited region, a part of a multidimensional cosmos – but not any of all the other parts.

When we die, we leave the physical body. Does this mean that we go to other dimensions? This would mean that we as «souls» still have a conscious self but not the kind of body we were used to in the incarnation. Our consciousness would then also have to be transposed to other dimensions and we would in our new shape discover or develop faculties of perception which allow us to perceive the new dimensions. A «soul» would then be a being, much «like you and me», which is merely «centered» in other dimensions, with a correspondingly different consciousness – extended or transposed in the sequence of dimensions. Or our soul may already now be the part of us, which is «centered» in other dimensions all along, but we then have simply forgotten this in our conscious minds.

This is, however, a different thing than the theory of parallel worlds, which can be found in metaphysical and esoteric as well as physical literature. It suggests worlds *of the same* dimensions, which in some manner are separated from our worlds.

Does this way of seeing things put the existence of God in question? Certainly not! God is in this view a «maximally dimensional» or even superdimensional entity and the one who created it all. This discussion could even bring God a little bit closer to us, in the sense that He by a very small step becomes more comprehensible!

«Fall» through the dimensions

If we now assume that the dimensions of the creation has a relation to the old Gnostic doctrine of a hierarchy of angels, about which Origen (and others) wrote, this doctrine also becomes a bit more comprehensible to us in the light of modern physics! The «fall of the angels» could then be seen as a downward transposition within the dimensions in which entities and beings live – probably also a restriction of the number of dimensions of which they are conscious. Before the fall, they might have lived – for example – in the dimensions 3 to 8, but some of them after the fall in the dimensions 1 to 3, as (according to Origen) angels who became human beings. These «fallen» beings would then no more be conscious of higher dimensions. They could no more perceive them, but they would deep inside, in their unconscious self, have a hidden memory of them.

This might have happened to us.

What until now has been an old mystical theory and also a doctrine of various religions now finds a preliminary, hypothetical basis in the light of modern natural sciences. The concepts and ideas connected with it become accessible for scientifically and technically minded persons and allow to a bit more easily grasp areas that were hitherto difficult to imagine. But «higher worlds» are yet not perceivable to us unless we have a «sixth sense». Could it be that the science of parapsychology moves in border regions of potential perceptions of other dimensions, which few persons with a more or less rudimentary or developed sixth sense are capable of?

But one might also imagine a «fall of dimensions». Not only a fall of beings within certain dimensions, but of dimensions themselves. Maybe the creation was one multidimensional unit in the beginning and then regions of limited numbers of dimensions were formed only with the «fall». In the Bible, the ancient Greek text talks about *katabolē kosmou*, commonly translated as «foundation of the world», in translations to other modern languages than English also «creation of the world» (John 17:24, Eph. 1:4, Hebr. 4:3 and 9:26, 1 Peter 1:20, Rev. 13:8). But *katabolē* actually means «fall, casting down» and *katabolē kosmou* would then, more properly translated, be «fall of the cosmos» [1]! Origen is quoted to have said that, because of the fall of the angels, God had to create the material world as an abode for them (cf. Chapter 3).

The Indian creation doctrine of the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy in a detailed manner describes how the grossly material world came to be in the form of steps of increasing condensations of a «primary substance» or «energy» [2,3,4]. In this, we may see a parallel to a hypothetical stepwise restriction of dimensions in corresponding regions of the creation.

Dimensions of hell

According to Origen (see Chapter 3) there is in the hierarchy under God a lowest level right under the one of the human beings: the level of demons and adversaries. This, too, fits in the model of dimensions in the creation. Also this level can constitute a partial region of dimensions*.

Origen taught that the «punishment in hell» would last a limited time. It would be contradictory to God's love if such a «punishment» would last forever, since there could then never be a just relation between offence and «punishment». An offence couldn't exist that wouldn't be expiated in a *limited* time! Or could there be an «unlimited offence»?

The ninth anathema against Origen in Justinian's letter to Menas reads: «If anyone says or has the opinion that the punishment of demons and ungodly human beings would last a limited time and would at some time have an end, or that demons or ungodly men would again be brought in, he is banned» [5].

It is obvious that souls would have to be able to ascend also from such a «lowest» region of dimensions. What is most at hand is that they would in a next step become *human beings*. Hence, souls would incarnate as humans from «above» as well as from «below».

Parapsychology and the theory of perception

Many persons have an attitude towards parapsychology like the supporters of the medieval theory of the ether had towards Maxwell, when he in 1873 proposed his theory of electromagnetic interaction. They later had to revise their attitude since there was no other explanation for the result of the Michelson-Morley experiment of 1897. According to the ether theory, the speed of light would have to be higher in the direction of rotation of the Earth than measured against the rotation. However, Michelson and Morely found no difference.

Today all our wireless communication builds upon Maxwell's theory. Even computers would hardly exist without the electronic development it led to.

The attitude that many hold against parapsychology is quite ignorant and not rarely arrogant. One could sometimes even talk about «scientific prejudice»... The part «psychology» in its name came to

* The question arises what is here to be understood as «higher» and «lower». This will in the first place have to be taken as qualitative. Or could there even be beings with a «two-dimensional» consciousness? Why not? Cf. [8]!

be since the theory of perception, a scientific branch of psychology, also took interest in phenomena like extrasensory perception. Maybe «paraphysics» would be a better name. There is no clear-cut line between parapsychology and metaphysics. The difference is mainly that the former to a higher extent occupies itself with perceptions, which appear unexplainable to our conventional science.

The conventional view of the world is strictly limited to what can be perceived with our five senses – what can be seen, heard, touched, smelled and tasted. Is there really clear evidence that there is nothing more than that in the cosmos? If there is, it is only so that we have no organs of perception for it! The fact of not perceiving doesn't allow the conclusion that there would be nothing else in the world than phenomena, which we can perceive. If we nevertheless assert the latter, we are like the blind who denies the existence of what he cannot see nor reach to touch.

One might object that we today have immeasurably vaster possibilities of perception through scientific instruments! They give, for example, access to regions of electromagnetic waves, which are invisible to our eyes. This alone shows that there is more to the creation than can be immediately perceived... But the theories and modes of function of such instruments are completely derived from knowledge of our world as it has developed out of observations with our five senses. A species of blind people could neither have developed electron microscopy nor television! How could we develop anything that has to do with a perception that we never had and couldn't even imagine? It is true that the development of scientific instruments reaches far beyond the borders of physical perception by means of organs of our bodies. But the instruments always follow the direction in which these organs point! They are in reality mere extensions of our organs of perception [6] – just like higher mathematics is a development, which began with counting fingers and toes in the stone-age caves of our forefathers. And what led to the computer started with the medieval abacus. However enormously far these things have taken us, the development always followed the very direction that was originally set by a beginning that was characterized by the corresponding sensory organ. Even though our scientific instruments are very highly developed, they could for basic reasons never be conceived for perceptions relating to a hypothetical «sixth sense». And would they through coincidence after all register something like that, no one wants to believe it, anyway, but rather assumes a «technical fault» or artifact... It has been said about our conventional scientists that they need only have one eye and that this may well be colorblind, since all they need to do is to watch the stand of an instrument needle or the printout from a measuring device... [6].

If we don't want to still continue along the same trace as before – even though this may take us into new regions ahead – the only possible alternative for further expansion of science is to strive, in a way, «sidewise» beyond the *border areas*! Thus, many a «border science» will tomorrow be a recognized science! To put up limits set by a familiar area and regard only what is within it as reality is not a scientific attitude, but pure dogmatism. In earlier times those who thought differently were burned at the stake. The «modern» method is to ridicule them.

Maybe you have read the story by H.G. Wells about the man who came to the island of the blind. It seems that there actually are persons in our society who really have a «sixth sense» and can perceive a little bit more than we others. They often themselves don't understand very well what it is that they perceive. But we treat them like the seeing man was treated on the island of the blind...

Scientific materialism

Dogmatic scientific materialism at least indirectly began with René Descartes (Cartesius, 1596-1650), who in the 17th century postulated a difference between

- (1) what can be measured, and
- (2) what can only exist in the thought.

One soon began to regard (1) as true reality and (2) as unreal [6]. What couldn't be measured couldn't be taken seriously. Thus philosophical and scientific materialism arose.

It was only when Maxwell's theory through the experiment by Michelson and Morely became *measurable* that Maxwell was no more ridiculed.

Even though Descartes' above-mentioned distinction influenced science to «develop» in this direction, he seems not to really have thought along the lines of scientific materialism himself. He actually introduced this dualism such that it along with the material aspect also contained a concept of a soul. He wrote that he out of his thinking recognized himself as a soul that in principle was independent of his body. A new book deals with his dualism in this view and calls it «Descartes' error» [7]. Here, however, Descartes was right in my opinion! The author of the book, Damasio, regards Descartes' observation as a mistake since in his view the soul could only be a condition in the brain or in nervous tissue. This is Damasio's error, since such an understanding of the soul is a preconceived idea. With this, no more needs to be said about that book...

Scientific materialism holds that the soul could only be a neuronal condition or process. Therefore there could be no soul without a body and no existence of the self after death. The doctrines of all religions oppose this since they maintain that the soul essentially is beyond anatomy and physiology. It does manifest in the corporeal realm, but this doesn't mean that it must also have its location there! The corporeal manifestation can just as well be a «shadow» cast by the soul. Since modern physics is already calculating with higher dimensions, it is about time that biology and medicine will do the same thing, and philosophy, too... We might really be multidimensional beings who have forgotten their simultaneous existences in higher dimensions.

I would like to explain with an analogy, which – like all analogies – cannot be complete. Imagine that an extraterrestrial scientist comes to this Earth. On his planet, all are deaf and they communicate with a highly developed sign language. He observes that people in an office building occasionally put a device at the side of their heads and move their mouths in a strange manner. He follows the cable and finds a switching central for the telephone system in the basement. He opens the box and watches light-emitting diodes light up and darken and he discovers circuit boards with electronic chips. With his measuring devices, he detects a permanent movement of energy in them, but misses the fact that an external optical transmission line imbedded in the wall is also connected to the box and sends invisible infrared impulses into it without touching the circuit boards. Then he finds a similar box in a demolished building nearby and takes it home. He analyses its contents, can dissolve the plastic of the chips and discovers little silicon plates with strange patterns. He understands that this will be a kind of a small computer circuit with a technology that is alien to him. He therefore thinks that the persons in the house in certain time intervals connect themselves to that computer. But why do they perform such strange mouth movements? He never has the idea that there could be something beyond this. He doesn't realize that the box is merely a part that connects the outside with the inside, and that the essential is not in the box.

This is similar to how scientists regard the brain and the nervous tissue when they don't dare to see that the essential goes past it and leads beyond the body. They only observe activities in the brain and associate them with thinking. But what are emotions and why do people have these strange intuitions? If the latter turn out to be true, this can only be coincidence to the scientists...

A game of thoughts with higher dimensions Are there connections to higher worlds?

Another idea that relates to a higher-dimensional world has less to do with the thematic in this book but may be mentioned for the sake of interest as a game of thought in multidimensional stereometry. It will, however, at the end connect with Origen! How would you imagine a hole *through* the two-dimensional world? That is: a transverse passage through a world of two dimensions. A sheet of paper may serve as a model for such a world. The simplest form of a hole *through* the paper is circular. Hypothetical inhabitants of that world would perceive the hole as something that to us is a stroke, which, however happens to appear equally long from whatever side it is viewed. This from everywhere around equally long stroke is to us a circle, but to the inhabitants of the two-dimensional world a *two-dimensional sphere*.

A reason for discussing this is that there are some strange reports about spherical apparitions, to which I will come back.

Similar considerations can be found in a very interesting philosophical novel *Flatland* [8]. It is a story about the people in a two-dimensional world that is visited by an inhabitant of the three-dimensional world. They can perceive him only when he penetrates their world. The visitor is for simplicity described as having the shape of a sphere and the two-dimensional people can only perceive its cross-section with their world when the sphere intersects with it. If it is beyond their world, they cannot perceive it. Otherwise they perceive the cross section of the sphere in a «side view» like a very thin circular plate, seen from the side, looks like a stroke that has the same length from whatever side it is viewed.

Let us now establish an analogy to our three dimensions and continue the thought experiment. This requires a bit of mathematical thinking and is, otherwise, not easy to follow.

What would, accordingly, be a hole *through* the three-dimensional world? It wouldn't be an infinitely long cylinder, a circular tunnel in our world, because this would be a *three-dimensional* hole! It would be a hole *in* our world and not *through* it! Its analogy in the two-dimensional world would be an infinitely long column *along* that world. What we are here talking about is a *four-dimensional* hole *transversely* through our world (similarly, the circular hole through a plane surface is a *three-dimensional* hole *through* the *two-dimensional* world). In its simplest shape and in *our* three-dimensional view such a hole would be a *sphere*! It would be a hole only as seen from the fourth dimension. To us, it wouldn't be perceivable as a hole, but we would see a *three-dimensional sphere* (like the inhabitants in «Flatland» see a special kind of «stroke» in their world, a two-dimensional sphere).

Just the same as the people in «Flatland» couldn't perceive the «stroke» as a hole through their world, we couldn't perceive the sphere as a hole through our world – because the hole appears as such only when seen from a dimension that is at least *one step higher*.

When it is bright in our three-dimensional world, the people in «Flatland» would see the «stroke» shine, because the light would through it enter from our world to their. They would see a shining «two-dimensional sphere».

So far, the consideration is valid and mathematically correct in a *four-dimensional* stereometry. It might not be very easy to follow for the one who is not used to mathematical reasoning, but it is a matter of fact that the four-dimensional hole *through* our world would to *us* appear as a sphere.

Apparitions of shining spheres

There are reports since ancient times about shining *spherical* appearances. They have today sometimes been taken to be UFOs, which will, however, belong to a very different category. Origen has described spiritual entities of a *spherical* shape. This is reflected in the 5th anathema of Justinian (cf. Chapter 3): «If anyone says or has the opinion that, in the resurrection, the bodies of humans will awaken in a spherical shape, and he doesn't confess that we will awaken in an upright position, he is banned». It is also reflected in the 10th anathema of the synod: «If anyone says that the resurrection body of the Lord be ethereal and of a spherical shape, and that the resurrection bodies of the others be of the same kind... he is banned.» [5]. Could such spheres be intersections with the fourth dimension? Could they in a way be «holes» or apertures to it?

A motive that to me to with some hesitation include these thoughts, that appears almost «synchronistic», is this. While I was writing the manuscript for the German edition of this book, I met a highly intelligent young man who had himself seen a clear light-sphere apparition. In his youth he one day with convincing clarity saw a big ball of light which for a while followed him on his way to the school and then floated away. He somehow felt observed by it. It seems that other persons didn't see it. One may now speculate about what it might have been, from imagination to hallucination. However, the experience was completely real to him and remained an unforgettable memory. His desire to understand it led him to take up a study of physics at a university. Just because of this experience he has the intention to deal with border areas of this science, which may be controversial to many a person.

Could it be that some of the almost infinitely many light-spheres in cosmos which we call suns are also «holes» to higher dimensions, through which light and maybe also matter enters our three-dimensional world? In a way gateways to other dimensions? What consequences could this have for

the gravitational theory? Such a thought doesn't seem completely absurd in view of the new theory of gravitation, based on Einstein, since it relates to curvatures of the three-dimensional space, which would then necessarily extend into the four-dimensional one! Where else would the three-dimensional space bend? This is another example from modern physics, which deals with a model of more than three dimensions...

It is interesting that Origen has also described the sun as an entity (reflected in the 6th anathema of the emperor and the 3rd of the synod).

Could beings from higher dimensions enter our world through such a «hole» or light-sphere? Now the thought experiment becomes a bit too fantastic, doesn't it? But something like that is actually described by an Argentinean child who may well be a being that has incarnated as a human for the first time [9]. He said that he came to our world through the sun...

References

1. Viktor Rydberg: *Bibelns lära om Kristus* («The Biblical Doctrine of Christ»), Bonniers, Stockholm, 12th ed. 1923. Appendix: *Om människans förtullvaro* («On the preexistence of man»).
2. Oscar Marcel Hinze, Theodora Hugentobler: *Der Lichtweg des Sāṃkhya* («The Light Path of Sāṃkhya»), Akademie für Phänomenologie und Ganzheitswissenschaft, Im Weinberg 12, DE-78345 Moos-Weiler/Bodensee (Germany), 1996.
3. Gerald J. Larson: *Classical Sāṃkhya*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979.
4. *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, ed. by Gerald J. Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1987, vol. IV: «Sāṃkhya».
5. Origenes: *Vier Bücher über die Prinzipien* («Four Books on the Principles»), translated and commented to by Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 2nd ed. 1985.
6. Lectures by Oscar Marcel Hinze, Moos (Weiler), Germany.
7. Antonio R. Damasio: *Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, Pan, London, 1994.
8. Edwin A. Abbott: *Flatland. A Romance of Many Dimensions*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962.
9. Cabobianco, Flavio M.: *Vengo del Sol* («I come from the Sun»), Manrique Zago, Buenos Aires, 3rd ed. 1992. A highly recommendable book! It has been translated to German and French, but an Internet search didn't reveal an available English translation. As soon as he could speak, the boy began to tell about spiritual realms and said that he had come from there. He also made drawings as sketches of cosmic structures. The parents took notes of what he said and saved his drawings, which were years later published as a book.

Chapter 5
DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE
RIDDLES OF THE CREATION

Dimensions of human existence

The creation of human beings is described in Genesis. On the sixth day, God said: «Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air...» (Gen. 1:26). This verse talks about men in plural. The next verse has: «So God created man in his own image,... male and female created he them». The plural could possibly refer to only two, but this is uncertain. In any case, also the woman is an image of God! God has in himself both the male and the female [1]. Sexuality is almost raised to a command, since they should multiply diligently... (Gen. 1:28).

It is only after the seventh day that Adam is created. So he wasn't the first human, after all! «...and there was not a man to till the ground.» (Gen. 2:5). Therefore, God created Adam out of dust and blew a soul* into him through his nose (2:7). Here nothing is mentioned about being an image of God (but later in Gen. 5:1). Adam was put in the garden Eden, in a way as God's gardener. There were many trees with magnificent fruits and in the middle grew the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God warned Adam not to eat from it, since he would otherwise die. Later God created Eve for him.

The serpent persuaded Eve to eat from the forbidden tree: «Ye shall not surely die... your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil» (Gen. 3:4-5). And the serpent was right! They really didn't die and their eyes were opened! But, maybe, their three-dimensional eyes... In a way, they might yet have «died», but in a relative sense of a change of condition of being. In reality, there is no absolute death. There is no cancellation of existence, but only a change of state and that will be what took place.

Before, they were naked but not ashamed (Gen. 2:25). Now they were very ashamed and covered themselves with fig leaves and hid from God. When God came, he first didn't find Adam, but had to call him. Why did they hide? Because they were naked: «Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree...?» (3:11).

Since they covered their sexual parts**, the Dogma asserts that eating from that tree would mean the sexual union. It is true that the word «know» (Hebrew: *lada'at*) is in the Bible also used in this sense (e.g., in Gen. 4:1), but this cannot be the meaning here, since Adam didn't have a sexual partner when he in Gen. 2:17 was forbidden to eat that fruit! Eva wasn't yet created! Her creation wasn't even planned in that moment. He could, at most, have masturbated... Even though God had created human beings already, Adam was completely alone in Eden. We don't know where the already created humans were, but they obviously were not in Eden. Adam couldn't even have done it with an animal, because they don't appear in the garden before Gen. 2:19. Seeing his loneliness, God had mercy with Adam and first gave him animals as companions. Seeing that the animals weren't enough company for him, he later created Eve, who appears in Gen. 2.22.

It is remarkable that one fact seems to have escaped almost all readers. First, Eve ate the fruit from the tree *alone*. After that she persuaded Adam to eat the fruit, too, but again *alone*. Sexuality is normally something you practice *together*. If this really were to mean the sexual union, it would certainly have been written that they ate the fruit *together*!

Eating from the tree of knowledge will therefore have to mean something else, but the Dogma made sexuality a scapegoat. What was it, then? According to Origen and others (cf. Chapter 3), it

* «Breath of life» in the translation. The Hebrew text has *neshamah*. This word is one of three different Hebrew words – *ruach*, *nephesh*, *neshamah* – used for *soul*, being the «breath of life» that makes the body live.

** In any case this is the usual interpretation of making themselves «aprons» from fig leaves. More literally, Gen. 3:7 actually means that they *girdled* themselves with fig leaves, which is not a very clear indication that they would specifically have wanted to cover their genitals.

could have to do with the wish to know something they yet didn't, something different that wasn't offered to them in Eden.

What was it that happened? First they had *another state of consciousness* since this obviously changed through eating the forbidden fruit. Before they didn't see themselves as naked, but afterwards they did. Relating to the doctrine of fallen angels (Adam and Eve could symbolize them, as could the other humans created in Gen. 1), their consciousness must have been higher before. They then fell into a lower state of consciousness.

They apparently were in a higher state of consciousness while in Eden and the garden can then, in one way, be seen as a symbol of the abode of the angels *before* they fell. When they ate from the fruit, they then tread a path on which they would experience good and evil. As a consequence, they lost the higher, multi-dimensional consciousness and fell into a lower. In that state of consciousness they were no more aware of their multidimensional spiritual bodies, which they had before been able to perceive. They no more saw the higher-dimensional parts of their bodies, but only their three-dimensional appearance, and therefore saw themselves as «naked» (missing a part they still could remember but no more could see). They then had to leave Eden, which would mean that they had to go to another level of existence. On that level, they would experience «death» in a relative manner, since they acquired physical bodies, which would eventually die, but not their souls.

This way of understanding their change is confirmed by an apocryphal text *The First Book of Adam and Eve*. Here, God says to Adam: «Of your own free will have you transgressed through your desire for divinity, greatness and an exalted state, such as I have; so that I deprived you of the bright nature in which you then were...» (VI:5). «When you wast under subjection to Me, thou hadst a bright nature within thee, and for that reason couldst see things afar off. But after thy transgression the bright nature was withdrawn from thee; and it was not left to thee to see things afar off, but only near at hand...» (VIII:2) [2]. Was their bright nature taken away from them, or did they only loose their ability to see it?

Did God really have to seek them in the garden? He must immediately have known were they were. It seems more probable that it was the other way around: they no more saw God so that He had to call their attention to Him.

In their new state, Adam and Eve experienced «death». In reality, they were immortal, but no more conscious of this fact. They would eventually leave the three-dimensional space, and that is what we call «die», even though death is only an illusion. They now had to walk the path to its end and were therefore not allowed to eat from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). Maybe this was because they would then have returned prematurely to their spiritual state, or maybe because they would then have to stay in the fallen state forever (with immortal bodies). It is also a kind of «death» to loose the higher consciousness.

God made them «coats of skins, and clothed them» (Gen. 3:21). Did he give them *human* skins? That is: human bodies, which have skins as their most perceivable part to us. Does this mean that he consolidated their physical bodies and gave them their final appearance?

They had to leave Eden and enter the three-dimensional world. Soon, children were born to them and the son Cain took a wife! (Gen. 4:17). His sons also took wives. Where did they come from? A solution to this riddle may well be the above observation that God had created other humans before he created Adam. They may have lived where Adam and Eve had to go. However, *The Second Book of Adam and Eve* [2] tells that Cain had a sister and married her. Then intermarriage will in that case have continued for the first generations.

Thus we might recognize the fall into three dimensions in the biblical story*. This is a question of interpretation. The Dogma will not agree with this way of seeing it. It prefers to leave riddles unsolved (or offers apparent solutions)...

* To the thought that the story of what happened in Eden could in a symbolical way correspond to the doctrine of the fall of angels might be objected that God in Gen. 2:7 created Adam out of «the dust of the earth». The word used for «dust» is *'aphar* which means «dust» and also «something pulverized» in the sense of «turned into particles». The word for «earth» is *adamah*, said to be so because the earth is usually reddish in the Near East, and *adam* among other

We soon meet the principle of karma in the creation story: «Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed» (Gen. 9:6). However, we usually don't see this confirmed in life. The murderer's blood is quite rarely shed. So if these words are to be true, this will in most cases have to happen after his death! And if it will really have to be blood that he has to shed, he must again have a body that has such blood... This will relate to the enigmatical passage that God will visit «... the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation» (Ex. 20:5, 34:7, Num. 14:18, Deut. 5:9). As this passage is translated and understood by the Dogma, it is an outrageous injustice and a blasphemy of God's love! The children and still more the «children's children» could have nothing to do with the «iniquity»! The Dogma tells us that they even didn't exist when it was committed, claiming that they were created in the moment of conception. One could then just as well punish the neighbors or anyone else... Such an extremely cruel interpretation *cannot* be correct! The only acceptable interpretation is to see it the way the Christian Gnostics did: the «children» are the new incarnations of the soul of an evildoer (in which he again becomes a child). He will *himself* have to bear the consequences of his actions up to a third or fourth *incarnation*! This is the only *just* solution of the riddle.

One God – or many?

A remarkable fact is that the Hebrew word *Elohīm*, used for «God» in Genesis 1, is the *plural* of *El* or *Eloah* and actually means «gods», even though it is translated in singular in all Bible versions. Nevertheless, the plural is kept in Gen. 1:26: «Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...» and again in Gen. 3:22: «...the man is become as one of us...». An explanation as *pluralis majestatis* would be insufficient and rather looks like an emergency solution of a theological dilemma. There are also various other names of God in the Bible [4,5]. When Jesus talks about the Father, he seems to introduce still another concept of God. And what is the *Holy Spirit*, which Christian Gnostics regarded as the *female* aspect of God? There is often reason to wonder about the monotheistic and patriarch strictness of the Dogma.

The first sentence in the Bible reads in Hebrew *Bereishit barā Elohīm et ha-shamajīm ve-et ha-aretz*. This is translated as «In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth». More correctly, both «God» and «heaven should be in plural! According to kabalistic sources, *bereishit* can not only mean «in the beginning», but also «the first one». *Et* means «with». Another possible and more literal translation is, therefore: «The First One created the gods with the heavens and with the Earth.»

Another enigmatic passage is where the Bible talks about «the sons of God» in Gen. 6:2 and 6:4: «...the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose... There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.» Here, again, the Hebrew text has *Elohīm* and the literal meaning would be «*sons of the gods*». The text makes a difference between them and the human beings, thus they were not human. Were they demigods? Were the «giants» they beget then quarter-gods?

things means «red», «reddish», «blood-colored». Could this also be understood as «particles from blood»? This idea has little to do with the thematic of this chapter but would actually fit the Babylonian story of creation (see below) and the theories of Zecharia Sitchin [3]. It is in any case obviously inconceivable that the «raw material» for Adam would be the reddish-brown substance that the plants and herbs grow in. This would be a too simplistic and actually naïve folkloristic interpretation. We can only guess about the real meaning of «earth», from *materia prima* which both the earth and man originates from (both having the same origin but not one originating from the other) to maybe even «constituents of blood» in the sense of «genes», which would fit Sitchin's theories. According to the apocryphic text mentioned it seems that Eden may not have been on the material plane, because there it was always bright, no night and day. However, where Adam and Eve went when they left Eden they for the first time experienced the darkness of the night [2, First Book, Ch. XII and XIII]. On the other hand, they may in Eden not have experienced darkness even at night simply because of their bright nature which they then lost – or could no more perceive.

It was already in the 19th century shown that the creation story in the Bible originates from still older Babylonian texts [3,6,7,8]. A parallel «Bible/Babel» came to light. However, in the Babylonian story, *gods* create the humans. A number of other gods, whose names are given in the Babylonian texts, created the humanity by order of Marduk. The goddess Tiâmat plays an important role in this story. She seems to have some relation to Lilith, mentioned in Jewish mythology. Lilith is described as half woman and half serpent and was the serpent in Eden. The human being was created out of bone (made by Marduk) and blood from a slaughtered god mixed with mud.

The gods made themselves a sanctuary, a region on Earth where they could rest. This opens another aspect on the story of Eden. When Genesis 3:22 says: «...the man [Adam] is become as one of us...», this also has a parallel in the Babylonian clay plates. In one of their legends he is called Adapa («seed of man») and is summoned to the god Anu. He is called to account because he had abused his powers (could that be compared with eating from the tree of knowledge?), so that a «divine wind» was damaged (one of its «wings» was broken).

Anu is conciliatory and offers Adapa food and drink, said to be the «*food of life*». But Adapa doesn't take from it, haven been warned by his creator Ea that it would in reality be the food of death. Anu's intention may have been: «This man is already a demigod [like us]... so why shouldn't we give him immortality and adopt him in our circles?» [6]. Adapa misses the immortality offered to him, and therefore humanity has to suffer and die. The Bible instead tells us shortly that Adam was thrown out of paradise *so that he couldn't* eat of the tree of life and that his wife Eva seduced him to eat the forbidden fruit...

An *indirect* «polytheism» in the sense of gods and demigods – and the many angels – who are *subordinate to a one highest God* can certainly not be very alien at the roots of Christianity and not even to a Dogma that talks about a Trinity, or a «unity of three». Herein we could find a basis for an honestly *ecumenical* dialogue with other religions, would one only want to...

Even with the eastern religions, which teach reincarnation...

References

1. Pinchas Lapide: «Ist Gott männlich oder weiblich?», in *Ist die Bibel richtig übersetzt?* («Is God Male or Female?», in: «Is the Bible Correctly Translated?»), vol. 2, Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh, 2nd ed. 1996, p. 60-62.
2. «The First Book of Adam and Eve» and «The Second Book of Adam and Eve», in *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*, Collins & World, USA, 1974.
3. Zecharia Sitchin: *Genesis Revisited* (1990) and *The 12th Planet* (1976), Avon, New York, and seven other books by the same author.
4. Jack Miles: *God. A Biography*, Touchstone/Simon and Schuster, London, 1998.
5. J.A. Emerton: «Names of God in the Hebrew Bible», in: *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, ed. by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, Oxford University Press, New York/Oxford, 1993, p. 548-549.
6. Alexander Heidel: *The Babylonian Genesis*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1951.
7. Eberhard Schrader: *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* («The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament»), Reuther and Richard, Berlin, 3rd ed. 1903 (rewritten and reedited by Hugo Winckler and Heinrich Zimmern).
8. George Smith: *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, 1876, Sampson Low, Martson, Seartle and Rivington, London, 1876.

Chapter 6 FROM ORIGEN TO JUSTINIAN

Chapter 3 is based on my own studies and research in literature and old scriptures. What I will describe in this chapter is to a major extent based on the studies of Robert Sträuli [1], from whom I quote in an abbreviated manner to the extent in which it is relevant to the theme of this book. Sträuli refers, among others, to the historians Jacob Burckhardt [2] and Kurt Aland [3].

Decius' persecution of the Christians

The Roman emperor Decius (ruling 249-251, born between 190 and 200) issued an enactment in 250, which led to an extreme persecution of Christians. The decree required from everyone to once a year make a sacrifice with offerings to the Roman gods and with a prayer for the emperor. Origen refused to deviate from his Christian belief and obey the decree, and he was arrested, put in irons and tortured. But the sentence of burning him at the stake wasn't carried out to not make him a martyr. He died in 253 or 254 in the age of 69 in the Syrian town Tyros, today Sur, from the consequences of the tortures.

The law of Decius required from everyone in the empire to be able to show an official certificate of having carried out the yearly sacrifice. The honest Christian had to resist this, even if it would cost him his life. Those who survived the period and called themselves Christians were almost only those who had the certificate and yet wanted to belong to a Christian community. They claimed to have falsified certificates or, for example, to have bribed the priests to get one. There can though be little doubt that many of them had actually performed the sacrifices and the number of false certificates will have been far less than asserted. Furthermore, such fraud, even though against the worldly powers, would also be contrary to Christian principles. Those who belonged to the surviving Christian communities will therefore to a large extent have been opportunists, lip-servants and hypocrites.

A large number of Origen's disciples died the death of martyrdom. To the surviving «adjusted» ones – and obviously in the majority less truly religious Christians – «the spiritual heritage of Origen will hardly have had a great importance... They remained *truly faithful* to him as little as they had remained true to the Christian belief during the persecutions. Origen's deeper thoughts were understood the longer the less» [1].

Origen's doctrines and new ideas

Origen had taught the preexistence of the soul and – as shown in Chapter 3 – most probably also re-incarnation as a stepwise return to God. Around the year 300, Methodius (birth year unknown, dead 311 - he is also called Pseudo-Methodius in order to avoid confusion with another Methodius) set up a new and different doctrine. He taught that the whole human being, with its body and soul, would originally have been immortal and that the death and the consequent separation of body and soul had been brought into the world through the envy of the devil. God would therefore through the resurrection reconstitute man with body and soul, that is: in flesh.

Origen had taught that God was an uncreated creator from whom Christ had emanated as son and highest creation. Now another idea emerged, being that God and Christ would be identical. The difference between the communities increased.

A monotheistic paganism also came to be. The emperor saw himself threatened by it, since he in a polytheistic belief system could be regarded as a god himself. It was loathsome to him that the monotheistic pagans felt more attracted to the Christians than to the polytheists. As a kind of compromise, the idea of an uncreated identity of Christ with God was therefore convenient to many a person in the empire, since this would in a way refer to *two* Gods and mitigate the Christian monotheism «through the back door». This will have been a background for the Arianistic conflict, which at the end led to the council of Nicaea in 325.

Arius (born somewhere in the period 256-260, dead 336) was a Christian influenced by origenism. His opinion was that God had created Christ. Since his writings were burnt by order of the emperor

Constantine, we today have information about his doctrine only through testimonies of his critics. It is therefore unknown if he taught preexistence or even reincarnation, but this would in any case fit to the origenistic influence and his education by origenists.

The controversy about Christ being identical with God or created was utilized in the power struggle of clerical rule. Alexander, the opponent of Arius, kindled the quarrel for his own, selfish purposes, since this helped him become the bishop of Alexandria. At the end, the emperor Constantine interfered with the conflict.

An assertion that pops up over again in mainly esoteric books is that the doctrine of reincarnation would have been rejected at the council of Nicaea. I have been unable to find concrete evidence of this in literature on theology and the history of the Church. However, many a speaker couldn't get a word in edgewise, among them representatives of Arius (see below). The Gnosis was rejected as a whole. Thus, the reincarnation doctrine was, of course, *indirectly* rejected in the extent to which it was held by the Gnostics. Among those who couldn't get a word in may also have been a supporter of the reincarnation idea.

Constantine's manipulation of Christianity

Constantine was born 274 in Naissus, today Niš in Serbia, as the illegitimate son of the cesarean Constantinus Chlorus and a waitress Helena. Because of these circumstances, he wasn't a legitimate successor to his father, but unsuccessfully tried to make a career in the army. He had much more success with intrigues at the court of the emperor Diocletian and his successor Galerius in Nicomedia (today Izmit) at the Marmara Sea in Turkey.

Fire broke out twice in Diocletian's palace and the Christians were suspected of having kindled it. Later Constantine played down the incidents as caused by lightning, but the connection with thunder would hardly have been overlooked and is quite unlikely to have led to suspecting the Christians. It can therefore be assumed: «He [Constantine] either wanted to protect certain persons, or deflect a suspicion from himself – or both...» [1].

Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, was a monotheistic pagan. «Constantine was an arch-pagan who skillfully staked on the card of those who believed in one God. Through this, he won the impression that he would be associated with them... He used to ask *oracles* about his plans and decisions, as was common in paganism» [1].

After the death of his father shortly after the campaign against the Picts in Scotland, his soldiers proclaimed Constantine an emperor in 306 at the age of 32. It is uncertain if his father had really appointed him as successor. He chose Trier in Germany (at that time the Roman colony Augusta Treverorum) as seat of his government. At about the same time, Maxentius had himself proclaimed as emperor in Rome. After the death of emperor Galerius in 311, there were now two Western rulers, Constantine and Maxentius, and two Eastern, Licinius and Maximinus Daia. The Roman Empire was split in four parts. It came to a long and bloody wrestling about the predominance and in 312 to a decisive battle against Maxentius before the gates of Rome. Constantine's soldiers wore the Christ monogram on their shields. «One later believed to know that Christ had appeared to Constantine and told him to attach the sign as a protection. It will be a lot more credible that it was the *oracle* that had told him this and encouraged him to challenge Maxentius to combat before the gates of Rome» [1]. «There is no historical basis for viewing Constantine's war against Maxentius as a crusade, as a liberation of the Church from a fanatic tyrant... Also Christian sources give witness of Maxentius' tolerant attitude. Yet the Church made a religious war out of a rapacious assault and a veritable monster out of Maxentius» [4]. In reality, Maxentius had put an end to the persecution of Christians.

It is really peculiar how it has escaped the ones who should really know it: the senseless story about the appearance of Christ directly contradicts the Gospel. Jesus taught us peace and to love our enemies and that who takes the sword will be undone by the sword. Christ would never have called for a war and would never have allowed killing in his name, and He would never have protected an assault in mass violence!

After this battle, Maximinus Daia came next. He was an able ruler who supported the freedom of religion and let peace prevail in his empire. Nevertheless, later Church historians pictured him as a bloodthirsty and evil persecutor of Christians. This peace was uncanny to Constantine. He gave Licinius his sister as a wife and with him acknowledged full freedom of religion in the Roman Empire, and also the rights of the Christians. They together conquered Maximinus Daia, for which Constantine showed Licinius his gratitude through beginning a war against him, too, and later having him murdered... [4].

The Arianistic controversy was an occasion for Constantine to show off as a mediator. He therefore invited scarcely a third of the Christian clergy, to an overwhelming extent from the East of the empire, to a Council in Nicaea in 325. This town is today called Iznik and is situated at the lake Iznik Gölü in Turkey, a bit to the Southeast of the Marmara Sea (not far from Nicomedia, see above). Here the Arianistic profession of faith was snatched from its speaker and torn to pieces before it could be read to the end. There was clamor and riot. Appeals and pamphlets were thrown in the fire by the emperor without opening them. Arius was again condemned and banned. It was ordered to burn his books and to possess them was forbidden on penalty of death [4]. The «pagan Christians» had come to power...

«That he apparently adopted Christianity was in reality a junction of Christianity with Constantine's monotheistic paganism. Through this, the emperor dissolved the separation line between paganism and Christianity, which had been clearly visible to everyone, and opened door and gate for a fake Christianity» [1]. Origenism was fallen in disgrace through the origenistically influenced Arius, at least as concerns his doctrine about the nature of Christ.

Didymos, the last origenistic teacher of Christians

The doctrines of Origen were not yet definitely banished. There still was a Christian school in Alexandria, which had become world famous through Origen and which had been reconstructed by Greek Christians after the persecution by Decius. Here the last teacher of the high spiritual knowledge of Origen was the Alexandrian Greek Didymos (313-398). «As concerns the doctrine of preexistence of the soul, there was up to the 6th century no uniform opinion in the Roman imperial Church, and thus this doctrine was preliminarily approved to Didymos» [1]. He also taught multiple lives on Earth through reincarnation as a revolving sequence of experiences that eventually leads the souls home in resurrection. The fallen ones have to be «outside their own abode», which is the divine light world, until the soul eventually again is «completely enlightened, so that henceforth no part of it remains outside the light» [5]. «When all souls have accomplished the necessary sequence of revolving changes between the gross and the subtle worlds and every fallen being has in itself again decided only for the subtle alone and not for the gross, the mentioned worldly period will come to an end» [6].

Didymos comments to Eccl. 1:5: «The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose» and says: «The «sun of justice» rises in the soul... When it has seized the whole soul and completely enlightened it... then it [the soul] has reached complete enlightenment. Because it «sets» many times so that it again can «rise»» [7]. In Eccl. 1:6 is today often written: «The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north...». Here, again, the word *pneuma* has been translated as «wind». More correctly translated, the Greek text says: «The spirit» – or the *soul* – «continuously moves around and it returns in its circulation» [7]. Didymos here doesn't mention the human souls explicitly. But he does so when he comes to Eccl. 1:7: «All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again». He comments: «Those who go out on the sea are the souls, in «ships», that is: in their bodies... And some come in the depth, the others go this way voluntarily in order to help the ones who are about to sink. Those of the second group are the «rivers» which «return to the abode» from where they began their way downwards together with the others» [7].

The «Constantinian donation»

Centuries after Constantine, a myth about the «Constantinian donation» arose. There was a «Pippinian donation» in 754, with which the Franconian king Pippin III for the foundation of a Church State gave to the Church what didn't belong to him, but to the emperor: the major part of Italy. This «donation» was said to be motivated by a «Constantinian donation», *Constitutum Constantini*, with which Constantine would have given Rome and the whole Occident to the papacy. It was claimed that Constantine had first been a persecutor of the Christians and as punishment struck with leprosy, and that he had been healed and baptized by the pope Silvester. The *Constitutum* would be his gift in gratitude.

Research has shown that this *Constitutum* was a falsification by the Church, established only a few years before the «Pippinian donation», and was «manufactured» to be its motivation. The miraculous story of the healing is based on a tale, *Legenda Sancti Silvestri*. In reality, Constantine wasn't a true persecutor of Christians, but a successful manipulator of them. He never had leprosy and wasn't baptized by Sylvester, but on his deathbed by the Arianistic bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia when Sylvester had already been dead two years [8].

Addendum

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* devoted an issue in May 1999 to questions concerning the Church at the 2000-year jubilee of Christianity [9]. The following may be quoted to the theme of this chapter:

«Max Horkheimer calls Constantine an «unscrupulous person» who, «among the various doctrines of the time about the divine, selected Christianity as a cement for the endangered worldly power». At that time, the Church was reoriented on fewer bases than any other community before or after. And Ernst Bloch stated the opinion: «In that the Christianity under and through Constantine made use of the Roman state, the state made use of the Christianity, and the Christianity failed.»»

«The alliance with Constantine and the betrayal of the original Christian doctrines establishes the historical influence of Christianity. A religious idea was converted to almost the opposite. With the Constantinian change, the anti-Jewish seed began to germinate, which had been sown in the Gospels.» As to the latter, one might wonder – if it is true – if such an «anti-Jewish seed» was in there from the beginning, or sneaked in later...

In any case, the first one to collectively accused the Jews of being responsible for Jesus' death was the 2nd-century bishop Meliton of Sardes. Micha Brumlik a member of the Jewish Community in Frankfurt, has – for good reasons – requested an intensified research work in these matters in order to clarify how Christian Anti-Judaism arose at the end of the 2nd century [10].

References

1. Robert Sträuli: *Origenes der Diamantene* («Origen the Diamantine»), ABZ, Zürich, 1987.
2. Jacob Burckhardt: *Gesammelte Werke* («Collected Works»), vol. 1, Schwabe, Basel and Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, new edition 1978.
3. Kurt Aland: *Geschichte der Christenheit* («History of Christianity»), vol. 1, Mohn, Gütersloh, 1980.
4. Karlheinz Deschner: *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums* («Criminal History of Christianity»), vol. 1, Rowohlt, Reinbek, 1986, p. 365.
5. Quoted in [1], p. 227, according to Didymos' comments to Ecclesiastes 1.5 and 1.7 in the writings found in Taura (see chapter 3).
6. [1], p. 227, on Didymos' comments to Ecclesiastes 1.4.
7. Gerhard Binder and Leo Liesenborghs: *Dydumus der Blinde. Kommentar zu Ecclesiastes* («Dydumus the Blind. Comments on Ecclesiastes»), Institut für Altertumskunde der Universität Köln, 1965.
8. Karlheinz Deschner: «Die «Konstantinische Schenkung»» («The «Constantinian Donation»»), in *Opus Diaboli* Rowohlt, Reinbek, 1987, p. 131-142.
9. Rudolf Augstein «Ein Mensch Namens Jesus» («A Man Called Jesus»), *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, 21/99 p. 216-223.
10. «Über die Perversion des Kreuzes» («On the perversion of the cross»), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Frankfurt, Sept. 15, 2003, p. 43.

Chapter 7
ARE BODY AND SOUL INSEPARABLE?

The Dogma teaches that the body and the soul would be a unity. This would already be a reason why the soul couldn't separate from the body when it dies and later incarnate in a new body. There could only be a resurrection through the reconstitution of the body that once was.

No one can explain how that is supposed to take place. How a body that has rotten in the grave would be reconstituted, which is fallen to pieces and largely eaten by worms, is unconceivable. Are we to become zombies? And where are the souls in the meantime, until they finally have their bodies again?

How a body that has been completely disintegrated through an explosion would arise anew, or a body that has passed the digestion of a wild animal would become like before is actually an absurd question.

Should then someone who dies as a child again have the body of a child? Should the cripple again hobble in the resurrection? We would at least expect that some fantastic restoration process would also be completing and healing.

One can certainly refer to God's omnipotence and say that to Him *everything* is possible. It would, however, seem quite a demand to expect that God would recollect and reassemble all molecules that have spread in the ocean from of a body, which has been eaten and excreted by a shark. The absorbed molecules of the fish would then have spread further when its body in turn died and was eaten. There is a very much simpler way: rebirth in a new body that arises *through the process of procreation that is established by God*. What sense would the other alternative have?

In order to take the matter still further *ad absurdum*, these molecules would have passed through very many human bodies before they would be «resurrected»! They would have, in a way, «reincarnated» in a large number of bodies, which other souls once had. Because they would after decomposition and putrefaction of a body be absorbed anew by plants and animals, which would again be eaten by humans, whose bodies also are merely links of a long chain in nature's recycling.

Should then in an eschatological final my and several other souls have to argue (in that case with still incomplete bodies...) about molecules, which have been in my body but before or after in theirs? And what happens to the soul who gets no or too few molecules, because others claim them?

Paul already objected to such ideas: «...How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body... It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body» (1 Cor. 15:35-38 and 44). We may associate sowing with putting a body in the earth. These verses don't contradict that the spiritual body of resurrection could follow at the end of a series of reincarnations

The funeral ritual of the Church in some manner contradicts the resurrection of the same body with the formula: «From earth (or dust) have you come and earth (dust) you will again become.» This is also written in Gen. 3:19. When the Church then adds that one would again resurrect out of the earth, this is something that is written nowhere in the Bible...

And what happens with souls who depart to the «eternal hell»? Will they also have their bodies back, or only the souls who go to heaven? Or are, after all, body and soul separable for those who are condemned to eternal punishment?

There are contradictions to the asserted inseparability of body and soul in the Old Testament. In Gen. 35:18, Rachel's soul leaves the body when she dies. In 1 (or 3*) Kings 17:21, Elias prays to God that the soul of a dead child may return in its body. In Jon. 4:3, Jonah asks God to take his soul from him so that he may die (many Bibles in English have «life» but some in other languages do have «soul»). Eccl. 12:7 says that the body will return to the earth when we die, but the spirit (soul) will

* There are different ways of counting here.

return to God, who gave it (cf. Ps. 103[104*]:29 and 146[145*]:4, where the English text has «breath» as a translation of the Hebrew *ruach*, which is actually one of three Hebrew words used for the *soul* – corresponding to *pneuma* in Greek; Bible translations in some other languages have «spirit»). On the other hand, the Old Testament at various locations refers to the dead as «sleeping». They sleep in the dust of the earth (Dan. 12:2), or they «sleep with their fathers» (1 Kings 2:10 and many other verses) [1]. «We have no proof that the spirit was thought to remain in the vicinity of the body...» [1, p. 146]. Instead, it appears that the soul goes to the realm of the dead (or even in hell) – at a place of forgetfulness or destruction (cf. Job 14:21, 26:6 and 28:22, Psalm 88[87*]:12[13*], Eccl. 9:5) [1]. This rather suggests a state of soul than that it would stay in the buried body.

Jesus nowhere in the New Testament talks about the «resurrection in the flesh» which the Dogma preaches and which is mentioned in some texts for the profession of faith. One may also ask how the one man who was crucified together with Jesus could be with Him in paradise the same day if not his soul would first leave his body (Luk. 23:39-43) [2]. In Luke 8:54-55 Jesus brings the daughter of Jairus back to life: «...and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.»

2 Peter 1:14-15: «Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle... I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.» The Greek text has *skēnōmati* from *skēnos* = «housing of the soul», which is here translated as «tabernacle», and *éxodos* = «going out», translated as «decease». Therefore we can also translate this as: «Knowing that shortly I must put off this housing of my soul [this body]... I will endeavour that you remember these things after I have gone out from it.»

Finally the following question is certainly justified. Why should we humans for eternal times – even after the resurrection – have to drag a heavy physical body around like a clubfoot of the soul, when the angels don't have to have one and not even the devils?!

The dogma of inseparability and also the purgatory (see Chapter 13) belong to a strategy against reincarnation ideas. Reincarnation would be impossible if the inseparability were true.

The Church has reinterpreted Aristotle

The Church, at least in part, has the idea of inseparability of body and soul from Aristotle (384-322 *before* Christ), who was a Greek philosopher, and not from the Bible [3]. As we have seen, Origen had a different idea about body and soul than the Dogma (but not necessarily than Aristotle).

Aristotle wrote a treatise with the title *On the Soul*, which in its Book II has passages that have been seen as a confirmation of the Dogma. We have to study them in detail.

II 1,412b *«It is not the body, which has lost the soul, that is equal to the one that has the possibility to live, but much more the one that will possess it...»* [4]**. *«That which has the capacity to live, is not the body which has lost its soul, but that which possesses its soul...»* [5]. (Enhancements by me.)

A body without a soul cannot live. The soulless body is dead. If it can lose its soul, the two are obviously separable.

II 1,413a *«...the soul and the body make a living creature. It is quite clear, then, that neither the soul nor certain parts of it, if it has parts, can be separated from the body...»* [5].

...lest the body dies. If one would wholly separate the soul or (if possible) an (essential) part of it, the body would have to die. A body without a soul is not (any more) a living creature.

* Different ways of counting.

** The German translation according to [4] – here rendered in English – is exact and literal and therefore helpful for the accurate understanding. Since it is, however, complicated in its wording (even in German) and less easy to follow, I will – with one exception – hereafter use the English translation [5].

II 2,413a «...*that which has a soul is distinguished from that which has not by living*» [5].
A body without a soul is dead.

II 2,413b «*But in the case of the mind and the thinking faculty nothing is yet clear; it seems to be a distinct kind of soul, and it alone admits of being separated, as the immortal from the perishable. But it is quite clear from what we have said that the other parts of the soul are not separable, as some say...*» [5]. (Enhancement by me.)

Here two kinds of souls are mentioned – cf. Origen’s theory of *two* souls (Chapter 3). As is described in a more detailed manner in the text before and after this quotation, the one soul has to do with perceptions and emotions, which arise out of them. This kind of soul cannot be separated from the body, since it is dependent on its physical sensory organs (perceptions by the soul are a different matter).

The other kind of soul is the mind, the conscious self, which is immortal. The body, however, is perishable. This kind can, so far, be separated from the body while it remains alive. When we sleep or are unconscious, the mind stops thinking, and yet the body doesn’t die. A heavily retarded person lives with a rudimentary ability to think. When the body dies, this kind of soul separates definitely from it. (The «perception-soul» will then have to follow the other soul, and then continue to perceive in a new way with the soul’s own perceptual faculties.)

II 2.414a «*As we have already said, substance is used in three senses, form matter and a compound of the two. Of these, matter is potentiality, and form actuality; and since the compound is an animate thing, the body cannot be the actuality of the soul, but the soul is the actuality of some body* [5]. *Thus the opinion is correct of those, to which the soul appears to neither be without a body nor be a body* [4]*. *It is not a body, it is associated with a body, and therefore resides in a body, and in a body of a particular kind;... From all this it is clear that the soul is a kind of actuality or notion of that which has a capacity of having a soul*»[5].

As concerns the *combination of body and soul*, the soul manifests through a body, which is allocated to it and can have a soul, but the soul isn’t itself a body.

II 4,415b «*The soul is the cause and first principle of the living body*» [5].

The body lives when and because it has a soul.

Is then the conclusion of the Dogma correct? The body is a substrate for the soul, which acts through it. The body lives only through its animation by the soul. If the soul is separated from it, the body dies.

Obviously, Aristotle’s view is not that the soul couldn’t exist without a body. But when it has a body, it expresses itself though it in a way in which we can observe its expression on the material level. This doesn’t exclude that that it couldn’t express itself on a level we cannot observe, when it doesn’t have a body. According to Origen (see Chapter 3) it may without a physical body nevertheless have an *immaterial* body.

The Dogma of the Church about the inseparability of body and soul in this light appears to be an expedient modification of the doctrine of Aristotle, an adjusted motivation of a preconceived idea. One gets the impression that – since a useful argument in a desirable reference couldn’t be found in the Bible – one sought despairingly in the philosophy until one found something reasonably useful in the writings of a man who wasn’t even a Christian (and also not a Jewish scholar, as would have fitted to the Old Testament). And yet this argument is lame...

Even contradictions to such a Dogma are found in the Bible (see above and Chapter 2). Jesus seems to contradict such a view in John 3:6: «That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which

* Here according to [4] since it has a literal translation. In [5] the translation is interpreting: «For this reason those are right in their view who maintain that the soul cannot exist without a body, but is not itself in any sense a body.» The Greek text doesn’t state that a soul couldn’t *exist* without a body! It is as long as the body is alive combined with it – but with a specific body and not with just anyone.

is born of the Spirit is spirit.» The doctrine of the purgatory also contradicts it. Unless the purgatory would come after the end of this world, the soul would obviously have to leave the body to enter it, while the body (according to the Dogma) is still lying unresurrected in the grave!

Did Aristotle reject the idea of reincarnation?

Some authors claim that Aristotle would have rejected the idea of reincarnation [6,7]. They quote (or refer to this passage): that «any (arbitrary) soul would enter any (arbitrary) body» would be «absurd» and «the myth of reincarnation of the soul would sound «as if someone would say that architecture would make use of flutes. Because in reality each art must use its own tools and just the same the soul has its own body» [6].

This text passage more completely and more correctly translated reads: «...as though it were possible, as the Pythagorean stories suggest, for any soul to find its way into any body, [which is absurd,] for we can see that every body has its own peculiar shape or form. Such a theory is like suggesting that carpentry can find its way into flutes; each craft must employ its own tools, and each soul its own body» [5: I 3,407b]. Where is the concrete contradiction to the reincarnation doctrine? This rather suggests that, if a soul reincarnates, it doesn't do it haphazardly but takes on a body, which *is suited for its task*.

This task has less to do with the appearance of the body and much more with where it is born, in which culture and in which family, under which circumstances of life and as what sex. The task not only has to do with actions, but often still more with a forthcoming lesson, maybe also repair or probation.

Aristotle in another text himself contradicts the dogmatic interpretation above: «It remains that the rational or intellectual soul only enters from without, as being only of a nature purely divine; with whose actions the actions of this gross body have no communication» [8].

Furthermore: Aristotle was, as has already been remarked, neither a Christian nor a Jewish scholar, but a pre-Christian Greek philosopher. Therefore the words of other Greek philosophers – like the ones of Plato, Pythagoras and other supporters of reincarnation – equally deserve consideration!

References

1. Alexander Heidel: «Death and Afterlife», Chapter III in: *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, Phoenix Books, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago ILL, 1967.
2. Karl Aage Kirkegaard: *Reinkarnation er forenelig med kristendom* («Reincarnation is Compatible with Christianity»), Sankt Ansgars Forlag, Copenhagen, 1999.
3. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* («Lexicon for Theology and the Church»), vol. 9, ed. by Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, Herder, Freiburg, 1964, p. 570-571 (under «Seele»).
4. Aristoteles: *Über die Seele* («On the Soul»), transl. by Willy Theiler, vol. 13 in the series «Aristoteles Werke in deutscher Übersetzung» («Aristotle's Works in German Translation»), Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1994.
5. Aristotle: *On the Soul* (in one volume together with *Parva Naturalia* and *On Breath*), original text with translation by W.S. Hett, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. / William Heinemann, London, 1957.
6. Christoph Schönborn: *Existenz im Übergang* («Existence in Transition»), Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln/Trier, 1987, p. 100.
7. Leo Scheffczyk: *Der Reinkarnationsgedanke in der altchristlichen Literatur* («The Reincarnation Idea in Ancient Christian Literature»), Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Meeting Reports from the Bavarian Academy of Sciences), 1985, vol. 4, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München, 1985, p. 8.
8. Aristotle: *De generatione animæ*, quoted in: Joseph Head and S.L. Cranston: *Reincarnation, an east-west anthology*, Julian Press, New York, 1961.

Chapter 8

REINCARNATION – WHY DOES THE CHURCH FEAR IT?

As has been shown in previous chapters, the Church and some books try to wear off the belief in reincarnation. This seems to mirror a fear of the Church institutions that the belief could spread further.

What do they fear?

The Church accuses the reincarnation doctrine of teaching a path of *self-redemption**. And what would be wrong with that, if it would be true? If such a self-redemption would be possible and really lead the souls back to God: why should that path be forbidden to us? God would obviously have made such a path possible Himself! Otherwise it couldn't lead to *redemption*... A rivalry mentality of the Dogma seems to come through here, which doesn't want to permit any way to God, which isn't approved by the power structure of the Church!

Reincarnation isn't a path to self-redemption in the sense the reincarnation opponents put it. It is the great and loving *grace* of God in that He gives us new opportunities. He will never send us to eternal condemnation but shows us the path of repair and probation, which we may even repeat until we have passed all examinations.

At the end, *every* soul will be redeemed. This isn't a question of *if*, but of *when*.

There will be another consideration behind the incorrect accusation of self-redemption: this could question the monopolistic claim of the Church as being the only beatification. It isn't allowed to be true that there could be redemption without the Church! It is claimed that the only way is through Christ but one really means that the only way would be *through the Church alone*. The age-old formula is: «No salvation outside» (cf. [2]).

As concerns Christian concepts of reincarnation, we are dealing with a Christianity outside of the Church. This is already an atrocity to the Dogma. The largest and oldest sect in the world tolerates no other at its side. The Church has taken possession of Christ and demands to be seen exclusively as His sole agency. Why, then, couldn't the Church absorb the concept of reincarnation and thus include Christians believing in it in their orbit of power? First, there is in the Dogma, as history shows, an immense resistance against changes. Second, this would reduce the power over the individual person of the Church institution (see below).

It may also be assumed that the idea will be extremely uncomfortable to the Church that the many souls are back here again, who were victims of inquisition and persecutions because of a different belief. Still worse, that past heinous deeds of the Church could come to light, for example in past-life regressions...

Another reason for rejecting reincarnation may be the necessity that a new body has to be procreated through the sexual act – regarded as a «sin». The demonization of the sexuality is a crime against humanity and a blasphemy against God, since He Himself has created this process! In their perverse attitude to this, it will appear bad enough that already the present body is «conceived in sin»...

* In this context one often refers to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. The term «self redemption» is used by her but is hardly found neither in texts of other supporters of the reincarnation concept nor in old scriptures. It is a typical strategy of the Dogma to pick a remark by a single person that appears offensive to it and put it as if it would be representative for the whole idea! She wrote: «There is one Eternal Law in Nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony. It is owing to this Law of spiritual development... that mankind will become free from its false Gods and finally find itself – Self-redeemed» [1]. The «Eternal Law» is one of balance and harmony and not reincarnation and karma, but the latter are effects of it. The wrong conclusion that reincarnation would be eternal is wishful thinking of the opponents. Reincarnation is not a path to a self-redemption without God but to a *self-elaborated* redemption by God-created means. If the dogmatists think that this would refer to a «redemption from God», this will be an «intentional misunderstanding» for strategic purposes. The idea is, of course, redemption from the evil and from the material world.

The threat with an eternal hell

A special tool of power is the threat with an eternal hell. «You have only *one single* chance to go to heaven: Only through us. This chance is offered to you *only once*, and that is now, during the few years you spend here on Earth. If you miss it, there is no other chance but you will be lost forever.»

To stir up fear is a luciferian strategy...

If people would know that they will be given new chances, this institution wouldn't have the same power over us. The Church wants to forbid the soul to have existed before conception, but the soul still does what God wants...

Now someone objects: «Then we could take our time! There is no hurry for redemption...» Who knows what it costs to dawdle will not think like that. The causality that is called karma brings me highly unpleasant consequences if I waste time on the path and devote myself more to satisfactions of my ego than to developing my soul. Such an objection is ignorant.

There will also be worldly reasons for rejecting the reincarnation concept. Who believes in reincarnation and knows about the lessons it will give us in the future for wrong actions today will not easily participate in the nasty games of this world. He will hardly treat his fellow men as enemies or even kill them by order of the government – earlier even with the blessing of the Church – since he knows that he will again meet his victims and very probably next time be born among the «enemies» himself.

Such a person is not a useful tool for exercising power and suppression. He will not easily cooperate in intrigues, manipulations, arbitrariness by authorities and coercive measures, which both the state and the Church like to exercise. He will rather take to passive resistance, non-cooperation and civil disobedience. Institutions of power have no use for scrupulous persons.

Disobedience as a Christian duty

It is a Christian duty to disobey and refuse orders whenever something would otherwise go against one's own conscience. But it may many a time cost one's life.

Many a reader will have seen the graffito: «Imagine there is war but no one goes there». If people would refuse the order to attack and kill even when they are in the army, they would act as true Christians – and we would have peace! Gandhi's principle of passive resistance, civil disobedience and non-cooperation is at the end the most effective weapon.

The question then arises what actions contradict the conscience. A true defense against an attacker would rather not, but most attacks are disguised as «defense»... Here the Church in cooperation with worldly powers (cf. Chapters 11-12) wants to take away the decision from the single human being and place them under disability.

Who believes in reincarnation will rather have the courage to disobey and act in a true Christian manner, even if it would cost him his life! And even if this in certain cases would require disobedience to the Church!

Was Jesus a reincarnation?

The reincarnation concept raises a question that will be delicate to the Church but under the assumption of this doctrine certainly justified. Could it be that Jesus also was a reincarnation? The next question would then be: of whom? Of one of the great persons in the Old Testament? That would be less problematic, even though the uniqueness of Christianity would be relativized – also in relation to Judaism (even though Christianity basically is a reformed Judaism!) – and the Church wouldn't like that. Or could Jesus even be the reincarnation of one of the great persons in another one of the great religions? Maybe of Buddha? There are, after all, remarkable parallels between the doctrines of both! Then the fundament of the Church would really begin to rock... and it would have to open itself for a true inter-religious ecumenicity! It would have to exercise an unaccustomed modesty towards its sister religions, whose believers are just as much our brothers and sisters as anyone else. This may be more offensive to the Church than anything else since it by far rejects such possible consequences and claims the «truth» for itself.

Even though I am convinced of the reality of reincarnation, I don't want to maintain that Jesus was a *reincarnation*, but I see in Him an incarnation of God's love which could very well be unique – unless the divine love has incarnated already before him. But the question is fundamentally motivated if reincarnation is assumed. The answer is open. If one rejects reincarnation, the question could be said to be absurd, but that looks like a strategy.

We may allow us to ask if God after the creation has really abandoned humanity, until he not earlier than 2000 years ago finally let his love incarnate among us...

And when Christ comes back, having been here before, and if he than again comes in a physical body, is that not reincarnation?

Does the reincarnation doctrine really come from India?

It is over again asserted that the idea of reincarnation would have come from India – from Hinduism and later from Buddhism – and that it could therefore not be Christian. In reality, there is no clear allusion to reincarnation in the Vedas and the Purāṇas are not very clear on this subject – which doesn't exclude that it was known in Vedic times. The concept explicitly appears later in the texts, in the Upaniṣads [3-5].

What is still more important in this context is that a number of ancient cultures, which could have had no contact with India, had various forms of reincarnation beliefs. Among those are different native Indian cultures in north, central and south America, African tribes, Eskimos, Celts, Vikings, Australian Aborigines, people of the Pacific Islands, and so on [6]. A Church encyclopedia admits: «More or less extensive doctrines on reincarnation have been widely spread in the world and appeared in Asia, Africa, Australia, Oceania, among north and central American Indians and in parts of Europe. It is highly improbable that the doctrine would have spread from a common center; it could well have developed independently at these places...» [7].

It is well known and not contested that there were philosophers believing in reincarnation in the ancient Greece. However, Church oriented literature often claims that the ancient Egyptians would have had no reincarnation doctrine. Statements by various Egyptologists give another impression, as well as do contemporary reports of the ancient Greek [6]. The belief was also there in the ancient Persian culture [6].

The reincarnation belief in ancient Judaism

Theologians of the Church want to cast doubts on the fact that reincarnation wasn't an alien concept to the Jews at the times of Jesus, and some less scientific authors contradict it. There are a few passages in the Bible that clearly enough indicate this to be a fact (cf. Chapter 2). The one alternative in the question about the blind-born man: «...who did sin, this man... that he was born blind?» cannot be understood in any other way than that the man would have sinned before his birth. Otherwise the words have no sense. The attempt for an explanation that he could have sinned in the mother's womb [8] is so absurd that we don't need to deal with it anymore. The only conclusion is: who asked the question *must* have thought of an existence of the soul not only before birth, but also before conception, no matter how one tries to «twist it right» to make it fit the Dogma. From where did the disciple have his idea? And from where did some persons have the opinion that Jesus could – among other alternatives – have been a prophet that had risen again? And why did they ask John if he was Elias?

The disciples would certainly know about reincarnation if it is true that Jesus taught it in the inner circle, as the Gnostics said, and they were the ones who asked the question about the man born blind. When, however, the question was asked in Cesarea Philippi about who people thought that Jesus was, an opinion was mentioned that wasn't from the disciples. Is it then true that the reincarnation belief was completely alien to Judaism of that time? It wouldn't have to be a common belief shared by all or most Jews, but in any case by some of them – and others may at least have heard about such a belief.

As concerns the reincarnation belief in Judaism, Jewish sources can be expected to be more objective than Christian theological ones. Reincarnation is called *gilgūl* («circulation») in Hebrew. The kabalists believed in it. This has also taken a literary form among the Catalan Jews in the northeast of Spain and a book *Sepher ha-Bāhir* was written there in the 12th century. In it, several passages concretely mention reincarnation. One of them is: «Why does many an evil-doer have an easy life and many a righteous person have a difficult one? Because the righteous person has once in the past been an evil-doer and is now being punished... I am not talking about the same life, I am saying that he has been here already in the past» [9: § 135, p. 148]. Further written evidence is found in the *Zohār* and Rabbi Isaak Luria ben Solomon (1534-1572) wrote a treatise on reincarnation*. Another Jewish author on the same subject is Chaim Vital [10].

Josephus in his writings asserts that the Pharisees and the Essenes believed in reincarnation [11], but here – how could it be otherwise? – the theology of the Church wants to interpret or translate his statements in another way.

Gershom (Gerhard) Sholem was *the* expert on kabalistic Judaism. He wrote as follows about the belief in reincarnation: «I must, after all, confess that I tend more to the first opinion, being that we here have to do with remnants of an older Jewish-Gnostic tradition...» [12: p. 197]. He wrote about «new and maybe very old ideas». The other opinion, which theologians like, is that the kabalists had adopted their belief from the Cathars in southern France. This is contradicted by the fact that the reincarnation belief was already before the Cathar era known to the oriental Karaites (Kareans) and that it already in the 10th century was supported by Gaon Sa'adiah ben Joseph (882-942), who lived in Egypt and Babylonia [13].

A good presentation and reasonably objective for being a theological text is given in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* [14]. Here it isn't denied that there could *also* have been movements within the Judaism of ancient times in which people believed in reincarnation.

A Christian theologian author who is hostile to reincarnation [15] criticizes the following statement in *Meyers Konversationslexikon* («Meyer's Encyclopedia») of the year 1907 (vol. 18, p. 263): «The Jews at the time of Christ quite commonly believed in reincarnation. The Talmudists assumed that God had created only a limited number of Jewish souls, which would therefore come back, as long as there are Jews. They may sometimes for punishment be transferred to animal bodies. At the day of resurrection they will, however, be purified and again come to life in the bodies of the righteous ones in the Promised Land.» Later editions of the famous encyclopedia no more have this statement (has something been undertaken against it by the Church?).

Origen wrote in his contradiction against Celsus [16: 1.15] that Hermippos had told in his first book on the «lawmakers» that Pythagoras had brought his philosophy to the Greek as adopted from the Jews – including the doctrine of reincarnation.

It was in all cultures!

Authors of the Church want to assign the reincarnation doctrine to only the Indians and therefore often deny that there would have been a reincarnation concept in Islam. Here again scholarly literature gives us another image. There were several currents of belief in reincarnation in Islam and we find the belief still today among the Druses [17,18], Vezides, Turkish Alevites [19] and some of the Kurds [18].

The real impression rather is that concepts of reincarnation go like a red thread through almost all cultures and religions. Where it is no more there today it in most cases has been there before. In Chapter 2 I wrote about the early Christians in this respect. Since the reincarnation belief with a high probability existed among the Jews – the Jewish Chassidim still today believe in it – and is known from the Greek philosophy, it is not astonishing that it was known also in early Christianity. It is cer-

* Besides the «simple» reincarnation (*gilgūl*), Luria also writes about a «soul impregnation», *ibbur*, which reminds of a kind of possession by a soul of someone who died (or maybe even by parts of that soul).

tainly even less astonishing if the statement of some early Gnostic movements is true that they had this belief from Jesus' teachings in the inner circle.

Spontaneous memories

What could the reason be that such beliefs popped up almost everywhere? One important reason will be *spontaneous memories*. There will in all times have been persons who *remembered* a past life, at least fragmentarily. This occurs still today [20], especially among children (see below), but it is rare that grown-up persons still have them. In ancient times people could talk relatively freely about such memories and were listened to. In the dark medieval ages, however, one could be burned at the stake for claiming to have such memories. A few Christian mystics may between the lines give us a sentiment that they might have had such memories, which they wrapped up well in paraphrases and allegories for reasons of their safety...

It will be embarrassing to the Church that such memories even today occur in their own circles. The German priest Günther Schwarz from Diepholz near Bremen was interviewed in a TV broadcast [21]. He already earlier had faint memories, which became a certainty to him after an operation during which he was «clinically dead». He came back with clear memories.

As a private person he couldn't deny having them but as a priest he commented: «I am not authorized to preach reincarnation. But as concerns our continued existence I am authorized by what I know from Jesus, from the Gospel and from the Bible altogether. The question is only how this should be interpreted and here I believe that the Church has a backlog. But there are signs for hope.»

What still today rather occurs is that small children have memories of an earlier existence, which usually fade at the age of about five [22-28]. I will tell such a story, which was presented in a Swedish magazine [29, cf. 30]. The author witnessed what happened and she has also told me about it personally.

In Des Moines (Iowa) many years ago there lived a little girl, Romy Heideman-Crees. She over again told her parents a story. With time, the fragments came together to a whole picture.

Romy told that she had been a young man, Joe Wilkie, who lived in Charles City. This man and his wife had had a motorcycle accident five years earlier in which both died. He had gone to school in that town and was once hit by a bus when he was 14. At that time, he lived with his parents Luise and Larry Wilkie in a red brick house. The father later died and the mother had pains in her leg. Joe married and moved to another place with his wife Sheila. They had a child, two cats and a dog. And so on.

It is decided to research the story and they all go to Charles City. The girl had described the house. The address of a Mrs. Wilkie is found in the telephone directory and her house fits the description. A woman with crutches opens the door, but as the girl addresses her as «mother», she becomes irritated and closes the door again. Later she lets them come in and all is confirmed!

The 76-year-old woman, whose leg pains in the meantime got worse, still suffered from the loss of her son Joe. The story about the bus and all other things that Romy had told had really happened. When Joe and Sheila died they were training for a motorcycle race. The motorcycle fell on the side and they were run over by a car that came closely behind.

Many children tell stories, which parents don't take seriously, or they caution the child to stop telling such «fantasies». It is regrettably very rare that such a story is researched since hardly anyone has the idea that it could really be true. But if it is researched, a confirmation is very often found [25-28]. The phenomenon isn't rare among children and many of them would probably still have such memories when grown-up if one wouldn't have suppressed them and taken the belief away from the persons in their childhood. There are few cases of spontaneous memories surfacing later in life (or maybe resurfacing, since the persons may very well have had such memories as children, but forgotten them in the meantime).

«Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise» (Matth. 21:16)...

References

1. Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna: *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 3 «Anthropogenesis, Part I», The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar/Madras, 1971, p. 418.
2. Hans Küng: *Wahrhaftigkeit* («Truthfulness»), Herder, Freiburg i.Br., 1971, p. 182-183.
3. Herman W. Tull: *The Vedic Origins of Karma*, Śri Satguru, Delhi, 1989.
4. William A. Borman: *The Other Side of Death: Upaniṣadic Eschatology*, Śri Satguru, Delhi, 1990.
5. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty: *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983.
6. Joseph Head and S.L. Cranston: *Reincarnation, the Phoenix Fire Mystery*, Julian Press, New York NY, 1977.
7. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, McGraw-Hill, San Francisco, 1967, p. 257, under «Transmigration of Souls».
8. *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. VII, Abingdon, New York and Nashville, 1951, p. 613.
9. *Das Buch Bahir* («The Book Bahir»), translated and commented by Gerhard Scholem, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1970.
10. David Wexelman: *The Jewish Concept of Reincarnation and Creation*, Jason Aronson, Northvale N.J., 1999.
11. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 7, Keter, Jerusalem, 1971, col. 573-577, word *Gilgul* (written by G. Scholem).
12. Gershom Scholem: *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit* («On the Mystical Appearance of God»), Rhein, Zürich, 1962.
13. *Jüdisches Lexikon* («Jewish Encyclopedia»), vol. IV/2, Berlin, 1930, col. 326-327, word *Seelenwanderung*.
14. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. XII, ed. by James Hastings, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1921, p. 435-440, under «Transmigration (Jewish)».
15. Karl Hoheisel: «Das frühe Christentum und die Seelenwanderung» («Early Christianity and Reincarnation»), in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* («Annual for Antiquity and Christianity»), Aschendorff, Münster, vol. 27/28, 1984/1985, p. 24-46.
16. Origen: *Contra Celsum*, transl. by Henry Chadwick, At the University Press, Cambridge, 1953; also: «Origen Against Celsus», in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan and T&T Clark, Edinburgh, vol. IV.
17. Extensive study reports in *Reincarnation International*, London, No. 15 (June 1998), p. 11-21 as well as in a British TV documentary 1998 (Channel 4).
18. *Enzyklopaedie des Islam* («Encyclopaedia of Islam»), vol. IV, Brill, Leiden and Harassowitz, Leipzig, 1934, word *Tanāsukh*.
19. Walter Saller: «Das Dorf der lebenden Toten» («The Village of the Living Dead»), *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* (Germany), No. 31 (6.8.1999) p. 13-19.
20. Stefan von Jankovich: *Reinkarnation als Realität* («Reincarnation as a Reality»), Drei Eichen, Ergolding, 1992.
21. German TV documentary *Immer wieder leben. Reinkarnation und christlicher Glaube* («Live Again and Again. Reincarnation and Christian Belief») by Klaus Wölfle, BR 1987. Broadcast by ARD and BR in the series «Gott und die Welt» («God and the World»).
22. Joanne Klink: *Früher, als ich groß war. Reinkarnationserinnerungen von Kindern* («Earlier, When I was Big. Reincarnation Memories of Children»), Aquamarin, Grafing, 1992 (translated from a Dutch original apparently out of print, no English translation found).
23. Peter and Mary Harrison: *The Children that Time Forgot*, Berkley, New York, 1991. Earlier published as *Life Before Birth*, Great Britain, 1983.
24. Carol Bowman: *Children's Past Lives*, Bantam, New York, 1998.
25. Stevenson, Ian: *20 Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2nd ed. 1980.
26. Stevenson, Ian: *Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville VA, vol. I-IV, 1975-1983 (an extensive documentation of 42 cases). From the same publisher also: *Unlearned Language*, 1984, and *Children Who Remember Previous Lives*, 1987
27. Erlendur Haraldsson: «Children Claiming Past-Life Memories. Four Cases in Sri Lanka», *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1991, p. 233-261. Also: Reprint Series No. 18, Social Science Research Institute, Reykjavik, Iceland
28. Erlendur Haraldsson: «Replication Studies of Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation by Three Independent Investigators», *The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 88, July 1994, p.207-219.
29. Annu Edvardsen (today: Liikkanen): «Lilla Romy möter sin mor från sitt tidigare liv» («Little Romy Meets her Mother from a Past Life»), *Allers*, Hälsingborg, p. 5-7 and ... (published in the 70es, year and volume not readable in my copies).
30. Christopher M. Bache: *Lifecycles. Reincarnation and the Web of Life*, Paragon House, New York, 1990, p. 1-3 – here the same story as in [29] is told but each of the two reports has some facts the other doesn't have. Joe's name is given as Williams and not Wilkie. The Swedish journalists are mentioned.

Chapter 9

ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPONENTS

There are many different arguments against the reincarnation idea in literature [1-6]. Below, I will list and comment some of them.

Reincarnation means that the hardship is prolonged.

Eternal condemnation would perpetuate the hardship forever! Then we would rather prefer to have a few further incarnations...

Reincarnation contradicts resurrection.

Here is no contradiction. The spiritual resurrection comes at the end of a series of incarnations. It eventually comes for *every* soul since *no soul* is lost.

Reincarnation is of no interest to the Christian, in view of «the end is at hand».

Well, we are now waiting almost 2000 years for this «end at hand» (cf. Math. 4:17 and 10:7, Mark. 1:15) – more than 60 generations. This is long enough for our souls to have reincarnated ten times or more. It was by far not as near and «at hand» as many thought in these days...

The corresponding Bible passages may be the only ones, which already long ago turned out to be wrong. A near end was predicted that was to come so soon that many of those who were alive at that time wouldn't die (Math. 16:28) and that the generation of that time wouldn't come to an end before it (Mark. 13:30) (that means: within a third century!*). It would come so soon that the disciples wouldn't even have time to pass through all towns of Israel in their mission (Math. 10:23). This prediction turned out to be wrong already in the first century. They are all since long dead and most of them will be reincarnated again, and the disciples could have passed through the towns several times until they died... That this prediction wasn't fulfilled, which has to do with the return of Christ, is maybe the biggest disappointment of Christianity!

I can only imagine that luciferian powers put everything thinkable in motion in order to delay this as long as ever possible. The infiltration of the Church (see Chapter 11) will be a part of this plan. What was predicted might very well have been foreseen but the adversary powers regrettably were so far very successful...

There actually was, however, a near end, but not of this world and not with the return of Christ. It was the end of a true Christianity based on Jesus' doctrine. Instead a *Paulinian* Christianity came (which among other things introduced a devaluation of the woman that is alien to Jesus' teachings) [7]. Then the departure from Jesus continued with the Church [8].

John's Revelations actually contradict the Bible passages mentioned since they predict various violent incidents, which could certainly not be closely forthcoming. Some predictions obviously refer to things that are yet to come (cf. Chapter 11).

But the above quotations of Jesus will not necessarily be wrong. The equation will prove right if we hypothetically assume a hidden reference to reincarnation in them! Some of those who were incarnated at that time would not yet leave the «wheel of rebirth» and humanity would still remain in the actual phase of development until He returns. And the true Christian doctrine will not before His return reach the whole Earth.

These misunderstood – or otherwise unfulfilled! – Bible words were a reason why many early Christians took no interest in the reincarnation question. They had the opinion that there would be no more time left for another incarnation, anyway. They believed that incarnating would already have come to an end (if it had ever existed). Their motivation for such an opinion in any case proved to be wrong.

I see the frustrating waiting, now so far in vain during two millennia, expressed in Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot*. The Irish dramatist wrote in French and it is said that «Godot» is derived from the English word *God* with the French diminutive *-ot*, which is supposed to mean some-

* «Generation» a measure of time is generally understood as about the third of a century.

thing like «the little God». He has himself never explained the meaning of this. Is the «little God» supposed to be Jesus?

Or could it be that Jesus simply *reincarnated* and became a person who was never associated with him? Maybe he did come back and we never knew it...

Jesus died for us, in our place, and with that all bad karma is already forgiven.

In fact this is basically true, but it isn't a cheap solution that makes us free from own responsibility nor from repair. We cannot conveniently leave to Him to make all in order for us that we have messed up, to do the «dirty work» in our place and clean up after us... And what about all the bad karma we have acquired *after* His crucifixion? This question was already extensively dealt with in the Introduction and in earlier chapters.

I have heard the opinion that Jesus' sacrifice would erase all the karma-loaded past and that the soul that surrenders to him would become washed clean. That is, however, not at all what this world looks like! Could it be that Lucifer has abused this great sacrifice to introduce a pseudo-Christ as a clever tool for his manipulations? (Cf. Chapter 11.) If Lucifer would through such a trick erase all the past of a soul – and with it all the long and toilsome development through many incarnations that it unconsciously still carries in itself – he could make the soul moldable in his sense and insert it as an ignorant wheel in his machinery. All the experiences a soul would have acquired, through which it after its fall from God had already advanced far on the path of renunciation of evil, would be in vain and the «naked» soul could again be ready for evil after loosing that development! A «soul washing» comparable to «brain washing»... back to square one!

The true Christ, however, offers to accompany us on this path and relieve us from the past – not to erase it – and show us the way to the target. Relief from the past can only consist in repair and responsible reconciliation – with other souls, with God and with oneself. Thus the soul unburdened by the past but fully conscious of its experience can at the end of the path reach the divine target.

This life offers sufficient opportunities to develop.

We only need to open the daily newspaper to see how the «opportunities» are used by the majority. Such «opportunities» would filter out a handful for the heaven and send the masses to hell. And what about those who understand little or nothing of their «opportunities»?

It is not a matter of a process, but of a decision.

For the major part of humanity then a decision that would obviously be wrong, since they don't know better. And this should then end in an eternal condemnation that is *irrevocable for all times*? Where are love and grace? Where is the mercy? This is as if we would require a decision for a profession from a three-year old child, which would be binding for the whole life.

Karma has no effect since one in a new life knows nothing of the old one.

Here one forgets the unconscious self, which knows very well what the conscious self has forgotten (see below). This is the reason why past-life therapy works!

The suffering of the individual would be meaningless.

What sense would it have *without* reincarnation? Only a fanatical masochism? Cf. Chapter 1.

The earlier personality would be erased and one would in a new life be another person.

The true self is the soul, which «dresses» itself with bodies. Do I change my personality when I put on new clothes tomorrow? *Persona* means *mask* in Latin. Should we identify ourselves with our masks and not with the true self behind it? Cf. the following.

Why, then, don't we remember?

We forget nothing. What the *conscious* self no more knows remains in the memory of the *unconscious* self. This is confirmed in hypnosis experiments, which show that any detail of early childhood memories can be brought forward even though the conscious self has completely forgotten it. It is

similar with earlier existences. A difficulty for our official science is, however, that such data must then be stored in an immaterial memory of a soul that cannot be physically conceived, and that this science doesn't want to believe in a soul – even though it is the doctrine of every religion! The objection belongs to a time in which we not yet knew of the unconscious self and is self-disproving through the knowledge of modern psychology. There are also spontaneous memories (see above) and memories called up through regression techniques (cf. Chapter 14).

This can be compared with the transition between being awake and being asleep. When I am asleep and dream, I will in the dream hardly remember the dream I had in the night before. But during the day I can often remember a few dreams I had lately and can sometimes even see a relation between them, which I cannot see when I am dreaming. In the comparatively «awake» condition between two incarnations I have an overview over various lives.

The eternal cycles of reincarnation don't solve the problem of the evil; the evil would remain forever.

Firstly, the cycles are not eternal. Secondly, the evil would be even more eternal in an eternal condemnation! As concerns the theodicy question: see Chapter 1. The evil is much more in the *doing* than in the own suffering that is a consequence of evil doing, which I have traded in and from which I should learn the lesson and no more to do such evil.

Western reincarnation concepts originate from Blavatsky's Theosophy.

This is an ignorance of historical truth, see earlier chapters. There were reincarnation concepts in the West long before Blavatsky and she has a limited influence outside Theosophy. It is similar with Allan Kardec*, Rudolf Steiner and – also! – L. Ron Hubbard. It is really an affront that a few authors mention the two latter persons in one breath! This is a tactic that is offensive for Anthroposophy. The difference is enormous. The abuse of strongly modified reincarnation concepts in «Scientology» (claiming that we would originally have been a kind of extraterrestrial «Titans» who then incarnated as human beings) for manipulation of people and their financial exploitation brings lots of heavy karma to those who practice it [9-12].

Most of the so called «secret philosophies» (mainly kept secret as a protection against the Inquisition) –far less secret today – preserved ancient concepts of reincarnation in the West. It may be true that among them were a few that were quite antichristian, but other philosophies preserved ancient Gnostic Christian knowledge.

The reincarnation idea contradicts God's grace.

It is God's great grace and mercy! The great and loving grace not to be lost but to have another chance to become free through repair and to take the responsibility for oneself. Ruppert wrote that God's forgiveness is no «cheap grace» «if only it is made clear that the judgement according to the actions» is forthcoming *also for the pardoned sinner...* [4, enhancement there]. That is just what reincarnation and karma involve!

Genetics contradict reincarnation.

Not at all! Under circumstances, the soul chooses a body with certain characteristics in order to make a needed experience in it. It may also accept certain characteristics so that it can be born to be together with another soul. But genetics never alone define personality and character but also influence and education as well as what the soul brought with it, which acts out of the unconscious self. Genetics to a considerable extent define the external person but much less the internal.

The self is in the brain and therefore an inseparable part of the body.

This is a materialistic version of the false dogma that body and soul would be inseparable. It is the view of official science, which a few reincarnation opponents have taken up as an argument – even though science also takes this as a motivation to deny the existence of a soul and survival of the self

* His real name was Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail.

after death and therefore denies basic Christian beliefs [6]. But if the self could only exist in the brain: don't angels have a self? Didn't Christ have one any more after the crucifixion? Doesn't God have a self? Who is in the purgatory while the worms eat his brain? And who is in hell when his body is not allowed to resurrect?

Those who believe in reincarnation are often pantheists or atheists.

Can there be a soul without a God? Hardly imaginable! Atheists believe even less in reincarnation since they don't even believe in a soul. The reproach of pantheism will have to do with the idea that we would at the end of the reincarnation become «gods» ourselves [5]. Would we then in the heaven of the ecclesiastic eschatology not be like «gods» in comparison with our present human state of being? The here loosely used concept «gods» must first be defined. Furthermore, Jesus told us: «Ye are gods» (John 10:34)!

The idea that reincarnation believers would be atheists might have to do with the misunderstanding that Buddhism would be a religion without God. This was already dealt with in Chapter 1. Buddha will undoubtedly have known that who treads his path will *himself* experience God! How else is it to be understood that Kuan Yin – a female Buddha in China, goddess of mercy and an incarnation of the angel* Avalokiteśvara – has promised to wait at the gates of heaven until all souls have been redeemed (images of Kuan Yin remind a lot of images of Mary).

«The reincarnation belief in a western form promises relief from questions of personal responsibility, from wrong decisions in philosophy of life, from individual guilt with reference to «karmic laws»...» [13].

The doctrine of reincarnation and karma could hardly be more wrongly understood! The accusation in the quotation could rather be cast on the Dogma since it promises a «grace» that is presented such as if Christ and God would free us from all responsibility if only we convert. Otherwise we would forever go to hell. This is almost like a modern version of a «letter of indulgence». On the contrary, the reincarnation concept requires us to take full responsibility ourselves for our actions and to correct wrong decisions through own experience of their consequences. We ourselves carry the guilt for wrong doings and have to carry it off. This to a large extent takes place through repair and conversion to which the lessons of the «karmic laws» take us. These lessons involve that we will later experience our past actions as done to ourselves – not as a punishment but as a *lesson*. It is really a loving grace of God that he gives us this opportunity instead of condemning us forever for a wrong step.

«There are, nonetheless, serious objections to this alternative. The most obvious is that, with rare exceptions, we seem to have no memory of previous existences. This is not only an argument against the truth of reincarnation; it is also an argument against its utility, if true. It is more than a little implausible to claim that we are learning by experience or continuing a development already begun; rather, we seem to be starting all over again every time.» [15]

Again this ignorance of the unconscious self! It was already above remarked that *the unconscious self forgets nothing!* It is only the conscious and rational ego that forgets. It is certainly time that the discoveries of modern psychology and psychoanalysis about the unconscious self are finally taken notice of also in this context. Arguments like this belong to medieval ages in which the unconscious self was unknown. Because of this the «rare exceptions» confirm the rule, such as spontaneous memories and memories of children!

* As was mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 1, the Devas in Hinduism and the Buddhas in Buddhism can very well be compared to our concept of angels. The Devaloka (world of the Devas) can be seen as a level in the hierarchy of angels, even though the Dogma detests the recognition of analogies, parallels and relations to eastern Religions and only wants to see differences and contrasts... Avalokiteśvara is regarded as the Deva or Buddha of *love and compassion* – reminding a lot of Christian concepts! – especially in Tibet, where he is called «Chenresig» (sPyan.ras.gzigs). It has been suggested that the Mahāyāna Buddhism, which arose 2000 years ago, could be a Christ impulse in Buddhism [14], since herewith a *collective* path emerged on which one takes one's fellow men and women along, a path of community. In spite of all resistance of the Dogma there will still be many common points to evaluate!

It is only the ego-self that emerges anew when the body is born, but the unconscious self that has to do with the soul is the basis upon which each new incarnation builds. It is there that we carry our conscience as the sum of all earlier experiences. The psychology today knows very well how much we are influenced and guided by impulses from there, without being conscious of it! This is how both karma and continuation of the soul development work!

Contra-productive polemics.

It is certainly very contra-productive to do as one author does – obviously in lack of better arguments – calling the belief in reincarnation an imbecility, stupidity, hallucination, idiocy, infantile philosophy, laic philosophy, manipulation, ignorance, intellectual pathology, superficiality and so on (see [5] - all these expressions and still more are there spread out over the pages, often as personal insults of various authors)!

Another false concept about reincarnation that is often found in literature of the opponents has to be clearly corrected: that the reincarnations would never end – if there were reincarnation, the human being would reincarnate forever. In reality, we are here dealing with steps or rungs of a «staircase» or «ladder» back to God, classes in a school for the soul. After a last incarnation the soul can return to the divine word to stay there – it then has finally come home!

References

1. Mark C. Albrecht: *Reincarnation. A Christian Critique of a New Age Doctrine*, see Chapter 2.
2. Heinrich Beck: *Reinkarnation oder Auferstehung. Ein Widerspruch?* («Reincarnation or Resurrection. A Contradiction?»), Resch, Innsbruck, 1988.
3. Jörg Wichmann: «Zur Veränderung des Reinkarnationsglaubens in der westlichen Kultur und Esoterik» («On the Modification of the Reincarnation Belief in the Western Culture and in Esoterics»), in *Reinkarnation oder Auferstehung. Konsequenzen für das Leben* («Reincarnation or Resurrection. Consequences for Life»), ed. by Hermann Kochanek, Herder, Freiburg i.Br., 1992, p. 181-193.
4. Hans-Jürgen Ruppert: «Reinkarnation in neugnostischen Bewegungen. Anthroposophie - Theosophie - New Age», («Reincarnation in Neo-Gnostic Movements. Anthroposophy - Theosophy - New Age») in *Reinkarnation - Wiedergeburt - aus christlicher Sicht* («Reincarnation - Rebirth - in a Christian View»), Paulusverlag, Freiburg (Switzerland) and Theologischer Verlag, Zürich, 1987, p. 65-125.
5. Pier Angelo Gramaglia: *La Reincarnazione ...altre vite dopo la morte o illusione?* («Reincarnation ...Other Lives After Death or Illusion?»), Piemme, Casale Monferrato, 1989.
6. Paul Edwards: *Reincarnation: A Critical Examination*, Prometheus Books, Amherst NY, 1996, This book is an astonishingly naïve product of purely materialistic thinking in the way of official science.
7. Herbert Haag und Katharina Elliger: *Stört nicht die Liebe. Die Diskriminierung der Sexualität – ein Verrat an der Bibel* («Don't Disturb Love. Discrimination of Sexuality – a Betrayal of the Bible»), Walter, Olten, 1986.
8. Karlheinz Deschner: «Das urchristliche Dogma vom nahen Weltenende und wie statt seiner die Kirche kam» («The Early Christian Dogma of the Near End of the World and how the Church came in its Place»), in: *Der gefälschte Glaube* («The Falsified Belief»), Knesebeck & Schuler, Munich 1988, p. 32-42.
9. Renate Hartwig: *Scientology - ich klage an!* («Scientology - I accuse!»), Pattloch, Augsburg, 1994.
10. Renate Hartwig: *Scientology - die Zeitbombe in der Wirtschaft* («Scientology - the Time Bomb in Business and Economy»), Heyne, Munich, 1994.
11. Kaj Moos: *Scientology - fandens eget værk* («Scientology - a Work of the Devil Himself»), Havmågen, Silkeborg (Denmark), 1985.
12. Kaj Moos: *Scientology - videnskab eller svindel?* («Scientology - Science or Fraud?»), Havmågen, Silkeborg (Denmark), 1989.
13. Hans Neusius in an information sheet: *Reinkarnation - Chance oder Illusion?* («Reincarnation - Chance or Illusion?») on the occasion of a public discussion in Trier on October 17, 1997 (Referat Weltanschauungsfragen im Bistum Trier).
14. Lectures by Oscar Marcel Hinze, Germany.
15. Michael Paternoster: «Reincarnation – a Christian critique», in *The Christian Parapsychologist*, Sept. 1979, p. 124-129.

Chapter 10

REINCARNATION – WHY DO PEOPLE FEAR IT?

The reincarnation question is senseless for agnostics and atheists. If man has no soul there can obviously be no reincarnation and if there is no God the whole thing is meaningless, anyway. The objection by opponents that believers in reincarnation would often be atheists is therefore self-disproving.

For believers in God, however, the question of a life after death is essential. It seems, though, that many are afraid of the possibility of reincarnation! They reject this concept in a way that often seems fearful. Are they frightened of the possibility to be born again in a new body? What are they afraid of?

I have never been bad!

I should have been an evildoer? Impossible! I was always good. When I suffer, it is in any case unjust. I can never have caused that myself.

And yet the world is full of evildoers of all kinds: from the minor swindler and pick-pocket to the mass murderer and the war criminal. You only have to open the daily newspaper to see that! If therefore for purely statistical reasons the possibility would not be very small that I would have myself been one of them – and maybe not even a very small one – I will rather reject the idea of reincarnation. I can then continue to talk myself into always having been good. The scoundrels and criminals are always the others. And that may even be true today. That it might not always have been so is unthinkable...

And I can continue to make myself believe that my suffering is completely unjust. It can only be the fault of the others...

I reserve a seat in heaven!

If I behave well and follow all that my religion prescribes, I can reserve a good place for me in heaven. For what would I then need further incarnations? Christ has forgiven me. Do I then need more?

The fanatic has put it all on one card. His place in heaven is to be definitely and irrevocably reserved – no matter how he behaves to his fellow men and women in this world. Actually, only the brothers and sisters of the same faith count, the others will anyway go to hell... The thought would be unbearable that much of this could be in vain and a mistake! Such a thought must not only be suppressed, but defeated. As if one could with enough violence shape the truth to become the way we want to have it...

When religion becomes an excuse for violent acts and when its rules are unlovingly used as bats to club down our brothers and sisters, we have understood nothing! Nothing at all! Rules and prescriptions are of course not there to be violated, but also not to be followed mechanically. They are guidelines for those *who cannot yet do it in love*. The love stands above all rules. Rules have a real sense only where humans are still undeveloped in love. They then cannot yet act out of their hearts. Rules are substitutes through which many things can after all be reasonably kept in order. They are crutches for those who still have closed hearts.

But who has developed to act more out of his heart than out of his mind needs no rules anymore. Rules cannot foresee all possibilities and therefore include their own exceptions from the beginning – much more than we would ever think. The heart does it right even if this goes against a rule. Only who can act out of his heart and therefore needs no rules can have a place reserved for him in heaven. The person who acts only out of his rational mind and insists on provisions and regulations has not yet come that far!

Then I could be punished!

If there is reincarnation I could be punished for many a little injustice that I have committed in the course of my life. Maybe even for one that isn't so small... And I have taken such effort that no one should know it, maybe even not God... God is supposed to have mercy! More than I have with my

fellow men and women. Christ is supposed to have forgiven me on the cross! Even though it is hard for me to forgive others... I am only a human being!

And because of that, that I am only a human being, I have to grow still more while *being human*! It is only when I am grown up as a human being that I can go further. The criterion is, again: love! How could I go to heaven if I have not yet understood that when I die? Then I will have to return to make up for it!

The very possibility that I can return to make up for what I have neglected and grow still more in another life, until I have become really grown up as a creature of God, is the greatest mercy!

We are quickly indignant when a worldly court imposes «a too low» punishment on the one we regard as a criminal. We are just as quickly indignant by the thought that *we ourselves* could be punished for an offence! The others should be punished, and that well, but with us one should of course be lenient and reasonable. The circumstances are always mitigating for us, but not for the others...

If at all, then the others shall reincarnate, but not me. Then it is better to dismiss the whole idea far away from me...

However, karma and reincarnation are not a matter of punishment, but of learning and correction, even though this will often take place through lessons on my own skin, which I have attracted to myself through insistent excuses and justifications...

Chapter 11

DOES THE CHURCH WANT CHRIST TO RETURN?

There are a few remarkable books, which mention a luciferian plan, a centuries old plan to infiltrate the Church with magic and satanic forces. The powers of evil would strive after having their own people in the higher ranks of the Vatican and eventually on the throne of the Pope.

Because the luciferian forces were unsuccessful in their attempts two millennia ago to nip the rising and to them threatening Christianity in the bud, a highly ingenious strategy was elaborated. Instead of destroying Christianity, it was tried to make it serve their interests, just like the modern business principle: «If you can't kill it, buy it!»

The book *The Broken Cross* [1] by Piers Compton describes a plan by the *Illuminati* for such an infiltration. I will select only a few main points. As Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (1881-1963) became the Pope John XXIII in 1958, he introduced a new cross on which the all-seeing eye in a triangle is seen. This is a symbol of the *Illuminati* (often put on the top of a pyramid). Roncalli has himself told that he was converted to Catholicism through the writings of Léon Bloy (1846-1917) [2,3]. It is said that Bloy identified the Holy Spirit with Satan and that he, according to Compton, presented himself as Lucifers prophet! In a major encyclopedia is written: «A man of the devil as well as of God, of hatred as well as of love...» [4]. Roncalli allegedly experienced an initiation in a secret order while he in 1935 was delegated to Istanbul in the service of the Vatican. A master of the order gave him a very special mission, the sense of which will have to do with his later ascension on the chair of the Pope. The description indicates that Roncalli without knowing it was chosen for a special purpose and was manipulated towards it with all the seductive influence of mysticism and the secrecy atmosphere of the order. The ego-befooling thrill of being «something special», the lure of being chosen and privileged, is a trap very often used to turn people into tools for dark purposes. People who usually are told little about the true but concealed purpose of the activity they are charged with but are stuffed with society secrets and ritual cults... A detailed report about this initiation is said to be given in a hard-to-find text [5].

The next Pope was Giovanni Battista Montini (1897-1978) who was elected 1963 and took the name Paul VI. He introduced another new cross, the «broken cross», which is said to have been a symbol of Satanists in the 6th century. It consists of a twisted cross with a deformed Jesus figure and has allegedly been used by black magicians as the «sign of the beast». This nasty *caricature* of a crucifix is put on top of a staff, which the Pope carries at various occasions.

During the reign of this Pope it came to a scandal that was soon covered up. The archbishop Annibale Bugnini (his name is in the below-mentioned list) had in 1975 inadvertently left his document file in a meeting room. It was opened with the purpose of finding out who owned it and it was discovered to contain documents about persons in high positions in secret societies in Rome. Bugnini was then (as a punishment?) displaced to be a nuncio in Iran, then governed by the Shah, and the Vatican strove to let the grass grow over the matter. The story was published as a novel [6] upon which the expected denials followed.

Another scandal was the publication in 1976 of a list of 70 persons in the Italian magazine *Borghese*. These persons had high positions in the Church and were said to all be members of secret societies. Some persons of the clergy commented: «there is a Fifth Column in the Church that constantly works for atheism» and «the presence of enemies of the Church inside its inner structure... should be revealed.» A secret French list is told to contain many more names.

The Holy Communion and the Catholic Mass were watered down and profaned under the Pope Paul VI. The Communion is since then sometimes offered in quite careless forms. The above-mentioned archbishop Bugnini, as a Masonic agent in the Vatican [7], and the cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani introduced a *New Mass Order*, adopted at the 2nd Vatican Council 1962-1965.

Another book [8] partly refers to *The Broken Cross*. It tells that a conspiracy for infiltration of the Vatican by the *Illuminati* was discovered in 1785. A priest who was a member had died in an acci-

dent and secret documents about such plans were found at his body. A certain Masonic group, the *Carbonari*, intended to infiltrate the Church on all levels.

A further book [9] is allegedly based on revelations on the deathbed by a priest and threefold doctor who belonged to the innermost insiders of the Vatican and had been an advisor to three Popes. He told a journalist [10] about an occult ritual in the Vatican in 1963 (the year in which Pope Paul VI followed John XXIII). In that ritual the fallen archangel Lucifer was enthroned as leader of the Catholic Church. They aim at a world government: «They do anything possible to have their man as Pope.» The book is presented as a factual report in the form of a novel in order to protect certain persons through altered names of persons and places.

A more recent book [7] has caused much stir. The Vatican has in vain tried to stop the publication of this document composed by 20 persons in high positions* in the Church who wrote under a common pseudonym. Chapter XVII reports about a black mass in the Vatican and Chapter XVIII, «Satan's smoke in the Vatican», reports in a quite detailed manner how the «Masonic polyp» as an agnostic order systematically infiltrates the Church. Before quoting a testimony about a black mass in Chapter XVII, the authors write: «Satan, the prince of darkness, cunningly directs the ways of his followers... His guiding principle is: You don't have to act against God if you can do without him. It is sufficient to make use of the patterns, which the Church offers in that it legalizes ambitions of human selfishness... so that the Church as a Divine institution easily becomes an abode of infidel materialism. In this way, Satan lets the Fathers of the Church themselves turn the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount into their opposites.»

The deadly activities around the 33-day Pope John Paul I may have a certain significance in this respect [1,11].

Compton also reports about black masses in the Church. In the basilica of Sta. Maria de Guadalupe in Mexico City a goat was slaughtered as a sacrifice in front of the altar [1, p. 124] and in Belgium a Progressive Theological Congress was held in a Franciscan Church in Brussels under Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens. It opened with dancing girls and then an unbelievable shape slowly rose from the altar. It turned out to be a gigantic plastic phallus. A phallic worship of the heathen god Baal followed [12].

I know myself a person who told me the following. In a neighboring village an old pensioned man lives who during decades was a secretary in the Vatican. He repeatedly says: «What is going on in the Vatican is criminal» but doesn't unveil what he is referring to.

The Ayatollahs of Iran obviously understand nothing of psychology. When Salman Rushdie was sentenced to death for his book *The Satanic Verses*, they gave it the greatest publicity a book can have. Rushdie's book overnight became world famous and a bestseller. The Church should know better than that and never do the same. Yet it seems to make similar mistakes. When Professor Hans Küng and the priest Eugen Drewermann** were condemned and deposed they attracted much more public attention and their writings became better known and more read than ever before. Something similar happened in the Indian region of mission with Tissa Balasurya (Shri Lanka). Is this a mistake or intention? Could this be a red herring? Maybe these persons *should* have much public attention in order to deviate it from other critical questions (such as the arguments about the Catholic Mafia *Opus Dei****)? Strangely, the Church doesn't react publicly to books like the above-mentioned on the

* The only one of the authors whose identity became known through denunciation is the retired Vatican prelate Luigi Marinelli, now subject to a court procedure initiated by the Vatican.

** The cases may be little known on the other side of the Atlantic, but these two are critics of the Church in Germany who have inadvertently been made very popular by the institution they criticize.

*** There have repeatedly been revealing reports in the media about *Opus Dei* and critical discussions in Switzerland because of its headquarter in Chur. Since I have had little opportunity to follow the discussion in the German-language media, I may instead mention that an extensive series of articles was published in the Swedish newspaper *Expressen* on July 4-8, 10, 11 and 13 in 2000, in which this «sect» was described as a «black force». In Slovenia, a series of articles was published in *Mladina* No. 39-41, 2000 (in which the expression «Catholic Mafia» is used). *Opus Dei* performed a coup in the Slovenian parliament and could achieve that in the summer 2000 an ultra-conservative man loyal to them ruled as a president for four months as a result of a provoked government crisis. He changed certain things to the advantage of the Church. Democracy and the wis-

infiltration theory but instead tries to secretly stop them or withdraw them from the market. Or they are declared to be fads or «trivial literature», hoping that they will not be taken seriously. Thus, for example, the book *The Broken Cross* may no more be available... Against Karheinz Deschner (see earlier chapters) and Otto von Corvin [13] court procedures were tried, which the Church lost in both cases. Since then it instead tries to pass them over in silence

Some own observations seem to confirm the infiltration conspiracy and are thought provoking. Could something about these rumors really be true? Could such an endeavor already have achieved much success?

Strange parallels to magic

Could there in the Church even be varieties of magic? A monstrous thought that is right-out forbidden!

There are secret societies in which the neophytes and the members in the periphery are kept in illusory ideas. Only who after painstaking tests appears sufficiently reliable is initiated into the true secrets of the inner circle, which turns out to be a reversal of the peripheral structure of doctrines. The outer circles are not allowed to know what it really is about and the members are kept in the belief in something different. Could it be that an infiltration of the Church – if the assertions in the above-mentioned books are true – also proceeds according to such a system?

Of course, I don't know if this is so but the books mentioned and some strange observations let such thoughts suggest themselves since there are at least certain parallels even to techniques used in black magic.

A well-known technique in voodoo is to use a puppet representing the victim and stick needles, nails, pieces of glass and the like in it, or to cut in it, in order to harm a person. In every Church and in every Catholic home there is a «puppet» of Jesus with nails in hands and feet and often with a crown of thorns on His bleeding head and a wound in His side – nailed to the cross!! Is this supposed to break the power of Christ? Should he still remain fixed to the cross?* A dreadful thought, and a possible analogy would be shocking...

It is very interesting in the context of this Chapter that – according to major encyclopedias – crucifix images were used only from the 6th century on and that the first crucifix sculptures were made as late as in the year 1000. During the first 600 years of Christianity, the image of a *victorious* Christ was used, which was then replaced by the image of a *suffering* Christ! This certainly fits the picture in this chapter...

A papal ritual that is sometimes carried out (as it was, for example, at the turn of the millennium) is to carry a staff around that has a crucifix at its top – the above-mentioned «broken cross». Sometimes the Jesus figure on it is anointed in a way that almost makes us think of embalming a dead body. Carried around like a trophy, this scepter seems to want to show: «Jesus is dead. I now exercise the power.»

Are we dealing with coincidences and apparent similarities with certain techniques of magic, or is also here no smoke without a fire? In such ways, the return of Christ could be *delayed* by calamitous means...

Has the Lord's Prayer been reformulated according to known principles for affirmation so that it refers *to the future* and not to the present? «Thy kingdom come» and not «Thy kingdom IS» – *here and now* – and so on. It *shouldn't be yet*... What is uncomfortable for those who have the power should be delayed as much as possible, because they will then have to give their power up.

dom of the people won at the end and the corresponding party lost by high amounts in a regular election in October 2000, in part thanks to the important clarification by these articles.

* It is unbelievable but maybe significant that the famous painting of the *resurrected Christ* by Grünewald was taken from the Isenheim Altar in Colmar (Alsace, France) to a *museum*! The Eastern Church, however, recognizes the resurrected Christ much more. It has corresponding images and the beautiful Easter greeting: «Christ is resurrected!» – «Verily, He is resurrected!» The resurrection mass of the western Church on Easter Sunday seems rather to be an isolated case and «window dressing».

The kabalistic cross in the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer terminates with the kabalistic cross – a formula of kabalistic and western magic – because at the end it says: «...thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.»

The Kabbalah is a high spiritual science and it is in no way my intention to devaluate it. However, knowledge and concepts of this science have repeatedly been abused in black magic. Techniques are, for example, known in the Kabbalah for allegedly conjuring up spirits and even make them servants. Such things play no essential role in the kabalistic science but they do in forms of abuse.

The kingdom, the power and the glory are three sephirot (plural of sephira), three of the spiritual centers in the human being according to the doctrine of the Kabbalah (which probably have analogies to the chakras of the Indian doctrine) [14]. These three sephirot are:

malkūt = *the kingdom*: at the feet,

gebūrah = *the power*: at the left shoulder,

gedūlah = *the glory*: at the right shoulder (also called *chesed* = *the mercy*).

The corresponding points on the body are also the points we touch when we make the sign of the cross (as concerns *malkūt*, we rather point towards it since we would otherwise have to bend down or go down in the knees)! We also touch the head, which indicates that another sephira is involved, located to the head. This sephira is *keter* = *the crown*. Should it really be: «...thine is the crown, the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen»?

Exactly the same formula is used by magicians in various magic rituals, mostly spoken in Hebrew or Latin! Eliphas Levi, alias Alphonse Louis Constant, deviated into occultism and magic from being a Catholic priest, called himself an abbot and as member of a secret brotherhood he will have been initiated in many things. He wrote: «We see by the occult vesicle of the Lord's Prayer... that it was originally made after two manners, or at least that it was characterized by two entirely different formulae, one reserved for priests and initiates, the other imparted to neophytes and the profane. For example, the initiate said raising his hand to the forehead, «For thine», then added «is,» and continuing as he brought down his hand to his breast, «the kingdom,» then to the left shoulder, «the justice,» afterwards to the right shoulder, «and the mercy» – then clasping his hands, he added, «in the generating ages.» *Tibi sunt Malkuth et Geburah et Chesed per aeonas* – a Sign of the Cross which is absolutely and magnificently kabalistic, which the profanations of Gnosticism have lost completely to the official and militant Church. This Sign after this manner, should precede and terminate the Conjunction of the Four.» [15]. The «Conjunction of the Four» is a set of conjurations for subjugating elementary spirits.

This will not be the whole difference between the two ways to recite this prayer. Eliphas Levi will only have touched on the subject and concealed more profound secrets. Firstly, the initiate knows what he is doing and that he is actually making the *kabalistic cross*, and the profane has no idea of what he is really saying and doing. Secondly, the initiate could possibly add the sephira *keter*, as indicated above.

It is interesting to note that only some later Bible editions have this «kabalistic cross» in the Lord's Prayer in Math. 6:13. To them belong Luther's Bible, King James' Version and also the Peshitta. In contrast, my text of the ancient Greek Bible doesn't have this formula and also not the «Amen» at the end. My Bibles in Spanish and Italian don't have it, either. Has the formula been added later? This may be another piece of a puzzle that builds the picture of this chapter...

Confirmation in the Revelation

Another important passage of the Bible now appears in a new light in view of the above.

In the Revelation is written: «And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of

names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration» (Rev. 17:18).

«And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth» (Rev. 17:9). «And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth» (Rev. 17:18).

Who will, reading about the great city, not think of Rome with its seven papal academies, built on seven hills – and of the Vatican, officially called «Vatican City»!?

«And the ten horns... are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet...» (Rev. 17:12). We could here think of Dekapolis, the ten Hellenistic towns in Israel of that time. Mentioned in Math. 4:25, Mark 5:20 and 7:31, they are in a more general sense seen as symbols for pagan areas still to be missioned (cf. the visit of the Pope to India in 1999 with a call for continued mission; in May 2000 the question about Christian mission among the Jews again became a matter of discussion in Germany). The scarlet color is among others a symbol for the Church, which still is striving for expanding its power over some «heathen» areas. The woman is carried by a beast. A beast is often seen as a symbol of the devil.

«And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies» (Rev. 18:1-3).

Who would, when reading about that angel, not think of Christ coming to judge the Church? And to whom would not the strictly forbidden thought easily come that the whore would be the Church? It has at all times enriched (cf. a.o. [16,17,18]) and prostituted itself to the powers of the world, but also manipulated these powers and executed power itself.

The dogmatic interpretation wants to see the world power of the ancient Roman Empire in this, and that the town would be the heathen town Rome before its christianization. This contradicts the future vision in the Revelation, which to a large extent obviously refers to events that have not yet taken place! Why should the vision suddenly jump 2000 years back in time instead of symbolically describe a *continued course* of a *forthcoming* event referred to in the previous Chapter of the Revelation? It cannot be otherwise than that the unmasking and fall of the «great whore» is yet to come!

It would also be hard to see how the Roman Empire would have «fornicated» with the kings of the Earth, which it fought against by all means and wanted to subdue. Such a «fornication» through all times is much more true for the Church!

If the Bible passages quoted are to be fulfilled, it can be expected *that the Church doesn't want Christ to come back*, since that event will lead to its own judgement and end!

No prayer for Christ's return

It one day came to my mind that I never heard a *prayer for Christ's return* in the liturgy of the Church. I therefore asked a friend who has completed a study of theology. No, it seems that there really is no such prayer! Later, another person confirmed this.

A personal inquiry at the Institute of Liturgical Science and Sacramental Theology of the Catholic Theological Faculty at the University of Vienna brought no enlightenment in this matter. All that we could find is that a few ritual and other prayers briefly mention that we would *eventually* be together with Jesus Christ in heaven. But we found no prayer that asks for his soon return to definitively redeem us. «We are already redeemed», the person said, obviously thinking of the common expecta-

tion as a Christian of the Church – inconsiderate of the suffering in the world and our co-responsibility for those who suffer (cf. Appendix 1).

Another inquiry in the Priest Seminary in Graz (Austria) had the same meager result. They could at both places only refer to texts in the Missal where the return of Christ is *mentioned* but in no way connected with a concrete and active prayer for it. The High Prayer says: «We proclaim your death, oh Lord, and we praise your resurrection, until you return in splendor.»* The Latin text has no «splendor» but only: «...until you come» («...donec venias»). This almost sounds like «Your return can wait, take your time. We are so happy to execute the power in your place.» The death of Jesus is strangely stressed.

Two other locations in the Missal similarly have only statements that he will return in an undefined future and again have no prayer that the redemption would be completed soon. In the Great Profession of Faith is said: «He sits on the right side of the Father and will return in splendor to judge the living and the dead: His kingdom will have no end» – similarly but a bit shorter in the Apostolic Profession of Faith. The return is stressed to be in some undefined future.

As concerns the common expectance of the regular churchgoers and subordinate obedience to the Dogma, I come to think of what I heard in a Catholic TV broadcast in the USA in 1979: «Mr. Smith went to Church every Sunday, Mr. Smith went to hell for what he did on Monday.»

Who, then, doesn't want Christ back?

It is, of course, not really the Church itself that doesn't want Christ to return, but it will (today) hardly know about the secret influence from behind the curtains. Who really want to retard the things is Lucifer. But the old and unscrupulous master strategist is too clever and too cunning to simply paralyze the representative of his opponent in an open confrontation or even to destroy it. Instead, he poisons its heart and twists its head so that he can manipulate it in his interest in an unnoticed way. Since the people in the Church are only human beings, their weaknesses can be well used for the purpose. For that aim he gave a great military victory to Constantine, who in return held the Council in Nicaea. A pimp's marriage...

Also the Pope is only a human being. The perverse Dogma of infallibility is a human (luciferian?) invention that is little more than 100 years old, and was accepted with a scanty majority at the 1st Vatican Council 1869-1870 «against multiple resistance within the Church» [19]. Before that, only the decision of a Council was considered infallible, and that not from the beginning but only from the 14th century on. This has caused the Church many a problem since a resolution of a Council could not be changed when it turned out to be too obviously wrong. Instead, one had to resort to various tricky artifices so that a senseless old commitment could be bent right in a roundabout way. It is therefore important to once again stress that the anathemata against Origen (see Chapter 3) are no decisions by a Council!

How could that work!

If it would really be true that such an old secret plan in ways that even appear quite magic would have the aim to retard Christ's return: how could that work? Christ will be stronger than Lucifer! But the plan would in that case work *through us human beings!* If we since almost 2000 years are preprogrammed to keep the image of a Jesus *who is dead and nailed to the cross* deeply imprinted in ourselves, to pray the Lord's Prayer in a way that refers to a future, and as far as possible leave the thinking to clerical authorities, then we have become the ignorant tools of such a program... This is really a matter of subliminal manipulation! The power of an unconscious mass visualization is great. We were kept in spiritual immaturity for a purpose, so that we wouldn't be ready yet for Christ's return. He will probably not be able to come back before *we internally have grown spiritually* to be truly ready for it, and not as long as we are only apparently ready in our ego and in the external worldly ways of thinking!

* Having no access to a Missal in English, I have here translated from German.

Maybe Christ would have come back among the Cathars, if not the evil powers had destroyed them...

References

1. Piers Compton: *The Broken Cross. The Hidden Hand in the Vatican*, Neville Spearman, Jersey, 1983.
2. *L'œuvre complète de Léon Bloy* («The Complete Work of Léon Bloy»), Paris, 19 volumes, 1946-1917.
3. *Œuvres de Léon Bloy* («Works of Léon Bloy»), Mercure de France, 15 volumes 1964-1967.
4. *Grande Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse* («Great Encyclopedic Dictionary Larousse»), Paris, vol. 2, 1982.
5. Pier Carpi (pseudonym): *Les prophéties du pape Jean XXIII* («The Prophecies of Pope John XXIII»), Jean-Claude Lattès, 1975. The book appears to be available anew in Spanish and Italian. An Internet search under «"pier carpi" roncalli» (Google setting) yields much information on this case! A search under «"pier carpi" bugnini» is also informative and still more under «"tito casini" bugnini» (see [7]) and «mass bugnini»!
6. Tito Casini: *Smoke of Satan*, a novel published in April 1976.
7. I Millenari (pseudonym of a group): *Via col vento en Vaticano* («Gone With the Wind in the Vatican»), Kaos Edizioni, Milano, 1999. Volume 2: *Fumo di Satana in Vaticano* («Satan's Smoke in the Vatican»), 2001.
8. Michael Howard: *The Occult Conspiracy – The Power of Secret Societies in World History*, MJF Books, New York, 1989.
9. Malachi Martin: *Windswept House*, Doubleday, New York, 1998.
10. «Geistiger Abfall an hohen Stellen?» («Spiritual backsliding in High Positions?»), an Interview of father Malachi by the journalist Uri Dowbenko, *Loreto-Bote* 1/2000, Lauerz (Switzerland), p. 16-27.
11. David A. Yallop: *In God's Name? An Investigation into the Murder of Pope John Paul I*, Corgi, 1997.
12. [1] p. 134, referring to a report from the Belgian News Service that was quoted in the Italian newspaper *Il Giornale d'Italia* on September 17, 1970.
13. Otto von Corvin: *Pfaffenspiegel* («Parson's Mirror»), Hubert Freistühler, Schwerte (Ruhr), no year (1st ed. 1845, 5th ed. 1885).
14. A.E. Waite: *The Holy Kabbalah*, University Books, Secaucus NJ, 9th printing 1975, a.o. p. 195.
15. Eliphas Levi (Alphonse Louis Constant): *Transcendental Magic*, Rider, London, 5th printing 1975, p. 234.
16. Peter Furer: *Was die Kirchen verheimlichen* («What the Churches Keep Secret»), Agnos, Langnau a.A. (Switzerland), 1993.
17. Karlheinz Deschner: *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums* («Criminal History of the Church»), vol. 1-7, Rowolt, Reinbek, 1989-1997. (Commentary to the title: see [19] Chapter 2 and [7] Chapter 3.)
18. Helen Ellerbe: *The Dark Side of Christian History*, Morningstar, San Rafael CA, 1995.
19. *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* («Meyer's Encyclopedic Dictionary»), vol. 24, Bibliographisches Institut, Mannheim, 1979, p. 152.

Chapter 12 CRITIC'S ACCUSATIONS TO THE CHURCH

Evils of the Church

The «prostitution» (see Chapter 11) of the Church to the powers of the world began with the foundation Council in Nicaea in 325. It was the beginning of an unchaste relation with the worldly powers. This was a concubinage, which brought much disaster over the world (cf. [1]). This will have opened a back door for luciferian influences, which since then continuously work behind the curtains and facades of the Church. Since those times it seems, when looking carefully, that a goat's foot can sometimes be barely seen under the edge of the curtains... There are theologians who regard that event – the so-called «Constantinian turn» – as the most unfortunate in the history of the Church. It was a turn for both the Church and the emperor, who in the years before apparently went through a change in his view of the world that will have been more tactical than real. He originally was a paganishly oriented opponent to the Christians and not little superstitious, but then occupied himself with the Gnosis and finally turned to Christianity [2] – even though rather superficially and opportunistically (see Chapter 6). While he was still praying to pagan gods for victories, the reincarnation doctrine of the Greek philosophy will certainly not have been unknown to him. At the Council in 325 he, however, gave the impression to have turned away from all that.

When allegedly a Christ monogram appeared to Constantine with the message: «In this sign you will be victorious» (cf. Chapter 6), it can certainly not have come from Christ since He taught us to love our enemies and that who takes the sword will be undone by the sword!

How else can it be explained that the Church has had *so much blood* shed? Blasphemously even in the name of Christ! Contrary to Christ's doctrine of love... Among many other things:

- The Crusades: masses of «infidels» were slaughtered by people who considered themselves Christians and taught the people of the Near East to kill for the faith...
- The genocide of the Cathars – they were completely eradicated up to the last woman and child.
- The Inquisition – 6 million* so-called «witches» were killed, often after torture and not rarely raped; masses of critics, free thinkers, persons of a different belief, etc., were tortured and/or killed.
- The big genocides when «christianizing» the Americas – on Incas, Aztecs, Mayas, North-American Indians, and so on.
- Approval of hunting, trading and exploiting slaves.
- Blessings of wars, weapons and soldiers instead of following the Gospel and urging for reconciliation.
- Condemnation of Jews as «murderers of Christ», through which the Church directly or indirectly became guilty of pogroms. Jesus and his first followers were Jews themselves, but *Roman* soldiers nailed Him to the cross! The people didn't want this murder to be done but a small group in the front of Pilate's house was incited by a handful of high priests.
- The Church kept silent about the elimination of the Jews in Nazi Germany (cf. [3]).
- Secretly having hands in revolutions and dictatorships (a.o. it kept quiet about the actions of the Nazis and it even helped war criminals to be set free from prison and/or escape to South America – cf. [4,5]).
- The Vatican is said to have secretly supported Hitler and even given him the Christ Medal [6].
- In Northern Ireland both Churches silently approve the murdering instead of preaching the reconciliation, which the teachings of Christ require.
- The Churches kept silent about the murders and tortures in Bosnia. The Catholic Croats obviously hoped to gain grounds from the Muslims and from the Eastern Church of the Serbs, as well as did the latter in the opposite direction. If these Churches had taken the Gospel seriously, each priest would every Sunday in every Church in the country – if Serbian-Orthodox or Catholic – have

* Different numbers are found in literature. The Church is striving to make much lower numbers count. Since it does it in its own interest, such an endeavor is to be taken with caution...

condemned the murders and called for peace and reconciliation... But even warmongering in the sermons has been reported!!*

- In relation to the war in Kosovo it is painful to note that the Eastern Churches in Serbia and Russia still keep quiet about the genocide on the Kosovars. The Catholic Church has given only vague statements. If they would be truly Christian, they would have intervened with all possible means against it and urged the soldiers to Christian disobedience to the worldly power and to instead obey their conscience. But it seems that Muslims are not regarded as our fellow men and women and that one on the quiet enjoys their elimination... The same is repeated in the Russian war against Chechnya...
- A person who cooperates in a welfare organization for children in Romania told me that the Church in that country sometimes catches shipments for human aid and sells them in order to get money for repair and restoration of churches. A newspaper report informed in the autumn of 1998 that much money that was intended for the social work of Mother Theresa went to the Vatican and not to her.
- And so on, and so forth, et cetera,.....

It is remarkable that Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) in a secret letter to the cardinals of 1994 has allegedly written as follows: «How can one remain silent about the many forms of violence perpetrated in the name of faith – wars of religion, tribunals of the Inquisition and other forms of violations of the rights of persons» (reported in the *Chicago Tribune* of June 5, 1995, quoted in [1, p. i]).

March 12, 2000, it came to the *Mea Culpa* of the Pope – regrettably diffuse and an obvious endeavor to keep the Church and its hierarchy free from guilt and instead shift the blame on hangers-on. The relative clarity with which he – again – expressed himself against abortion would be still more desirable concerning sensitive historical facts. And what does the question of abortion have to do with this *Mea Culpa*? When it comes to «killing developing life» the Church has not made itself guilty. Instead, it has to the price of immeasurable additional distress and suffering of, e.g., cruelly raped women wanted to *prevent* their relief through abortion**. In the Church history we are dealing with *killing of actual life*, and that often en masse, as well as with the many omission crimes in this respect. Professor Hans Küng spoke of «general clichés and empty phrases» (Interview on the official German short-wave radio *Deutsche Welle*, March 13, 2000). The Church historian Karlheinz Deschner wrote a «reminder» to that occasion [3] that is well worth reading.

In the German political weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* the following could be read in May 1999 [7]: «The Church already anathematized deserters from the Emperor's army at the Council in Arles in 314. That was the end of pacifism, of disdain of the things of this world and of voluntary poverty of the early Christians. 40 years after the death of Constantine, the Church called a tenth of the ground and earth of the Roman Empire its own: in the medieval ages it even brought it to a third... After only a few centuries there were more victims of the Church than martyrs who had sacrificed their lives for it.»

In one of Germany's major newspapers [8] was at the beginning of the new millennium written that Pope Pius XII was mockingly called «Hitler's Pope». The German dramatist Hochhuth had already in the 40es brought on the stage that the pontificate should have shouted flaming protests in the

* In the Swedish newspaper *Metro* of July 14, 2000, the journalist Johanna Hildebrandt reported (p. 6) about her encounter with a Catholic priest during the Bosnian war. He spoke softly about the marvels of God, but then took out a paper on which it was written that all Muslims should be eradicated and said: «Do you understand that they are of the devil? They must die!»

** The issue of abortion is a difficult one. But there isn't the slightest doubt that in nearly all cases a child resulting from cruel rape is hated by the mother already in the belly and would have to suffer lovelessness, rejection, orphanage and/or adoption with an uncertain fate. If the soul that comes to incarnate can be spared this and at the same time the violated woman, one may certainly ask if the other alternative wouldn't be even worse. Reincarnation cannot be taken as an excuse for abortion! The woman who aborts too easily takes a karmic burden on her shoulders, as does a man who wants her to do it. We are, however, here dealing with emergency cases involving heavy suffering, and in such cases things look very differently.

world against the elimination of the Jews and that the Pope should in a sacrificial demonstration of solidarity have died himself among the Jews in Auschwitz. The Church claims, however, that more Jews were saved as a result of renunciation from protest, which is very hard to believe. It will rather have been a matter of not having to put up with seeing parts of the population leave the Church – which anyway happened – if it would have taken a clear stand against Hitler.

How Christian is the Church?

The Church claims to be the sole representative of Christ on Earth, to administer Jesus' assets and to preach His teachings in the only correct form. As we have seen from earlier chapters, there are reasons to doubt that this is true.

There are theologians who secretly approve what few of them dare to say in public: the Church in reality doesn't relate to Jesus but to Paul! It represents Paul's modified version of Jesus' doctrine [9,10, cf. 7,11]. New discoveries show that John should have become the successor of Jesus but was through political manipulations pushed aside in order to promote Paul [11]. Could it be that two Popes of the 20th century chose the name John Paul to confirm that? Paul wrote: «What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached...» (Philipp. 1:18). The ancient Greek text has «...*éite prophásei éite alētheía*...». *Alētheía* means «truth» and *próphasis* can be translated as «pretence, pretext, apparent reason, excuse».

The Church is therefore more Paulinian than Christian! With Paul (and in part already with Peter) an alienation process began through which this institution, when it later came to be, gradually became profaned and estranged from its task. The Church became a hybrid. It has, on one side, administered Jesus' assets and kept a true core and, on the other side, «adjusted» Jesus' teachings and used the alienated preaching for worldly power.

We know that Paul wasn't a disciple of Jesus. He regretted to be born too late for that (1 Cor. 15:8). When he still was Saul, he even persecuted Christians until he converted and changed his name to Paul after a vision. As concerns this vision, one may have similar doubts as in the case of the vision of Constantine (see above and Chapter 6).

Keeping the truth secret

During a workshop in Israel in May 2000 I had the opportunity to visit Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found. The place is today an excavation site with ruins of a more than 2000-year-old Essene center. In a movie presentation it was suggested that John the Baptist could have been an Essene. The theory that Jesus could at least have had good relations to the Essenes is not new. The Church wanted to keep the scrolls secret but a part of it was secretly photographed and smuggled out. These texts were under protest from the Vatican translated and published by an American team. I was told that this part would constitute only about 25 % of the discovered scrolls! If that is true, not less than 75 % would still be kept away from us! A Western theologian, however, said that only about a quarter of the text is not yet translated, but in that case still an important part is kept secret, which definitely is another crime of the Church. The reason *can only be one*: the truth would strongly endanger the fundament of the Church and its power... for example, if it turns out that the doctrine of Jesus to an important part existed already before him, in the Essene community.

Nothing concrete can be found as concerns the question of reincarnation in the texts so far published – neither for nor against this belief. If the Church wants to claim that this belief would have been alien to the Essenes, it is taking things too easily. In order to prove that it would have to allow the publication of the missing parts of the scrolls! And then the opposite may turn out to be the case... As long as scrolls are still kept secret, such a statement can not be taken very seriously.

Religion as warmonger

The history of humanity to a frightening extent shows that very many larger and smaller wars had to do with religion. One wanted to slaughter opponents to one's own faith and believed to kill for God

and Christ! What an extreme aberration of humanity and what a self-demonization of the religious institutions! It is and remains a heavy sin to kill and there is no worse blasphemy than to want to do it in the name of God or Christ! For the Christian a capital crime against Jesus' command of peace and love.

Three great religions confess to *one* God. Since according to them there can be no other, it has to be *the same* God! He is only venerated and prayed to under different names: Allah, Yahweh, God... and yet the same... Instead of sinning still more through the shedding of blood it is long overdue to finally come to a true interreligious ecumenicalism! *Any* form of killing, and still more «in the name of God», will close the gates of heaven to the perpetrator, put a heavy karma on his shoulders and prepare a place for him in hell (if there would be one). How can it be possible that human beings still don't want to understand that?

Buddhism and Hinduism also have their places in such a holy ecumenicalism. As already mentioned (a.o. in Chapter 1), the Hindus very well know *one* highest God, under whom divine beings are subordinated like the angels in the Catholic belief. Buddha didn't mention God since he will obviously have known that everyone who follows the path he showed will eventually meet Him. It is only one of various ways to the same destination.

The following picture came to me many years ago. There is a high mountain with a bright light on its top. Many paths lead up the mountain to that light. People are walking on the paths. They see the light in a different shape depending upon where they see it from. Some see a cross, others a half moon, still others see a Menorah (the Jewish seven-armed chandelier), others again see a golden Buddha, a Trimūrti (the Hindu trinity), and so on. The light looks different from different sides. The people shout to each other: «You are on the wrong path! I see the light up there. You must take this path!» They loose centuries in disputes and fall far back through conflicts and killing... When they have one day finished their senseless blasphemous fighting and finally arrive at the top of the mountain, they will know that it is unimportant on which path you came up. They had only lost the destination from their sight and with it a lot of time...

The cross

Isn't it strange that the Church has chosen a tool for torture and murder to be its symbol? Does it venerate His execution more than His life and work? Even though it is true that his sacrificial death was something extraordinary – and at the same time the most shameful act of humanity.

Imagine that Jesus hadn't been crucified but beheaded. Would one then have chosen a sword as a symbol? That would be quite perverse... We are simply no more aware of the fact that the cross in these days was a still crueler instrument of murder.

There is, of course, more symbolism in the cross, like the union of the vertical that strives to heaven with the earthbound horizontal, or the four rivers in Eden. In addition, the symbol will actually have become sanctified through 2000 years of devotion. But the historical ambivalence remains. It is long overdue to make the *resurrected Christ* a guiding symbol!

Miserable signs for the future

An aspirant for the succession of the actual Pope is the Italian cardinal Giacomo Biffi*. He claims that antichrist would already be among us and wouldn't be a monster with seven heads (Rev. 12:3, 13:1, 17:3,7.9), but a philanthropist and supporter of vegetarianism, pacifism, the rights of animals and the dialogue between the Orthodox and the Catholic Church. He would therefore want to «force the Catholic Church on its knees.» This cardinal is said to be ultra-conservative and regards everything, which is progressive for the Church and could adapt it to the 21st century and the new millennium as stupidity, vulgarity and shamelessness [12].

* In the above-mentioned list published in the journal *Borghese* there is a cardinal Franco Biffi, which must, however, not necessarily have a connection with cardinal Giacomo Biffi.

With this attitude he contradicts the words of Jesus and according to his own words advocate the opposite: wars, reckless killing of animals* and enmity between the Churches! He advocates misanthropy instead of philanthropy and wants to preserve the dark medieval ages in the Church. Antichrist will be very satisfied with him!

He quotes Nostradamus who prophesied a 3rd antichrist who would have a blue turban and Arabic blood. He would obviously then have assistants and followers characterized by red cardinal caps and Vatican arrogance... in the worst case even sitting on the chair of the Pope. It will, after all, really be a monster with seven heads but only one will be wrapped in blue, the others will wear red...

References

1. Helen Ellerbe: *The Dark Side of Christian History*, Morningstar, San Rafael CA, 1995.
2. J.-R. Palanque, G. Bardy and P. de Labriolle: *Histoire de l'Église* («History of the Church»), vol. 3, Bloud & Gay, 1947, p. 24-33.
3. Karlheinz Deschner: *Memento!*, Rowohlt TB, Reinbek, 1999.
4. Peter FÜRER: *Was die Kirchen verheimlichen* («What the Churches Keep Secret»), Agnos, Langnau a.A. (Switzerland), 1993.
5. TV documentation *Persilscheine und falsche Pässe – Wie die Kirchen nach dem Krieg den Nazis halfen* («Clearance Documents and False Passports – How the Church Helped the Nazis after the War») by Ernst Klee, Hessischer Rundfunk, 1991.
6. E.R. Carmin: *Das schwarze Reich. Geheimgesellschaften und Politik im 20. Jahrhundert* («The Black Empire. Secret Societies and Politics in the 20th Century»), 2nd ed. Wilhelm Heyne, Munich, 1997, p. 374-375.
7. Rudolf Augstein: «Ein Mensch namens Jesus» («A Man called Jesus»), *Der Spiegel* 21/099, p. 216-231.
8. Article in *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Jan. 20, 2000, p. 16.
9. Herbert Haag and Katharina Elliger: *Stört nicht die Liebe. Die Diskriminierung der Sexualität – ein Verrat an der Bibel* («Don't Disturb Love. Discrimination of Sexuality – a Betrayal of the Bible»), Walter, Olten, 1986.
10. Anton Mayer: *Der zensierte Jesus. Soziologie des Neuen Testaments* («The Censored Jesus. Sociology of the New Testament»), Walter, Olten, 1983.
11. Manfred Dimde: *Die Johannesverschwörung* («The Conspiracy against John»), Droemer, Munich, 1998.
12. «Vegetarijanci so antikristi» («Vegetarians are Antichrists»), *Mladina*, Ljubljana, No. 12, 2000, p. 12.

* One sometimes tries to justify the selfish killing of animals with Gen. 1:28: «...have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.» However, dominion over the animals doesn't involve the right to kill them! It means that we should *care* for them. Gen. 1:29 clearly says that our food should be herbs and fruits and the next verse that these are also food for the animals. There is no word saying that animals should serve as our food! It is only after the flood, in Gen. 9:3-6, that God allows humans to eat meat, with certain exceptions and following certain rules (the blood should not stay in the meat, since it carries the soul – the «life» – of the animal).

Chapter 13

CAN THE CHURCH RECONCILE WITH REINCARNATION?

It is imaginable that the Church could reconcile with the reincarnation idea and accept it in a Christian form? At least as a possibility?

One difficulty will be that the Church has already denied the reincarnation idea. That it changes its view – however convincing facts, evidence and circumstances may be – appears nearly impossible. History shows repeatedly that the attitude of the Church must first become absurd to such an extent that it has no other choice – for example the medieval belief that the Earth would be flat, and then that it would be the center of the universe. Who taught the truth could burn at the stake...

Signs of possible reconciliation

In spite of all, a few and mainly Catholic theologians have commented in a cautiously reconciliatory manner. Evangelistic theologians are generally much more rejecting. A few theological books have taken up the question to what extent an approach could be possible [1-7].

The famous and influential Catholic theologian Professor Karl Rahner (1904-1984) pointed out: «...if not the Catholic concept of an *«intermediate state»*, even though it may appear old-fashioned, could be an approach to deal better and more positively with the... idea of *«soul transmigration»*, *«reincarnation»*, at least under the condition that such a reincarnation isn't understood as a human fate that could never be terminated» (in *Grundkurs des Glaubens* – «Basic Course in Faith», quoted in [5]).

Heinrich Beck, a theologically educated Professor of Philosophy, doesn't exclude reincarnation as a possibility and summarizes (here abbreviated and commented by me) [5]:

«1. Ultimately, only resurrection is essential.»

My comment: This is also the end result of a series of reincarnations.

«2. Reincarnation is neither sufficient nor necessary.»

It wouldn't be sufficient since it would mean a repetition of an existence that is essentially the same and since it would incorporate the «danger and temptation» for self-redemption.

My comment: The «repetition» is actually a step on a stair-like path upwards; as concerns «self-redemption»: see Chapter 8.

It wouldn't be necessary since the decision for God and the good can be realized in one life and since the «purgatory» in the world beyond would be an alternative to reincarnation.

My comment: In spite of a decision for God and the good I may still have old bills to pay: repair and reconciliation. The decision will therefore not exclude that I would have to come back for another life in order to finish a few things and «clear up» behind me. The grace will most probably not free me from my own responsibility and «do the dirty work» for me, which my past actions require done. As concerns the «purgatory»: see below.

Some may want to ask as an objection, how I will be able to do that in a new life if I don't remember the past one. As has been explained in Chapter 9, I will in my next life *unconsciously* know very well what I have to do for repair and reconciliation! That my egoistic rational mind doesn't know, is not an objection, but the mind can be stumbling block if it is too arrogant and stubborn...

«3. Yet reincarnation is possible and meaningful.»

... for perfection of one's own self and for cooperation in the perfection of other persons and humanity.

My comment: Also as a lesson for the growth of the soul and for reconciliation with other souls.

Franz-Josef Nocke, Professor for Catholic Theology, calls for a dialogue [5], like Professor Hans Küng from whom he quotes: «There wouldn't necessarily have to be a conflict between Christianity and Hinduism in this matter... An integration of new doctrines in the Christian tradition can indeed in

no way be excluded from the beginning.» This doesn't conclude the discussion, but only opens it» (quotation in [6]).

Norbert Bischofberger gives a good overview over various standpoints concerning reincarnation and Christianity in his theological thesis [7]. His result is that reincarnation isn't necessary, but possible. He also quotes Karl Rahner: «I really don't care about «soul transmigration»... But if one considers the immense distribution of this idea in space and time... one can ask oneself if there couldn't be something that is correct in this doctrine of soul transmigration. Then one could... ask oneself if there wouldn't, after all, be some space free for such a moderate doctrine of soul migration also within the Christian Dogmatism of a purgatory...» (quoted in [6]).

In Bischofberger's valuable contribution to this discussion, reconciliatory voices of various further theologians are mentioned. Who can read it is recommended to do so.

Is the Dogma of a purgatory a modification of the reincarnation concept?

Geddes MacGregor has advanced the question if the purgatory could also include the cleansing of the soul through reincarnation, or if it could even be reincarnation [2,4]. In the latter case, the reincarnation concept has been converted to a Dogma of a purgatory. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the purgatory wasn't the same concept for Origen as that, which the Dogma of the Church later made out of the idea.

In some European languages (such as German and Swedish), the word used means «cleansing fire». The Latin word *purgatorium* as well as the Greek word *kathartyrion* have nothing to do with fire, and expressions like «Fegefeuer» (German) and «skärseld» (Swedish) are therefore misleading. English and Latin languages use more proper words.

«The reformers rejected the idea of a purgatory as being unbiblical» [8]. The idea became established in the Dogma of the Church only in the 13th century, through the 1st and 2nd Councils in Lyon in 1245 and 1274, resp. Later, the idea was again laid down as a Dogma in the Councils of Florence in 1439 and of Trent in 1545-1547 [9]. The Dogma of a purgatory therefore hardly has a basis in original Christianity (even though one has sometimes striven to interpret certain passages in the Bible in this sense in order to create a basis).

The non-Catholic Churches reject the idea of a purgatory.

Has the idea of a purgatory indirectly to do with the Cathars?

The Church captured the Cathar citadel Montségur in 1244 with which the cruel genocide of the Cathars essentially came to an end [10]. After that there were not more than a few scattered and hidden remnants of people of the Cathar faith and their doctrines. Already the 12th Ecumenical Council in Lateran in 1215 prescribed what to think of the Cathars (Albigenses) and how to treat them. Further rules were stated at the above-mentioned Council in Lyon in 1245, where the doctrine of the purgatory was made a Dogma for the first time.

The Cathars taught reincarnation [11,12]. One could therefore easily imagine that the dogmatization of the purgatory concept was a counter-move in order to create an «orthodox» alternative to the reincarnation concept of the Cathars – a measure for «correcting» remnants of such a «heterodoxy» among the people. Why would otherwise the idea be taken up at the same time as when the elimination of the doctrine of the Cathars took place?

Reconciliation is possible!

As we have seen, there is a realistic basis for reconciliation between the Dogma of the Church and non-dogmatic Christians who believe in reincarnation. And it is certainly overdue after 1700 years of Church history...

It is still more so in view of the fact that, according to statistical inquiries, about a quarter of the population in the Western world believed in reincarnation around 1990. The numbers are growing and will today be approaching a third. The tendency is higher for Catholics in general and signifi-

cantly higher in Catholic countries than in those with an Evangelical or Reformed majority. The first inquiry was performed 1978-1982, at which time around 20 % had this belief, on the average. An interesting finding in this study was that of persons who had had a religious experience many more believed in reincarnation! Almost twice as many: as a European average 36 % of such persons, compared to an average of 19 % of those who never had a religious experience [13].

References

1. Marie Pia Stanley: *Christianisme et Réincarnation, vers la réconciliation* («Christianity and Reincarnation. Towards Reconciliation»), L'Or du Temps, Saint-Martin-le-Vinoux, 1989.
2. Geddes MacGregor: *Reincarnation in Christianity: A New Vision of the Role of Rebirth in Christian Thought*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton ILL, 1989.
3. Geddes MacGregor: *The Christening of Karma: The Secret of Evolution*, Quest, Wheaton ILL., 1984
4. Geddes MacGregor: *Reincarnation as a Christian Hope*, MacMillan, London, 1982.
5. Heinrich Beck: *Reinkarnation oder Auferstehung. Ein Widerspruch?* («Reincarnation or Resurrection. A Contradiction?»), Resch, Innsbruck, 1988, in Chapter IV.
6. Franz-Josef Nocke: «Ist die Idee der Reinkarnation vereinbar mit der christlichen Hoffnung auf Auferstehung?» («Is the Idea of Reincarnation Compatible with the Christian Hope of Resurrection?») in *Reinkarnation oder Auferstehung* («Reincarnation or Resurrection»), ed. by Hermann Kochanek, Herder, Freiburg i.Br., 1992, p. 263-284.
7. Norbert Bischofberger: *Werden wir wiederkommen?* («Will we Return?»), Grünewald, Mainz, and Kok Pharos, Kampen, 1995 (thesis).
8. *Das Neue Taschenlexikon* («The New Pocket Encyclopedia»), vol. 4, Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1992, p. 213.
9. *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, vol. XI, San Francisco, 1967, p. 1034-1039.
10. Otto Rahn: *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral* («Crusade against the Grail»), Hans E. Günther, Stuttgart, 3rd ed. 1974.
11. Hans Söderberg: *La Religion des Cathares* («The Religion of the Cathars»), Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala (Sweden), 1949 (thesis).
12. Arno Borst: *Die Katharer* («The Cathars»), Hiersemann, Stuttgart, 1953.
13. Richard Friedli: *Zwischen Himmel und Hölle – Die Reinkarnation?* («Between Heaven and Hell – Reincarnation?»), Universitätsverlag, Freiburg (Switzerland), 1986.

HISTORY AND PRINCIPLE OF PAST-LIFE THERAPY***Why do we reincarnate?**

Past-life therapy isn't recognized by official psychology since the latter rejects its theory (and therefore throws the child out with the bath water). This form of therapy therefore had to develop in an outsider position through individual work by pioneers. I am active in this area since 1980 and have developed own methods [1]. Through this work, I have in the course of the years learned what are the prerequisites for an effective and responsible past-life therapy as well as how it should not be carried out.

How it all started

The method of regression to past lives began with hypnotic experiments in the 19th century. It was not only discovered that persons could be brought back to relive forgotten childhood situations, but peculiar phenomena occurred even spontaneously in which a person under hypnosis behaved like being another person – in another time, another country and sometimes even of the other sex. Such cases were rare but occasionally observed. The latter kind of experiences was labeled as «hypnotic hallucinations» since there couldn't be another acceptable explanation for the official science.

The method of «regression to past lives» therefore developed in an outsider situation – a.o. thanks to a few persons who did consider the possibility (even though with skepticism and caution) that such experiences could indeed be memories from earlier existences. Milestones in the history of such regressions were in the 19th century set by persons like Prince Galizin (Germany), Colavida (Spain), de Rochas (France) and in the 20th century by Björkhem (Sweden), Bernstein (USA), Dethlefsen (Germany) and many others. From 1960 on they are too many to be reviewed here.

Already in 1850 the magnetizer Ellenberg used an early hypnotic technique to bring forth hallucinations in experimental subjects. Some of them told about remembering past lives.

The Russian Prince Galizin lived in Hesse (Germany). He and Colavida carried out their experiments in 1862 and 1887, resp. Galizin performed a hypnotic experiment with an uneducated Hessian woman who knew no word of French but started to speak it fluently under hypnosis. It wasn't his intention to take her back to a past life but this occurred spontaneously. She told about having been a noble woman in the 18th century and the Prince could later confirm the story at the place where she said that she had lived. De Rochas carried out a large number of regression experiments at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

At the end of the 19th century the Professor of psychology Theodore Flournoy in Geneva, who was a teacher of Carl Gustav Jung, investigated the case of Helène Smith (a pseudonym for Catherine Elise Müller), who talked about past lives when she was in trance. He explained this in the sense of cryptomnesia and wrote a book about it.

In 1928 a Coptic teacher Asa Roy Martin in Sharon (Pennsylvania) carried out past-life regressions which are said to have had a therapeutic effect.

In Sweden, John Björkhem was the first to devote a doctoral thesis (in philosophy) to the subject, published in 1942.

A British psychiatrist, Denys Kelsey, has in a book described his work with past-life therapy under hypnosis without clearly dating it. It will, however, mainly have taken place in the 50es.

In the 60es the study of the phenomenon and development of regression got a real start through the controversies about the book *The Search for Bridey Murphy* by Morey Bernstein. With time, it

* Based on a lecture given at the congress *Life after Death* in Kiblegg (Germany) on June 9, 2000. Revised and improved version of a lecture at the Goetheanum-Congress *Reincarnation and Karma* in Berlin, Easter 1997. In a first version: lecture at the *First Beneficial Congress on Spirituality and Abuses* in Lucerne (Switzerland) on October 6, 1995. More detailed references are given in [1].

was discovered that it can also be done without hypnosis and that a regression can have a remarkable healing effect. Thus past-life therapy arose. Since then, various techniques developed, especially non-hypnotic techniques, and a growing number of people devoted themselves to regression work and past-life therapy. Pioneering work was done and procedures were developed further. Names and methods are too many to review here.

A second academic thesis that discusses the phenomenon was published in Finland in 1974, written by Reima Kampman.

Principle of past-life therapy

The term past-life therapy has become «naturalized» but actually isn't quite correct. The regression doesn't always take the client back to past lives, but many a time to childhood situations in this life and to prenatal experiences in the mother's womb.

The principle of such therapy is, starting with a problem in the actual life today, to follow it back to its origin. This will logically take the client back to a traumatic situation in the past, since the cause of the problem will hardly be found in nice and happy experiences. The client is to become conscious of what happened that time in the past and – essential for the therapeutic effect – reexperience the *soul-injuring feelings and emotions* he had there. Liberating transformation, catharsis, can in such a case actually be efficiently achieved only through reliving these emotions and *dissolving them*. Who merely wants to watch the «original trauma» of his problem without reexperiencing it will afterwards know why he has his problem – but he will still have it. He becomes *free* only after allowing these *feelings* from the past to surface with the situation and *letting go of them*. Not reexperienced emotions remain hidden in the unconscious self. They are carried on through life in the «back-pack» and will continue to cause the same or similar problems. To suppress something is to keep it!

The «cheap solution» that many a person is hoping for, being that the therapist can free him without an essential participation of his own – without admitting these feelings and recognizing the real cause – is an illusion. There are alternatives, but they constitute a *long* path of working on oneself and one's problem so that one little by little can approach a solution – if at least one knows what the cause is. The *rapid* liberation goes right through the feelings.

The original trauma of the problem can be anywhere – in today's childhood, in the time spent in the mother's belly or in a past life. If a cause is found in the childhood, the corresponding situation often – but not always – rather had the effect of reactivating a still older trauma carried into this life with the soul.

The main points are, therefore.

- Relive one or more essential *causative situation(s)* in the past (more or less traumatic). Become conscious of what happened that time (and had become forgotten through being born again or suppressed as a childhood memory).
- Become conscious of the *feelings*, which were experienced, then (in principle shortly going to the high point of the feeling, but not «indulging» in them – it can, however, in certain cases take more time due to resistance) – mainly the emotional feelings but in certain cases also the physical. Reexperience the situation until it is over – in a past life usually until shortly after the death experience.
- Afterwards: go back to «*grab*» the *negative emotional energies and dissolve them*. (The procedure usually includes a spiritual level and has natural relations to spiritual healing.)
- *Verify* that the negative emotional energy is no more there in that situation, and if it is, repeat the process of dissolving them.
- Uncover possible (usually unconscious) *feelings of guilt* from that or another situation. These can nearly always also be dissolved (except in the rare case that the problem today is a karmic lesson that isn't yet over).
- Recognize the connection: past experience – today's problem, as well as: victim situation – preceding perpetratorship (karma). The soul-injuring feelings belong to that past and there is no need to have them today.

- In the case of a victim experience: out of this connection see it as a *terminated lesson* and thus reconcile with one's own past.
- *Reconcile* with souls who earlier were one's victims or perpetrators.
- *Reconcile* with oneself in respect to own earlier perpetratorships.

In certain cases also: reexperience a corresponding but positive situation that occurred *before* the traumatic experience took place: then there was no fear (block, or whatever else the problem involves), but it may even have been delightful. Become conscious of the fact that it can be so also today.

Dissolving negative emotional energies in such a manner is usually astonishingly effective, maybe also because there is a spiritual level involved (in which our official science refuses to believe).

The often remarkable effects are evidence of the reincarnation hypothesis that the therapy is based upon. There are cases in which conventional psychology and psychoanalysis couldn't lead to an essential solution of a problem but one single regression could clarify the and solve it. Even in cases of persons who don't believe in reincarnation (occasionally not even the therapist). How can that be possible?

If there is reincarnation, after all, and if in fact people can have problems, which have their cause in earlier existences (carried into this life with the soul), one can in such a case never find the true cause if one wants to exclude the reincarnation hypothesis!

The child in the mother's belly

Traumata in the mother's womb are important situations we want to take up in a regression and release. Far too many of us have as souls already attached to the fetus (but maybe not yet fully incarnated in it) experienced the disappointment, fear, rage or despair of the mother or the father when the pregnancy was discovered and not accepted with joy. The painful feeling of being unwanted, rejected, leaves deep traces in the soul that can have their effects a life long.

Experience shows that such soul injuries at the beginning of the actual incarnation occur much more often than we would imagine. Which mother confesses to her child that she wasn't happy to be pregnant? Very few tell the truth in such cases, but the soul of the child knows it, anyway.

The common opinion is that the child, yet only developing in the belly, wouldn't register and understand anything that is going on. Official medicine claims that an «experience» would be impossible since there is not yet a developed brain and nervous tissue. Completely wrong! In reality there is a soul that may even be older and more developed than the one of the mother or the father and on the soul level understands many things better than the parents do. Nothing can be kept secret to that soul. It is telepathically connected with the parents and registers even the most secret feelings and thoughts they have. Our first trauma in the actual life, therefore, quite often occurred during the pregnancy and we carry the unconscious memory along in the new physical life.

Emotional release

How is such a soul-injuring feeling released, which we have carried as an unconscious burden from the past? A feeling *cannot* be released if one doesn't first allow oneself to reexperience it. Suppressing it is to keep it. Holding it back is to suppress it. How could we release it if we don't know (don't want to remember) what it is? That is why the reexperience of feelings and emotions is so important, reliving them in the situation in which they occurred.

What is the next step? In past-life therapy one earlier sometimes – if one cared at all about resolving the emotional energies – had the client go through reliving a trauma and the feelings, but not too fast (so that the emotions wouldn't be too superficially felt). Experience showed that already the first reexperience «discharged» much of a negative emotional energy – maybe even all of it.

First, one was satisfied with that. But with time it was found that this wasn't enough in certain cases, and one began to repeat going through the same situation. The second time the emotions were in any case less. This was repeated as many times as needed until *no negative emotion was left*. This could be the case already after the second time, at least as concerns a specific emotion, but some-

times it had to be repeated a few times more. And then there could also be *other* kinds of negative feelings in the situation, which may have been in the background in the beginning when the main feelings were more dominant, and therefore came up later. These should also be released. A process that under circumstances could be a bit tedious and lasting, if carried out scrupulously.

Then the relation between the past experience and today's problem has to become clear. There are various ways to do this. I use a technique that is based on the method of Bryan Jameison*, which I have modified and extended with own developments. In this way of regressing we use a «counselor» or «guide» who is a more or less symbolical way *to meet one's own unconscious self*. Seeing it in front of us with an inner eye in the shape of, e.g., a human being or a being of light, we can have a conversation with it. In this conversation, the client actually *talks directly with his (her) unconscious self*. What the conscious, rational self doesn't know but the client knows in his (her) unconscious self can that way become conscious to the rational mind.

This special procedure with a «guide» or «counselor» opens new possibilities for effectively releasing old soul-injuring emotional energies. Jameison in the late 80es and early 90es developed a method to do this, which I adopted as an idea. In the course of working with it, I during the years came up with my own way of doing it. I use this today and teach it in my workshops.

In order to meet the «guide», we leave the level of experiencing that past and go to another level, where the «guide» is. We may for example ask him or her to make a fire [1]. Now the client returns to the past trauma, goes to the high point of the negative emotion and brings that emotional energy to the «guide». The «guide» then helps him (or her) to give that energy into the fire and symbolically burn it. Then we go back once more to that past situation. Is a rest of the feeling still there? Often not, but otherwise we bring the rest in the fire, too. The end result soon achieved is that the *feeling is no more there* in that situation. We do the same with other negative feelings – emotional or physical – but can also take some of them together to the «guide» to burn them. This is quicker and more effective than simply «discharging» them in the situation itself. Furthermore, the *negative emotional energy is taken out of the past situation and is effectively dissolved in cooperation with the own unconscious self*.

The fire to me has the positive aspect that it is a general symbol of *transformation* in many mythologies. Fire doesn't really destroy (maybe structures but not energies). Instead it transforms energies into new forms of energy. But there are alternative ways to do this.

It now remains to clarify if there are also other traumatic experiences in the past (in another life, in the childhood or during the pregnancy), which have added to the problem. In that case we do the same there. As remarked, problems are not caused by nice experiences. It can, however, be helpful to also go back to a past life where one experienced a similar situation without problems – for example, without fear – and become conscious that it can be so today again.

For every past life that comes up we would like to know if there were persons involved then who the clients knows again today (as the present incarnations of these souls). If this had to do with a perpetrator-victim relation, *reconciliation* with that soul is an *important* step to the final solution of the problem. Resentments still tie us to the problem.

Bypassing the emotions: suppression, suggestion and self-cheating

In a book about regressions is written: ««There is no need for you to experience distress of any kind on any level.» Encourage the person to disassociate himself from the situation and observe as if watching a movie or television» [2, p. 47]. It can hardly be done more wrong in a therapeutic regression! The emotional energies are in this case held back and remain hidden in the person. They will eventually continue to make problems.

* Bryan Jameison was born in Chicago in 1933 and died in December 2002 in San Diego. I am deeply thankful to him for what he taught me and for our exchange of experiences throughout the years. He is the author of *The Search for Past Lives*, Driftwood Publications, San Diego, <http://www.pastlife-therapy.com>.

Ursula Markham writes: « It is quite sufficient to know and understand what happened – there is absolutely no need to suffer, whether physically, mentally or emotionally. In fact, I would not be able to conduct sessions of regression therapy – whether present- or past-life – if I thought that my patient was going to go through agonies while it was going on.» [3, p. 27]. I in no way share her opinion. The central point in her statement will be in the last sentence of the quotation. *She isn't able to manage with emotions of clients... She seems not to know how to deal with and release them!* Many years of experience have taught me that the essential point for a successful therapy is to have such old soul ballast finally thrown out. For that one needs to get into the emotion, *shortly* but well. Otherwise one doesn't even know *what* to release!

The American Byron Katie teaches that everything depends on our belief system. If you suffer it is because you believe that you should suffer, that you have a reason to suffer, that you have something out of it, or that what you suffer for is true. Give up your belief system and you stop suffering.

I think that this too a certain extent is true, but her system appears to be partly suggestive and in that case suppresses symptoms through suggesting the opposite. If it goes that far it is only an apparent solution. It bothers me that she seems to even want to suggest compassion away. In my subjective and maybe exaggerated way to retell what I heard from a tape from one of her lectures, she claimed that we wouldn't need to suffer when we see starving people in Ethiopia on TV – unless it is our belief system that they must starve. If we stop believing that, we would no more have to suffer with them. This for me becomes cynical, high-handed and even selfish...

Harry Palmer writes in his introduction to the Avatar workshop that he once made an exercise, which took him back to a dramatic situation in this life, but no emotions came. «But it suddenly occurred to me that if I didn't create the memory of the event, it didn't exist for me... Why was I creating the idea if all I wanted to do was to get rid of it?... In my more lucid moments it was perfectly clear to me that the past didn't exist unless I chose to create a memory of it in present time» [4, p. 42-43].

This is the mastership of suppression... In this way, painful emotional energies from the past are only buried still deeper in the unconscious, and that with a nice excuse for the conscious self. They are covered up with the suggestion that one has never experienced anything bad and never been a perpetrator. But if that would be true, we wouldn't need to be incarnated today! If we would already be pure and guilt-free angels, why are we not already since a long time in the light world, to stay there? This hypocritical self-lie will unavoidable become unmasked one day, when not in this life, then in another. Instead of wasting time with pushing it ahead for the future, it is certainly better to take it to an end now, once and for all! And to forgive oneself for one's own part in all the evil of the world.

Perpetrators and victims

The traumatic situations which surface when we go back to the cause in the past of an actual problem today mostly have the nature of victim situations, since they will logically involve traumatic experiences. This raises the question why the soul of the client that time had to go through that victim situation. Experience shows that there is practically no suffering without a reason. There really seems to be only one thing: that we get back on our own skin what we once did to others! Not as a punishment, but as a lesson to learn that one doesn't treat people like that. The incarnated soul was as a perpetrator still immature and undeveloped in love. It experienced only one side of a certain situation: the selfish perpetratorship. The experience of the *other* side was still lacking – to be on the side of the victim in a similar situation – and that has to be completed later.

It really seems that no one suffers without a reason. There is no meaningless suffering. What is called «karma» according to regression experiences therefore appears as a lesson and not as the punishment that Asian religions see in it. The soul has actually *chosen* to have this lesson. Many have difficulties with this view. But wouldn't it be far more cruel to suffer *without a reason*?

Many persons prefer to imagine that they were always good and have never taking part in anything of all that evil, which we see all over this world and know from history of all times. The bad guys are always the other ones. But why are we not already in heaven to stay there? And if we have something to learn, it can only be because we once in the past didn't know it yet. No one will deny

that we are here to learn to be good! Certainly not to learn to be evil... But if we are here to learn to be good, this will have to mean that once in the past we were not yet good... Who needs we learn to be what he already is?

If we seek the reason for a victim type experience, we will therefore normally come further back to a situation in which that soul itself was a perpetrator. Once having realized this, it is easier to accept the victim situation as a lesson rather than a cruel fate. It was, after all, not unjust, but somewhere long ago actually caused by the soul and after that even sought by it, since it on a higher level realizes the need for such a lesson... Having seen that it is easier to reconcile with souls who were our perpetrators.

Feelings of guilt, reconciliation and the relieving light

The soul of the client often still today has feelings of guilt from the perpetrator life (which in most cases became conscious only after death). These feelings are today unconscious. Another important step towards solving the problem is to let go of these feelings, too – provided that one has really understood the lesson and is prepared to reconcile. Otherwise we must find out what first has to be, before these feelings can be released. That usually means: to realize what one hasn't yet understood.

Another important step is reconciliation with perpetrators and victims of the past. Is the client not yet ready to forgive a past perpetrator, this normally means that there is still something he hasn't understood. When one has truly understood all connected with it, one can always forgive! Releasing feelings of guilt is, furthermore, a step to *forgiving oneself*.

Who doesn't want to forgive actually holds on to the trauma. Forgiving makes us free! We can be sure that we, with what someone did to us, only got back what we ourselves have once done to others. Buddha once said: «Regard everyone who hurts you as your teacher!»

At the end of the regression, all released emotional energies are replaced with light energy. The «guide» envelops the person in light. The client feels the love of that light and absorbs its energy.

Four aims of a regression

We now recognize four aims with a therapeutic regression:

1. Release the soul-injuring feelings, which were experienced (mainly in victim-type situations).
2. Understand and realize the lessons of victim-type situations.
3. Throw off old burdens in the form of no more necessary feelings of guilt.
4. Inner reconciliation with souls who were our victims or perpetrators.

Resistance and «Circumsession»

When we set out to discover all these things, there is not rarely an unconscious resistance. Then the client *unconsciously* doesn't want to know certain things or refuses to believe them. Or he doesn't want to allow an emotion to come up. This is as if somewhere inside *unconsciously* «the pill appears more bitter than the disease». Somewhere inside the client says to himself: «If I first have to go through this, I would rather forget about solving my problem and leave things as they are.» It is an important task for the therapist to recognize such resistance against one's own liberation and find a way to help the client to overcome it. It is also important to recognize the rare cases in which the client is, after all, really not yet mature to let these old things come forward.

It happens that the client unconsciously doesn't want to release a painful feeling since he believes to have an advantage from it – for example to have attention and care from the environment. Or he can avoid something uncomfortable or even blackmail or take revenge on someone in the environment.

However, the imagined advantage is never worth the price. The attention forced by such means comes more from duty than from the heart and is not very real. Circumstances one tries to avoid will have to be faced later and if the unconscious motivation is revenge, a good portion of karma is traded in for it.

In some cases we find that the client is disturbed by the soul of someone who died – a soul that has attached itself to him. In more rare cases it isn't a soul but a negative entity. If this is discovered, it is very important that the therapist can recognize and handle it. The condition of having an attached foreign soul was called «circumsession» (Latin: *circumsessio*) in medieval texts on exorcism and is another thing than possession (*possessio*). The latter case is rare and has to do with a soul or entity, which wants to take over the body of a person. «Circumsession» means that the soul is «around» him and influences him, mostly not with really bad intentions but seeking refuge.

Some souls are confused after the death of the body and feel lost. They lived materialistically and didn't expect to exist after dying and cannot understand that now they actually do. The soul often feels an attraction towards a light but then believes that it would be its real end if it would go there. Or it has a life long believed the deceitful story of eternal condemnation, which is a blasphemous contradiction to God's immeasurable love. They therefore believe they might be sent to hell if they would enter the light. Such souls desperately seek to stay in the material world, and this is easier if they can attach to a living body.

The regression therapist must also be able to recognize when a regression experience can be assumed to be from a past life and when it is a case of a symbolic experience, and in the latter case evaluate it properly.

Errors made in regressions

Which are the errors that can be made in regressions? To these belong:

- Letting the person only *watch* the traumatic past situation, without reliving the feelings (information without release).
- *Interrupting the experience of an emotion* before it is over or without releasing it, since the regressionist fears not to be able to handle it.
- Not knowing how to make the client release negative emotions.
- Letting the client cast the guilt on others – which affirms the problem rather than solving it – instead of seeking healing reconciliation.
- Not letting the client realize the connection between a traumatic victim experience and an own perpetratorship, which would let him see the former as a *lesson*,
- and if this is done, feelings of guilt are called up instead of self-reconciliation.
- One gives up too easily when there is resistance against the own relief, or one is unable to overcome it.

If a feeling is not released, or doesn't come up in the first place, this can sometimes have the effect of a «primary intensification» of the problem. This is comparable with the «primary intensification» of symptoms in homeopathy and actually shows that one is on the right path – if only the client wants to continue. The problem can then *during the next days* after the regression be experienced as worse than before. After a week, everything is back to what it was like before the regression. In that case, one knows why one has the problem, but one still has it. The «primary intensification» is over but the problem isn't solved. If one gives up too easily in the case of resistance, this *temporary* aftereffect could also occur. (It, however, sometimes does happen that an unconscious resistance is so strong that it cannot be overcome in the actual regression – then such an aftereffect may be unavoidable. In a later regression the resistance will then more easily be overcome.)

Possible abuse

Mistakes of this kind are made out of ignorance, lacking experience or carelessness. What is much worse is a conscious abuse, which will hardly need to be mentioned as grave mistake. To this would belong the use of information gathered about the client in order to blackmail him (as is allegedly done in Scientology with results of tests and audits). What actually would also rather not need to be mentioned are outdated procedures like having the client imagine himself beating up the parent who used to beat him as a child, or castrating a rapist. Such «internal revenge» affirms the trauma

instead of dissolving it. The abuse of subliminal manipulation, which has taken place in certain organizations during meditations to music [1,5], is a similar crime against the soul, which might be possible also in the regression situation. Any form of manipulation is a guilt charge on the karmic account of the one who does it.

Why do we reincarnate?

I would now like to sketch the image of reincarnation as it evolves from regressions. This is an empirical picture and not one made up from gray theory in esoterism nor in the view of various religions. A rather clear picture of a school for the soul arises – a school in which the soul shall learn from the experiences, grow and mature. The main lesson in this school for the soul is unconditional love for our fellow men and women. To this unconditional love it is absolutely irrelevant if the other belongs to another «race», another religion or another culture. To the lessons of this school also belongs experiencing the consequences on the own skin of own offences towards others, performed in perpetratorship out of immaturity and being undeveloped in love. From the experience of a very great number of regressions, we can formulate the following «rules of thumb».

1. You will later yourself be born among those who you now most despise, hate, humiliate or exploit.

And that is not a punishment, but a lesson. The purpose is that the soul shall come to know out of own experience how wrong its previous attitude was. It shall learn unconditional love and understand that all human beings, without exception, are our brothers and sisters. If the ego struggles against such insight, the principle is: «*Who doesn't want to understand will have to feel.*» We have to go where we most failed in love for our fellow men or women. Or, as Jameison has formulated it: «*You become what you hate.*» How many whites have become black (and reversed)? To mention just one example...

2. What you do unto others will be done unto you.

Thus the soul seeks a perpetrator who can give him the needed lesson. This doesn't make that perpetrator free from guilt, since he will do it out of selfishness and not for that other soul. And if the soul doesn't find such a perpetrator – which regrettably is by no means difficult in this world – the person, who is this soul incarnated, can become a victim of (unconsciously sought) circumstances, or he can even do it to himself.

3. Perpetrators and victims will be together again.

No one escapes reconciliation. This is why we come together again in a later life. If we cannot forgive today, we have to do it later. We seek each other as souls over and over again, until reconciliation is reached.

4. What you have taken you will have to give back.

This has less to do with material values than spiritual. If someone has taken another persons freedom, he may later have to undertake something for the freedom of the other soul. We quite often see the following: if one has taken someone's physical life, one may have to give it back to him. Our victim may be born as our own child.

These are basic values taught by Jesus! Values, which have been trampled upon so badly by humanity... This alone shows that the reincarnation doctrine isn't unchristian but merely uneclesiastical...

Epilogue

Regressions naturally influence our future path in this life – our view of the world and our way to live. If a question is asked when we have died, it will certainly not be: «How often did you go to Church?» and also not: «What have you performed, what have you acquired?» But it will be: «How much love did you live and where did you fail in love?» In this, nothing inhuman is expected from us,

but only that we have done the best we can. No one can do more. Regression experiences will also help us to have a better answer to that question...

Evidence for reincarnation in regression experiences

There are various pieces of evidence (but no absolute proofs) of reincarnation in past-life regressions (dealt with in detail in [1]). A few of them will here be mentioned very briefly. Experienced past existences have been confirmed. The therapeutic effect of a regression shows that the experience didn't come by chance. The contents of the experience fit historically in the past time period and culture. Persons born blind, who didn't know this life what seeing is, remembered seeing in a past life and began to dream in images. Horoscopes for this and for a past life often have a multiple synastry*. Persons who also knew each other in a past life confirm this independently in their respective regressions.

References

1. Jan Erik Sigdell: *Rückführung in frühere Leben. Emotionale Befreiung durch Reinkarnationstherapie* («Regression to Past Lives. Emotional Release Through Past-Life Therapy»), Scherz, Bern, 1998 (this book is being translated to English).
2. Wagner McClain, Florence: *A Practical Guide to Past Life Regression*, Llewellyn, St. Paul MN, 1987
3. Markham, Ursula: *Regression Therapy using Hypnosis*, Piatkus, London, 1995
4. Harry Palmer: *Creativism: The Art of Living Deliberately*, Star's Edge International, Longwood FL, 3rd ed. 1990.
5. Jan Erik Sigdell: «Negative Programmierung» («Negative Programming»), in *esotera*, Freiburg i.Br., 7/1992, p. 94

* When two horoscopes have a planet in the same position (the same sign and degree, within the tolerance of the so-called orbis), this is called synastry. It will normally not be the same planet, but the same location. If in one horoscope Saturn is at 12° Aries and in another Venus at 13° Aries, this is a case of synastry. If this holds for several positions in two horoscopes, the probability for a coincidence is so small that this cannot have occurred by chance.

Chapter 15
AFTER-DEATH EXPERIENCE OF A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN

A tale

He was lying gasping in his bed and felt his force fade. He thought about his dear image of Jesus, which he carried inside him and a feeling of confidence came up in him. In spite of his disease, the image gave him a joy that helped him to face what was to come.

It became dark around him and he sank into unconsciousness. When he gained consciousness again, he didn't know how long it had been like that. But this time all was strangely different. He felt so light and it was bright around him. To his astonishment he discovered that he was floating in the room, his body lying dead in the bed under him.

He felt full of peace and joy as he glided through the roof of the house and floated up to the sky. Up there, he after a while saw a shining appearance approach him. It looked like the dear Jesus image he had carried inside himself almost a life long.

«Welcome, dear brother» said the appearance. He was so full of feelings that he for a moment couldn't answer. After a while, it seemed an eternity to him, he could finally say something: «Dear Jesus! Now I can finally meet you! I carried your image inside me all my life!»

«Yes, you did. Look inside you. There it is!» He looked inside him and saw the image shining.

«Lift the image out!» the appearance in front of him said. – «Why? It is so beautiful! I like to have it there.»

«I want you to see what is under it!» Suddenly he didn't feel well and a trembling wanted to come over him. – «What is under it? There is nothing...» – «Yes, there is. Lift the image out!»

He hesitatingly lifted an edge of it. Pus came out! Full of unpleasant feelings he let the edge fall back.

«Take it out completely!» He caught courage, took the image out and put it in front of him.

«Now look inside you! Look what was hidden under it!» He needed much effort to look inside him, but at the end he had to do it.

Oh what disgusting stuff welled forth! It looked like pus and blood, and bad-smelling worms were crawling in it. The shining appearance took out one of the worms and threw it away. It transformed into a human being and he recognized a woman who many years ago had come to him, asking for help. He hadn't really wanted to listen to her. He felt much pain and darkness, as she wanted to tell about her suffering and her big fear. And then she had an unpleasant smell. So he only gave her a picture of Jesus and said: «Pray to Him! He will help you!» The woman went away and the dark feelings let him loose. He never saw her again.

«Why didn't you help this woman?» – «But I helped her with your picture!»

Suddenly he saw the woman in water and a double of himself standing on the shore. The woman was going to drown. His double called to her: «Pray to Jesus, then you will come out!» The woman sank in the depths in front of his eyes. He understood it as a symbolic image of the situation as it then was.

The shining appearance looked at him seriously. «Why didn't you jump in the water to save her?» – «I couldn't. It was so cold and dark in it, but your power can help much more than I can...» – «And so she sank. Only if you had jumped in the water and pulled her ashore could she have listened to your words. She wasn't able to do it in the water! How could she, in the midst of drowning?» – «The feelings in the water were so terrible! I was afraid to sink myself.» – «So your faith was that weak? Didn't you yourself have the trust you wanted to give to her? You would never have drowned! I was with you!»

The man looked down in shame. The shining appearance continued: «Every worm crawling in there is a human being from whose problems you fled to me. A person you have neglected for my sake. A human being you pushed over to me instead of accepting him. Each of them would need your help first so that they could have experienced you as an example and through that open themselves for me. Do you know which words in my Gospel are the most important?» – «Probably the

ten commandments.» – «Mechanical rules for those who still have closed hearts! Much more important is: ‹Whatever you do unto even the least of my brothers and sisters you do unto me!› I was in all these persons, because I am in everyone. There is no human being on Earth in whom I am not, not even the most miserable and the most stinking tramp... The true service to me and my Gospel is to turn towards your fellow men and women, because in them I am nearest to you! To turn to a wishful image of me and turn away from them is an escape. Do you know that I need your help, too? I need your help to awaken in these persons!»

«I have revered you so much!» – «You revered a wishful image of me, as you wanted to see me and as you liked it better, in your inner temple that you made to have a refuge away from the unpleasant reality. That is nice, but it isn't yet good, because I was much closer to you in all those who you left outside in the reality, an you didn't see that!»

«What shall I do now?» – «You will now begin a new life. The image of me that you have inside must become alive. Until now it was only an image. You will now seek it in your brothers and sisters in the first place, instead of carrying it as a wishful image in yourself, and then you will recognize it in them. Therefore the image inside you will become hidden and you will have to sink in the depths, in cold and darkness, to be there with your fellow men and women. You have carried this force in you a life long but not used it properly. Now matters will become serious. Now you will have to make it work, from below, and not for yourself, because that you have already done. This time you will let it work for others.»

He fell in the water in fear. It was cold and dark as he sank in it. He saw a light inside himself that slowly became hidden in him.

Soon a child was born. It was thin and cried in hunger as the wasted mother put it at her breast in a squalid hut. Both felt deep despair.

The boy grew up under loathsome circumstances. As a grown-up man, he selflessly and indefatigably stood up for all those who suffered there and whose suffering he knew so well from own experience. There was a force in him, which he didn't understand, but it made him do it. He had to suffer much with the people, share much pain and despair with them, but this inner force always helped him. Thus he out of these feelings fought in a non-violent manner for their right and life. He organized self-help and taught them passive resistance. He couldn't do anything else. He loved them in their poverty, misery, dirt and fear – in their rage and helplessness that he knew so well but didn't feel so strongly himself, since in him the power of love was stronger. It was as if his love lit up a light in them and their eyes started to shine.

The suppressors of his people hated him, but they couldn't catch him for many years. Yet at the end he was caught. The court of the rulers condemned him to death for insurgence. As the bullets were fired, that strange inner force became visible to him. This time it was alive – a living light and not a stiff and almost shoddy image. This force had become a part of him. The shining appearance came to him again: «Now I am finally awake in you. I am no more a wishful image, no refuge from a severe reality and no excuse to not jump in the water. You have done it. Come with me!»

The man went full of joy and happiness in a paradise, together with that light being. He could recover long and well there, before he again had to begin another life on Earth. This time he came as a wise and enlightened person who consciously set an example of a divine message.

Appendix 1
REINCARNATION IN JESUS' TEACHINGS
 by **Palle Wischmann**

Chapter 9 in his book *Kirkens Dilemma* («The Dilemma of the Church»), Strubes, Copenhagen, 1990. Translated from Danish by Jan Erik Sigdell (abbreviated).

An old saying says that one doesn't see the forest because of all the trees. This saying will hardly fit better elsewhere than here, where we will talk about the reincarnation in the Gospel. Those who have eyes to see and ears to hear can both see and hear the elements of reincarnation, which come from Jesus' mouth. The blind and the deaf, however, cannot see and don't want to hear so that they will not have their home-made Christianity devastated by Jesus' true doctrine!

Jesus told his disciples that Elias had come back as John the Baptist. This is a biblical fact and it was confirmed on the Mountain of Transfiguration, where Elias appeared in front of the disciples and Jesus was transfigured to a heavenly being standing before them in radiating magnificence. The disciples saw this and when it was all over, Jesus confirmed that Elias had come and that they had done unto him as they wanted (Math. 17:12-13, Mark 9:13). The disciples knew from these words that he was speaking of John the Baptist who had been killed.

It isn't easy for the apostolic Church and the Pentecostal Movement, since they in any possible way want to circumvent it. They despairingly hold on to the statement that Elias wouldn't have died, but be gone to heaven in a fiery wagon, as the Old Testament tells us. But Elias came back as a new little child in Elizabeth's belly. He was born and grew up together with Jesus. Thus he must first have left his old body, and that is what we call death. Where he died has no importance. If he came back to Earth unrecognized and died here, or if his death occurred in the heights of heaven doesn't matter. If Elias goes from one body to another in Elizabeth's belly, it is reincarnation, even if you stand on your head!

A red thread of reincarnation

A thick red thread of reincarnations goes through the whole New Testament. Elias' reincarnation as John the Baptist is only the first of a series of passages. Actually, this thick red thread of reincarnations begins already at Jesus' birth. The Bible tells us that Jesus in his first days of life was visited by three wise men from the East* who wanted to welcome God to the Earth. Verily something great, since the Jews yet had no idea that God had come. Here the first threads of reincarnation are woven into the Christian faith – that is: for the one who can see them. There isn't the least doubt that these wise men from the East believed in reincarnation, because people did all over the East in these days.

It is to the Christians that it has always been something incredibly great that these wise men from the East, from a very different culture with another religion that had nothing to do with Judaism, could know that God would be born to this world! And not only that! They also knew where on this Earth it would take place! They even knew which child it was! And they left home in time so that they could be at the right place and welcome God in the moment when he opened his eyes in this world!

This almost surpasses what Christianity itself tells us and gives a living sensation that these wise men from the East must have known God in their way almost like Jesus did! No single person in the West could do what they did. Not a single Jew could do it, not even the Jewish priesthood. Because no one of them stood there that night to welcome God on Earth! Only the wise men from the East –

* Apparently the Danish author is thinking of the Buddhist and Hindu area as the origin of the wise men. But they could also have come from the Zoroastrian religion of Persia, in which one also believed in reincarnation. In the controversy (cf. Chapter 8) concerning a possible reincarnation belief among the Egyptians some Egyptologists generally confirm this and others at least do so for the later Egyptian culture, and that they then had this belief from Persia. As concerns the hypothesis that the wise men could have been Buddhists, the to the Church very heretic thought imposes itself that they – in accordance with the well-known Buddhist tradition to search the rebirth of a passed-over master – were searching the rebirth of Buddha! (Remark by the translator)

and of course also the shepherds from the area, but they had heard the angels sing about it! Otherwise they would have been just as unknowing as all the others were!

The question is: Why didn't all Israel stand at their sides that night? It was God's own people and would have still more reason to do so!

«The star lit up only in the moment when Jesus was born.» Thus a dear old priest tried to explain it once in a discussion about these things. «You have to give the Jews a little time!»

The answer is better than he knew, because it makes the men from the East stand out even more. They left home long before the star was shining! From where did they have their knowledge?

The Christians claim that this with the star over Bethlehem could be a translation error. It should in reality be written in plural. The wise men from the East said to Herod that they saw Jesus' star in the East and that they came because of that. But they couldn't have done that because the star had not yet lit up. And if they had waited until they could really have seen the star, the encounter in Bethlehem could never have taken place, because then Joseph and Mary would have been over all the mountains before the wise men could get there. They didn't stay in Bethlehem.

But if we accept the idea that it originally was written «stars» and not «star», the wise men from the East could very well have seen them, because they could have calculated the event astrologically. But this explanation is insufficient. The astrology isn't accurate enough for that. The wise men from the East must in addition to that have had a knowledge of God's thoughts and the mysteries of heaven that only Abraham and Moses could have had before them! Otherwise things don't work out!

Were the wise men Jesus' godfathers?

When we take up this occasion with the wise men from the East, it isn't in order to make a detail in the New Testament bigger than it is. It is because we can this way find an answer where we wouldn't otherwise have any.

At the age of twelve, that is when he has reached majority, Jesus disappears for 17 years and we don't know where he is, while his childhood friend John begins to call in the desert. Jesus appears again only when he is 30, because he then comes back to John in the desert to be baptized, that is: ritually cleansed from all old things. And Jesus begins his long fasting during which he meets the devil.

That Jesus wants to be washed free from earlier sins by John – because that is what John did with his baptism in the waters of Jordan – shows that Jesus will have gone through a development during which some things had happened which shouldn't have happened. They were certainly only minor things, but anyway. Therefore Jesus wanted to be baptized so that he could in a pure state enter the great task of his heavenly father.

But where had Jesus been all that time? Where did his development take place? That is what we would like to know!

Jesus could certainly not have been in Israel, because with his promising start in the temple at twelve we couldn't have escaped hearing more about him during so many years. Therefore it is probable that there could be a connection between these two facts in Jesus' life: the wise men from the East who came to welcome him and his disappearance for 17 years.

It will not be the least improbable that the visit at Jesus' crib in reality was planned and arranged by God himself! And that it wasn't as coincidental as it might seem, but that God in fact brought Jesus three godfathers as a gift for his birth who would later take care of his religious development when he had reached the corresponding age. Maybe God himself sent the wise men from the East through a vision or a dream, just like God later sent Joseph and Mary to Egypt in order to save Jesus from Herod's soldiers. If we follow this line, there is no riddle anymore and the puzzle fits.

At the age of twelve, Jesus made himself free from his parents. It is natural that he was in the temple where he could now act on his own. After that Jesus could have joined the next trade caravan to go to his godfathers in the East where his insight in things of the heaven became opened and his outstanding abilities for miraculous things developed.

There Jesus' child faith in the Old Testament became something different than before! There Jesus' heavenly religion was created! And there Jesus recognized that the human beings come to this world more than once!

The thought may seem astonishing. Most Christians have always lived with the idea that Jesus could all by himself and that he was perfect already as a child. But Jesus' baptism, his washing-off of the old, shows that he wasn't completely perfect as he grew up, and no one would demand that from him. Otherwise there would have been no reason to be baptized by John who was far below Jesus in heavenly greatness. These thoughts as well as the thought of godfatherhood therefore throw another and more logical light on Jesus' childhood than the stories of the apocrypha about all the wonders of his childhood. It is natural that also Jesus had to go through a religious development like so many others.

We should not overlook that Jesus, before he journeyed to his godfathers in the East, was still religiously immature, as can be seen from the Bible. It wasn't his heavenly religion that he at the age of twelve discussed in the temple with scribes and priests. It was pure Judaism. Otherwise they wouldn't have praised him up to the skies for his wisdom and insight in the ancient scriptures. They would instead have thrown him out of the temple. And Jesus also didn't yet know his miraculous capacities. Because these things were not yet developed! What Jesus brilliantly exhibited in the temple to the scribes and priests was simply what the old Zachary, the father of John the Baptist, had taught both boys.

At the age of twelve, Jesus will have been quite a normal boy but with a splendid intellect and with a consciousness of God. But he wasn't alone because messages from the angels weren't given to only one family. Two families had received angelic messages about their very special children. We know the message to Mary but shouldn't forget that the old priest Zachary suddenly sees an angel when he serves God in the brightest room of the temple. The angel tells him that he will have a son. But Zachary doesn't believe the angel.

We understand from the scripture that the two families knew each other, that the mothers went in and out of each other's houses and that the boys therefore grew up together in this especially religious atmosphere. They kept to each other with their heavenly nature, because both had come directly from God's heaven. Both boys were in the one family and in the other. And who could better teach the boys about the mysteries of the Old Testament than the old priest in God's temple?

Where did Jesus go?

When Jesus had reached majority one might think that both boys would together go in the desert and preach repentance and betterment to all the Jewish people. But each of them goes his own way! John goes alone in the desert where he as a prophet of God admonishes the Jews to conversion and repentance.

The fantastic thing is that the whole Christianity believes that Jesus after his appearance in the temple would have gone home and established himself as a carpenter and wood merchant in Nazareth for the next 17 years!! Until he became 30!! What a mental confusion the Christianity will have!!

And Jesus would have done that, who then taught others to turn their back to the material world so that God alone could fill their hearts as the great commandment in the law calls for! Jesus who later taught others to let the dead bury their dead! Jesus who taught that you cannot serve two masters! Should Jesus then have wasted 17 years with assembling windows and carriage wheels like a common man while his childhood friend was in the desert to serve God?? That is simply absurd!!

Nothing indicates that he also went in the desert with John. It is much more probable that he went with a caravan to his godfathers in the East to continue his religious development with them. There is much that indicates this, not the least the heavenly religion, which Jesus brings home and is almost as if it were cut out of the book of the wise men! There is no other alternative.

When Jesus returns from his godfathers in the East he wasn't recognizable. Not only that he wasn't 12 years old anymore – he was around 30 – but he also had acquired an authority and a radiance that could only induce respect. He was very different from the image of a suffering Christ that the Church devotes today.

Jesus heavenly religion

First, Jesus had now exchanged his orthodox Jewish belief against a heavenly religion that was unknown in the West. To Jesus the humans were no more earthly beings created to live on Earth forever. The earthly life therefore no longer had a sense by itself. Jesus had reached total insight about God when being with his godfathers in the East and he experienced human beings as heavenly beings, created in the image of God and belonging to heaven. They let themselves be dressed in flesh on this Earth only for a short time because they had gone astray in the depths of the heavens and lost their heavenly identity with the magnificence of the heavens. The way back to heaven therefore and according to God's will passes through life on Earth, because only through a life on Earth could the soul become as pure and shining as it had once been. Thus God had in his great grace created Earth like a mill for milling the souls. Or like a doormat on which the souls could clean their feet before they can step on the carpets of heaven. But the human being was blinded when dressed in flesh and couldn't itself find the way up and home to God. Therefore God had to over again send prophets and angels and even greater heavenly beings to guide the humans and show the right way home.

The doctrine of reincarnation fits in the nicest way in Jesus' new view of the world. It had to, since God is infinite love, infinitely great, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful and infinitely much more than we humans can understand. We don't know what Jesus experienced in the East with his godfathers. It isn't told anywhere. But if we want to try to understand a little bit of it, then we can imagine it to be it as follows. Just like Moses climbed Mount Sinai to receive the law and the whole Torah out of God's hand, Jesus will at a still higher plane have met God and out of his hand received the paracosmic law for all life in universe. We can hardly come closer to it than that.

It may be true and it may well be that one life on Earth in God's view is enough for full cleansing. The Christians could be right with that. But the humans loose themselves too much in the glare and on the muddy soil of this world so that they cannot achieve it! There the East is right! Therefore reincarnation is necessary and takes place out of God's great grace!

We may nevertheless lift a small corner of the heavy carpet that covers what kind of a school Jesus had with his godfathers in the East. Jesus finished his long path to heavenly insight and knowledge with fasting for forty days and nights. He had a big settlement with the devil, who in all possible ways tried to hinder him from becoming ready from his divine task. This is the first thing we hear about him in the Bible after his return.

But this long fasting and the settlement with the devil are not something special for Jesus alone. Buddha had to go through something very similar before he could enter nirvana. It looks like this incredibly strict fasting up to total exhaustion, in which one gives the devil all opportunities, is the last barrier that has to be overcome by all mystics. Only then can they at least to some degree enter nirvana or samadhi, the great spiritual state in which one becomes one with God. If the result is the same, a part of the path will doubtlessly also have been the same, and this means that it would have been the same path as in the East. This is not as improbable as the Christians want to make it seem because this is the way to God the wise men in The East knew! And truth can be only one – like God is only one!

Today the wisdom of the East and of the West are both sanded over so much that people believe them to be widely different. No one knows the common origin, any more. From the beginning the sense of both the eastern path as well as that of Christianity is to penetrate the mind so that the light of the soul suddenly breaks through and we can see God! Thus Jesus was also quoted as follows: «See, I fear nothing! Because I all the time see God walk at my right hand! And I know all answers because I can all the time see the Spirit walk at my left.»* But this is the simplest and most beautiful image of samadhi we can imagine! It is a pity that the yogis don't know it, because it is written in the Bible of the Christians!

* This will presumably be from an apocryphal text (note by the translator).

Who, then, was Jesus?

With these thoughts we will return on the Mountain of Transfiguration, because we want to talk about reincarnation in Jesus teachings.

We remember that it was God himself who put things right for Jesus' disciples and that Jesus on the way down from the mountain confirmed that John the Baptist in reality was a new incarnation, a reincarnation, of the prophet Elias.

However, God had not sent one down from heaven, but two, Jesus and John. Therefore God later in the book of Revelation calls them «my two witnesses» (Rev. 11:3). So if John was a reincarnation of Elias, of whom would then Jesus be a reincarnation? This would be the next question that will have concerned the disciples. Therefore, we soon are told how Jesus takes this subject up with them. In reality, this passage of the scripture is like a natural continuation of what Jesus said on the mountain but it has come out of its context in the Bible.

We can imagine how Jesus sits surrounded by his disciples, speaking about great things, and raises the question himself. «But whom say ye that I am?» (Math. 16:15, Mark 8:29, Luke 9:20). The disciples begin to guess logically with the greatest names in the Old Testament who come to their minds as one who could be incarnated as Jesus.

Let us first take notice that Jesus doesn't teach his disciples, saying: «Verily I say unto you: no one returns from the dead!» Jesus doesn't do that, and he couldn't, because he had told them that Elias had come back as John the Baptist. In principle, the thoughts are therefore pointing in the right direction, even though the answers to their guesses will be «no». Finally, Peter has the brilliant idea that if Jesus isn't a reincarnation of even the greatest in the Old Testament, he will logically be a still higher heavenly being who never before was on the Earth! This Jesus confirms and praises Peter for his clear insight, which only the Holy Spirit can have given him!

We can learn much from this Bible passage. First we learn that Jesus and his disciples thought and talked reincarnistically with each other. Otherwise the conversation could hardly have developed as it did. Not one of Jesus disciples though earthly or Jewish. Because not one of them gave the answer that would otherwise be expected: «You are God's son because we know that you were conceived by the Holy Spirit!» Jesus' disciples seem not even to have known that because otherwise this would have been the first they would have answered him. This may be something the Church has later invented to defend the cross and draw the Christian faith down to the Jewish earthly religion, where it doesn't belong, because Christianity never was the continuation of Judaism that the Church claims it to be!

Also no one of Jesus' disciples said: «We know that you are of David's house and family! So you are rightly a king's son and you can with full right sit on David's throne. Therefore you must be Messiah!»

Not one of Jesus' disciples talks about earthly relations of Jesus. The disciples only think reincarnistically and incarnistically: who could have incarnated as Jesus or which heavenly being could have incarnated on Earth. Since Jesus doesn't teach his disciples anything different, he again confirms the belief in reincarnation. How then Christian persons can say that there would in the New Testament not be a single trace of reincarnation is a mystery!

It is therefore wrong when Christians say that they have a soul! No one *has* a soul! Then one could just as well say that the clothes have a person! You *are* the soul! The self has to do with the soul, not with the body. We can say that we have a body of flesh. But we cannot say that we *have* a soul. The sooner we understand that, the quicker we will understand Jesus' true teachings!

Is the heaven there for you alone?

Another Christian delusion is that one can go to heaven alone while many others are lost. The thought is monstrous and shows how little the Christians today understand of Jesus' teachings. In Jesus' parable of the lost son we hear that the father sends all his servants out to meet the son when he sees him come. When Jesus, John the Baptist and an unknown number of other shining heavenly beings let themselves incarnate on the Earth even though they wouldn't need to, then it is only to

help us find the way up and home to God in heaven. And they do it so that they can walk the way with us and strengthen us. If you really believe that you can sit alone in heaven and enjoy your own liberation while your brothers and sisters and an unknown number of angels are out in the dark, then you understand nothing of Jesus' true teachings.

In reality this is a gigantic paracosmic salvage action in which all help all! If you could look into heaven, you would see that it is almost empty! All are out to light the others home! And would you meet an angel at the gates of heaven, he would and ask you in astonishment: «What are you doing here? Haven't you seen that your brothers and sisters are in need? First go out in the darkness and find them, and come back together! Then I will be glad to let you in!»

What did you really think? That God should harden your heart, that you could enjoy happiness forever and not have it spoiled by the cries from hell? That is what the Church teaches you, you may say. But this has nothing to do with Jesus. What did God do himself when we called him in fear from the outer court of hell? God created the whole material universe so that we could that way go back to heaven. Are you better than God? You, who participated in the fall of man? Have you not understood even the least of Jesus' teaching about the way up and home to God? Did you let yourself be crucified to help others? The mere thought of leaving your brothers and sisters back in the darkness makes you unfit for heaven! Because where God is everything is infinite love! God doesn't give up before the last soul is home, because God is the perfect perfection! Very few human beings today understand the great paracosmic drama they are part of! When you yourself have become shinningly clean like newly fallen snow, then you may have to go back to Earth in a new incarnation again, because your brothers and sisters cannot be without you, if also they shall find the way home! Or you may have to help in some other way, maybe as a guardian angel for one of your friends!

There is no personal salvation! We all depend on each other! No one can alone enjoy happiness while others are lost. If others are lost, this will also influence you! No one can rest alone! This is therefore a collective salvation of all humanity, and that is why the reincarnations are necessary so that all can come home!

The man born blind and Jesus' way to heaven

Let us now continue with Jesus and his disciples. Among many others, they meet a man born blind. We again see how consistently Jesus' disciples believe in reincarnation. They ask Jesus if the man was born blind as a result of his own sins or the sins of his parents!

The man is born blind! Therefore the disciples can only assume that he had an earlier incarnation on Earth! If they wouldn't have a strong belief in reincarnation, they wouldn't think of asking such a question! Jesus must have taught his disciples that.

Jesus answers that the man's blindness was neither a result of his own actions nor those of his parents, but that God's grace should be revealed through him, but this is irrelevant in this context. It is the fact that the disciples could even have the idea to ask such a question which shows that they believed in reincarnation.

These three Bible passages – the experience on the mountain, Jesus talk with his disciples about who he might be and the encounter with the man born blind have the reincarnation idea in common. They clearly show that the reincarnation concept was a part of Jesus' original teaching.

But these three Bible passages are not alone. We have a whole group of others, which are less obvious in relation to reincarnation but nevertheless have in common that they have a sense and are understandable only if reincarnation is assumed. Otherwise they are riddles.

One such passage with hidden reincarnationism is where Jesus meets a young man who asks him for the way to heaven (Math. 19:17-21). We see how Jesus splits his answer in two parts. First he answers shortly and clearly: «Keep the commandments» But the young man answers that he has done so and asks Jesus if there isn't more that he can do. And there is. Now comes Jesus second answer: «If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor... and come and follow me.»

It is clear that Jesus shows the man two different paths to heaven. With his first answer to keep the commandments he refers to the same path to heaven that John calls about in the desert. To keep the commandments therefore leads to heaven. Otherwise Jesus couldn't have answered the young man in a two-parted manner as he did, because what would have happened if the man would be satisfied with the first answer and wouldn't have asked more? In that case Jesus would have misled him if it wouldn't be correct that the commandments alone lead to heaven. It is only when the man asks for more that Jesus gives him more – his own path to heaven, the path of perfection!

But an obvious further question follows: if the young man could live a normal life in the society and keeping the commandments still go to heaven, why should he then sell everything to follow Jesus on the path of perfection?

There is no logical reason for the man to sell all and follow Jesus unless he couldn't leave it. In reality, many persons today have a similar question: can we live as we do in a material society if only we keep the commandments?

In this question reincarnationism is hidden, because only those who believe in reincarnation can answer it. For the others it will be a mystery.

The explanation is simply that Moses' way to heaven through the commandments is a very long path. It takes many incarnations to move forward on this path. Moses' way is no doubt steeper and more difficult than other paths, but it isn't as steep as it could be, because it still allows to live a worldly life at the same time. Jesus' path, however, the path of perfection, is so short that it couldn't be shorter. But for that it can be done in one human life! It doesn't require any further incarnation! Jesus' path is so short that you can reach heaven already with this life! Because Jesus teaches his disciples that many of them will not taste death! If you have come that far that you see God in your spirit, you will hardly notice when you drop the body, because then the soul sees itself. The death of the body is then nothing else than like taking the clothes off for the night!

The narrow path

Jesus' path to heaven is very steep. It couldn't really be steeper. It is only a narrow mountain path that winds from the foot of the mountain up to the top and that you will have to know to be able to find it. It can therefore not be allowed that you take luggage with you, because you wouldn't make it on the path but fall in the precipice. Therefore Jesus' path doesn't allow you to live a worldly life besides seeking God. That is why Jesus answered as he did: «Sell all that you have! Give it to the poor! Then follow me!» If you want to walk Jesus' path to heaven, you must therefore turn your back to the worldly and material life so that God can be alone in your heart. If the Church teaches you something else, don't believe it! Because the cross is not from God, it is the devils' intrigue so that you should come too late to the gates of heaven and he can keep you up to the end!

But if you are ready to walk Jesus' path and sell all you have to give it to the poor so that God alone can fill your heart and you don't have to share it with the emperor, then don't forget that this is only the beginning. After this requirement comes a long series of others, which will be stiller more difficult to fulfill. To walk Jesus' path to heaven doesn't only mean to give your heart to God. You must give all of you to God, without compromises. You cannot do it with less! Therefore, be like a wise architect. First calculate if you have the power to do what is required from you! If not, then it is better to stay on the path of the commandments for still some time, until your soul has become so much brighter that you easier can give God more than all.

Because to live in the society and keep as many of the commandments that your powers make possible and love all and everyone is better than to fall from the heights! And it is in any case better than to go nowhere!

In the Bible passage about that young man two ways to heaven are mentioned. Moses' long way through the chain of incarnations and Jesus' short way that can lead to heaven already in this life. We see how reincarnation in contrast to being a foreign element in Christianity opens the one Bible passage after the other and gives them a depth we have not before seen.

And if we have seen so much, we can see still more. We can also see what «firstfruit» Jesus talks about that is ready for harvesting and Jesus would take with him to heaven. It is all those who in their development through their incarnations have reached so far that only little is left for reaching the gates of heaven. They would now make the last part on Jesus' way. They would now come all the way home and again become the shining heavenly beings we all will eventually be. Many of these souls were incarnated with Jesus, around him. This is what we call collective reincarnation. It was those who in the first place became disciples and apostles.

As the human beings proceed through the series of incarnations their souls begin to shine again and radiate clearly and strongly like heavenly beings. Their God-consciousness grows with their longing for coming home to heaven. They will like the angels be less and less able to live a common life in society, surrounded by all golden material values. The material life appears to them more and more like a dead-end street one has to avoid. At the end, they desire to leave all the earthly and go back to heaven. It is mainly for them that Jesus was sent! But for all the others who are not yet further than that they are still stuck in the mud of the material world, Jesus confirms that the way to heaven through keeping the commandments is still valid. They will continue their reincarnations until they, too, become so shining and clear in their souls that they also cannot avoid to walk Jesus' path to heaven – if the devil will not manage to sand it over completely before that, because today we already know very little of Jesus' path. Only some fragments remain in the Bible. We will therefore hope that Jesus will come back soon or that God will send another great prophet who can renew the path!

Who takes the sword...

So much about the Bible passage about the young man who asked Jesus about great things. But there are still more passages in the Bible in which reincarnation is hidden. There are actually lots of them. There is another kind of passages that we know quite well if only we are attentive to them. For example: «...for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword» (Math. 26:52).

All Christians know silently that this word of the Bible is not correct. You must only look around to see lots of people in the course of time who took the sword but weren't killed by it! Most of them died of old age or disease.

If we have only one physical life on Earth, Jesus' words are not true. Anyone can see that. Jesus disciples had certainly objected if they had understood it the way the Church does today.

Again, the explanation can only be that Jesus' teachings were in reality reincarnistic. It is only so that it has later become reshaped in the interpretation, which made obvious nonsense out of such Bible passages.

The correct understanding can only be that who takes the sword will be killed by the sword in a future life! This Bible passage can be true only if it is connected with reincarnation. And it is remarkable that it is more than reincarnistic. Because we see that Jesus here takes up the paracosmic laws of rebirth to a new physical life. The paracosmic laws for our karma, as the East would say. The wise men who were Jesus' godfathers have beyond doubt taught their disciples as follows: «Whatever you do in this life against a human being, an animal or even a plant, will be done against you in a future life. And what you have neglected to do in this live for a human being, an animal or even for a plant will be neglected towards you in a future life. Such is the law of karma! Therefore love each and all! Because God also loves you!»

It may be that the teachings of the wise men were a bit more extensive than that. But it isn't hard to see that Jesus clearly taught his disciples much the same. And maybe Jesus teachings were also as extensive on this point when he gave them. Much can have been lost in the meantime. And this is not very astonishing if we consider that it was the wise men from the East who taught Jesus until he surpassed his teachers.

Those who carry the burdens

Jesus also says that the first will be the last and the last will be the first, and that the least will be the greatest and the greatest the least. This is also a reincarnistic doctrine. It means that for each incarnation you go through you will have more burdens on your shoulders, in addition to your karma! Because with every incarnation your soul becomes so much stronger and more radiating that it can take still more! For each incarnation your path to heaven becomes still steeper until at the end it is almost vertical. Who looks deeply into things sees something similar in the case of the man born blind we talked about. He was born blind without having himself sinned in earlier existences, nor did his parents prepare the ground for his disease. He lived his life as blind only so that the works of God should be made manifest in him. So if you meet someone on the way who has great difficulties in one way or the other, who is hit by disease, handicapped or in some other way carries heavy burdens while your life may be a rose garden, don't turn away from that person. Don't become irritated because that disturbs your circles! But remember that the turn will also come to you because we are going the same way home! The person who carries all the burdens is only ahead of you in his reincarnistic development! When you come that far in the development of your soul, you will also get burdens to carry! This is not by chance! And it isn't unjust! There is no way around it if you want to go home to God. And God is just! He doesn't give something to the one only, he also gives to the other – of the bad and of the good! Only Christianity believes something else! Because all God's children are alike and the burdens in life is what makes God's mill grind. They are the way up and home to God! But now that this has been said we must also tell – so that there will be no panic – that those are souls who long so much for God that they almost take two incarnations at once! Such souls are also there! They are the ones who carry almost inhuman burdens from who we others turn away shuddering. But we must also understand that there is no obligation. No one comes to Earth against his own will and all have accepted it in advance! And no one is given more than he can take, even if some have been given quite up to the limit.

Therefore help the sick, the poor, the handicapped, the retarded, the prisoner, the miserable, help all who in manifold ways carry the burdens of the world so that they can help you from heaven when they are there and it is your turn! Because the help they then can give you from there will be many times greater than the help you can give to them today. So that you will not be alone on the last part of the way, because you couldn't! Already their intercession means much more than you think!

There are great differences between the eastern doctrine of reincarnation and the one of Jesus. There is no infinite series of automatic reincarnation according to the law of karma, as the whole East believes. That is an illusion that arose with time since the East came as far away from the great truth with all that they have as the Christians did with the cross.

Jesus taught his disciples that in addition to karma there will be still more burdens for each incarnation. That is unknown in the East. Jesus also taught his disciples something about reincarnation that is unbelievable in the East. Who with an *honest* heart asks God for forgiveness will also have it! Then he has changed his karma! That you together with God can change your karma through the grace of forgiveness and therefore can avoid having to go through old karma in new incarnations will be shocking to hear for a yogi. It will be just as shocking as it is for a Christian to hear that Jesus and his disciples believed in reincarnation! How far humanity has come from the way of truth!

Your next life, your next incarnation – if you are not one of the very few who are having their last – is not something you are forced into, as the East believes. This life as well as the next is in any single case something we have asked God for. And God gives it only out of his great grace because the incarnations on Earth are the only possibility we have to come back to heaven. But God has his requirements, which you will know and accept in advance. And with his angels he will take care that you will come through satisfactorily so that you can advance in your incarnational development. Everything is completely under control. There are no coincidences. This is also something that Christians have come to believe afterwards. Or they blame the devil. That is why you have your guardian angel. He is the one who accompanies you and takes care about all these things. He is also the one who takes care that you will meet Jesus when you eventually are ready to walk that path. He takes care

that you will pass through all the things, which lead to the gate of heaven! That is why God created the Earth and he will also let the Earth pass away the day when the last soul is home for all to meet again in the joy of heaven.

About giving and taking

We will now terminate these reincarnationistic thoughts with one of the most puzzling passages in the entire Bible. It is not that the text is unclear. It is, but what Jesus says in this passage appears so unjust that no one can understand how he could say it. That is the mystery. We all know the passage: «For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath» (Math. 13:12, 25:29, Luke 8:18, 19:26).

Many Christians earnestly believe that this has to do with faith. But that cannot be, or the devil would in any case be happy to have a cooperation from God! Other Christians think more correctly that this refers to material goods but then give up to understand the justice in it.

The injustice is more than obvious. One might refer to the old saying that Gods ways are inscrutable. That way anything can be swept under the carpet. But this is not satisfying here. That those who have much should have still more while the little they have shall be taken away from the poor surpasses our understanding because it in an unpleasant way turns our religious feelings upside-down. Here something is wrong and parts of Christianity have recognized this since ancient times. In any case it is here hard to recognize the heavenly father as we know him so that this must be considered to be locked up to the unknowing. But how do we unlock it?

We immediately see that this Bible passage is one of those that are not fulfilled in one human lifetime. The whole world bears witness to that! Jesus is again talking reincarnationistically with his disciples, as he did over and over again. If we read the text passage reincarnationistically, it unlocks itself, opens like a flower and becomes the greatest divine justice we can imagine. Nothing is inunderstandable any more!

We have to read the words in the light of what else Jesus taught us and then it unlocks nicely: «Who has much in this life will have still more in the next if he shares with his fellow men and women. But from the one who has little in this life shall even this little be taken in the next if he kept it only for his own joy.»

That is the highest law of creation! It is the law of karma as the East teaches it, given by Jesus of Nazareth – right in our own Bible!

That is why many priests believe in reincarnation. And we should let them do that, because only the fool cannot look further than his own nose!

Additional remark by the translator

The text may give the impression that Jesus' path would unavoidable go through heavy suffering. This cannot be meant as simply as it appears. There are mainly two aspects of suffering:

1. Real suffering, essentially as a consequence of own actions (see Chapter 1 and the end of Chapter 14) – not as punishment but as a lesson. The soul must itself experience what its victims felt, unless it reaches regret and conversion in another manner.
2. Apparent suffering that is only in the eyes of the observer. We think that it would be painful when someone in inner wealth turns away from worldly wealth to live under simple circumstances or even in poverty. We only project our own expectance into this, how we think it would be. In reality such a person doesn't suffer, but there are few of them in this world.

Then there are theories of suffering that are unrealistic and have little sense:

3. Vicarious suffering. There can hardly be a more unjust idea, except if someone would *voluntarily* take the suffering of another upon himself! But that would have little sense. It is *one* thing to *help the suffering in love and sooth his suffering* (and this is very important, see Chapter 1). But to *take his suffering on one's own shoulders* is *another* thing and would in most cases help him to

shirk out a lesson! That would be as if the better student at a university would take the test in the name of another. And on the new shoulders, suffering would really have no sense, anymore...

4. Suffering as a consequence of «original sin». It would be an immeasurable injustice of God if I should have to experience such suffering, even though I wouldn't have existed when such an «original sin» was committed (those who theorize about such a sin deny preexistence). Such an injustice can only exist in the thinking of overrational theologians. That way, difficult questions of justice can be swept under the carpet as if one would cure one evil with the worse.

Then there is also compassion in the sense of «co-suffering». That we feel with the suffering is a natural consequence of love but another thing than own, personal suffering. How will not God himself all the time «co-suffer» through the big lovelessness of humanity! This way, Christ is every day crucified anew, since he is in every fellow man and woman!

Additional remark concerning the theory that Jesus was in the East

Various books claim that Jesus was in India and, among other things, that in reality he died in Kashmir. He would have survived the crucifixion or another would have been crucified in his place. One of the most interesting books of this kind will be the one by Nicolas Notovich [1]. These are allegations, which can hardly be proven, but this is may also be no smoke without a fire... As concerns an allegedly missing gospel [2] it is said that its original Aramaic text was found in a Tibetan monastery. The text would be written by John in the year 70 and brought to Tibet by a disciple, and would have been found there in 1870 by Placidus. He brought it to Rome where it is allegedly kept hidden since the text would make much in the Dogma appear unbelievable.

When the first Europeans came to Kerala in India, they were astonished to find a Christian community there: the Thomas-Christians. It is told that the disciple Thomas went to India and founded this community. In a Jesuit Ashram near Calcutta I found a work on the history of Christianity in India in the library [3]. In it was written that the Thomas-Christians had many scriptures, *which have been destroyed!*

Why did Thomas go to India? Could it be because Jesus had been there and told him about it? And why did, if this is true, a disciple go to Tibet? Maybe it was for the same reason? If Jesus was in the East during 17 years, he could very well have visited various countries where there were strongholds of eastern spiritual knowledge.

I was astonished in this context as I read a report in a major German newspaper [4] about the Japanese island Honshu. It was written that in Shingo on that island a part of the population is devoted to Jesus for the reason that he would have been there. The following is written on a board standing on the island: «It is assumed that Christ at the age of 21 came to Japan to study theology. When he was 31, he returned to Judaea to preach God's word. But instead of accepting his teachings, people tried to kill him. His younger brother Iskiri was crucified and died in his place. Christ could escape crucifixion and after a difficult journey returned to Japan. He lived in the village Herai and it is assumed that he became 106 years old. At this holy place is the tomb of Jesus Christ to the right and that of Iskiri to the left. The legend claims that these facts are based on the Testament of Jesus Christ.»

The Church, of course, gives another explanation. According to the legend the first Christian missionary was in Japan 1549, and it would have to do with him (and if Iskiri died in Israel one may ask how his body could be in Japan, but it could be a symbolical tomb without a body). This explanation could be true but doesn't have the objective independence, which we would wish. Especially since the Church in eastern religions only wants to see opponents and competitors and not the least of a kinship... Even though it doesn't want this to be true, many words of Buddha are astonishingly similar to those of Jesus! It is then objected that Buddha didn't talk about God. The explanation is, however, written in Chapter 1 of this book!

All taken together, this is maybe a bit too much smoke to be without a fire...

Someone may object that Jesus couldn't have survived the crucifixion since he appeared to the disciples. But bilocation is a known phenomenon in parapsychology: the appearance of a person si-

multaneously at two different places (or somewhere else while the body is asleep). Shouldn't Jesus be able to bilocate?

References

1. Nicolas Notovitch: *La vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ* («The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ»), Le Basileus, Toulouse (no year).
2. *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, ed. by G.J. Ousely, allegedly translated from Aramaic; no publisher, place or year mentioned (the 1st edition in English was published in 1901).
3. A.M. Mundadan: *History of Christianity in India*, Theological Publications in India, St. Peter's Seminary, Bangalore, 1984. About Thomas and Bartholomew on p. 21-66.
4. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 30, 1998, p. R 6.

Appendix 2

THE PRESENT-TENSE LORD'S PRAYER AND ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

As was mentioned in Chapter 11, the commonly used text of the Lord's Prayer refers to the future. Here is a possible present-tense variety that follows Math. 6:9-13 and the Greek text more in its sense than as a literal translation:

*Our father who art in all worlds¹.
Your word² is holy.
Your kingdom is also here (or: Our world is part of your kingdom).
Your will rules on Earth like in heaven.
You give us our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
by the same amount as we forgive those who offended us³.
Instead of taking us through trials:
heal us from wickedness⁴.*

Comments:

1. *Ouranós* = 1) heaven, abode of the gods, 2) the worlds. God is omnipresent and not only in some heavenly world, but also *here* in our world.
2. *Ónoma* = 1) name, 2) word. The translation «word» seems to give more sense here.
3. Cf. Math. 6.14: «For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you». Similarly in Mark 11:25-26.
4. *Ponērón* = 1) trouble, difficulty, hardship, 2) bad, evil, 3) wickedness. Doesn't it have more sense to in the first place pray for liberation from our *own* wickedness? Who will cast the first stone here*...? Several authors want to have «guide us when we are in temptation» and the like, since it is hard to imagine that God would lead us into temptation. That is what the adversary does. Instead of first having to go through tests and trials (to which a future reincarnation may belong), we pray to be healed from our own wickedness.

A prayer for the return of Christ

*Christ, be already today in our hearts,
open them for love
and use us for your work of love in this world
so that it is saved from the evil.*

The free will

The free will was discussed in Chapter 1 as an attempt to solve the theodicy problem, which with the completion through preexistence and reincarnation becomes a real possibility for a solution. There are, however, paradoxical aspects in this respect: the possibility to abuse the free will in order to limit the free will of another person or even take it away from him! As it often occurs in the world... and as Lucifer strives for by all means so that he can claim the free will for himself. One could have the impression that the light beings, who built creation on God's order, in their love and harmony never

* Who of us has never had a bad thought about another person? Who has never felt a sense of revenge, rage or jealousy towards another? Who hasn't secretly approved official arbitrariness, a hard sentence or violence, thinking that the person concerned deserves it? Who hasn't looked away from those suffering misery or complained about refugees without asking from what peril they might have had to escape? Who has never felt disgust seeing a person who for psychological or physical reasons wasn't able to keep himself clean? All that and much more belongs to the own wickedness, and not only violent acts, deception, calumnies and, for example, «salted bills»! The bad ones are always the others... is an attitude that is meant in Math. 7:3-5 and Luke 6:41-42 with the mote in the brother's eye and the beam in one's own!

had the idea that such an abuse could occur. It looks like they therefore forgot a law: «Whosoever abuses the free will in order to rob free will from another, or to limit it, forfeits his rights and loses his own free will by the same amount.»

At the beginning there was this free will to the full extent. But then Lucifer has limited our free will a lot. In the «dark ages» it became something else than what was foreseen. His method is to manipulate us into ignorance. We therefore no more know that we have a free will and know even less of the alternatives, which are at our choice. We no more know about the consequences of a choice made in ignorance, under manipulation and maybe after all not out of much free will, since it was made under deceitful shading out of alternatives.

Obviously the free will God secured us has taken us a lot astray, far from the divine light, as is clearly seen in this world. The principle is good but the result is appalling...

However, the «forgotten» law isn't really forgotten! It is included in the law of karma. If we abuse our free will, we will become victims of abuse of free will in a future life! Nevertheless, a radical solution would be to renounce our claim for a free will – not in such a way that others could unscrupulously dispose of us as they want to, but so that *we give our free will to God!* The last line in the above version of the Lord's Prayer has to do with that.

Jesus demonstrated this to us at the crucifixion when he prayed: «...not my will, but thine, be done» (Luke 22:42). We could follow his example:

*God, I give my free will to you
so that it will no more lead me astray
and no one else can claim it:
Not my will, but thine be done!*

It is repeatedly said that the angels only help when we ask for it. Here, again, something has come out of balance! The devils tempt and mislead us and we haven't asked them to! Maybe we also have to ask the angels to stop respecting the free will, since they otherwise play into the hands of Lucifer! Because most human beings no more know of the angels nor that they can ask them for help! The free will has become perverted...

Pray for the dead ones, too?

In a text the Danish author Michael Agerskov asserts that Jesus at the end of the Lord's Prayer had also taught to pray for the dead. «The prayer for the dead was left out by Paul. His motivation was that those who were dead and saved through their belief in Jesus' death of reconciliation, and therefore made alive, wouldn't need an intercession – and that those who died without this belief couldn't be saved through an intercession» [1]. According to Agerskov, the following should be at the end of the Lord's Prayer:

*...take the dead in your protection,
protect and guard us all.*

There is no source given for this assertion, but I think that such an intercession for the souls has a lot of sense!

A Christ mantra

Now it is really going too far for the dogmatic Christian reader! Even a *mantra* for Christ...!

Many in the West who don't feel well with the stiffness of the Dogma of the Church seek to expand their horizons, for example in India. And some of them after much time turn back to Christianity, to a new and more living Christianity and not to the one of the Dogma. But manipulations of the adversary take place in India, too (he is known there as well as here and they call him Māra; as concerns the popular reproach of polytheism: see the beginning of Chapter 1!). Also there it isn't all gold

that shines! Some recognize that and so much more gain a foothold in a «new» Christianity that essentially will be 2000 years old but liberated from ballast it later became burdened with... That happened to me. The «detour» – or way of fate – via India brought me to Christ, outside of the Dogma – but with a remaining sympathy for Indian thought.

There is a category of mantras in India called Gāyatrī. Every divinity (to me comparable with our concept of angels) has its own version of a Gāyatrī*. Thus during a study of Sanskrit in an Ashram (where I with time discovered much darkness behind the glare in the foreground and therefore didn't return – which as a single case doesn't stop me from seeing much divine light shine through in Hinduism) the following *Christ-Gāyatrī* came to me. This will be a very meaningful completion for Christians with an inclination to India and maybe even more for Westerners who still seek in Hinduism but have not yet found the connection back to our Christian roots through which both are united:

*Jyotih Kristosé vidmahé,
mahá premané dheemahi,
tanno Kristoh prachodayát.*

In scientific transliteration:

*Jyotiḥ Kristose vidmahe,
mahā premaṇe dhīmahi,
tanno Kristoḥ pracodayāt.*

In translation:

*We know the light of Christ,
let us contemplate the great love,
may Christ fill our spirit.*

And finally in Devanāgarī:

ज्योतिः क्रिस्तोसे विद्महे ।
महा प्रेमणे धीमहि ।
तन्नो क्रिस्तोः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Reference

1. Michael Agerskov: *Kristi Tale* («Christ's speech»), Vandrer mod Lysets Forlag, Copenhagen, 1996 – extract from the book *Vandrer mod Lyset* («Wanderer Towards the Light»), 1920.

* The word is feminine in Sanskrit. It isn't only the name of a goddess but also of a metric in Indian poetry. A Gāyatrī for a divinity always has this metric and the «formula»: We know... , let us contemplate..., may... fill our spirit. The name of the divinity is inserted as well as epithets and symbols.

About the author

Jan Erik Sigdell was born in Sweden in 1938. He studied electronics and received a doctoral degree in medical engineering. In 1968 he moved to Switzerland and worked for the medical industry. In 1979 he began to work as a free-lance consultant for the dialysis industry.

In the 70es he experimented with hypnotic regression. His first contract as a free-lance consultant was with a company in Colorado, where he at the same time had the opportunity to learn a non-hypnotic technique for regression and past-life therapy, which he began to practice in 1980, parallel to his work for the industry. Since then he practices this therapy and teaches it in workshops. He has given many lectures on reincarnation, regression and past-life therapy in mainland Europe. From 1986 on, this is his main activity, together with authoring work.

He is to-day known mainly in the German-language area as an author, popular speaker and a trusted past-life therapist.

In January 1979 he moved with his Slovenian wife to her home country.

Publications

1. A number of articles in medical engineering, Chapters in books on dialysis and a monograph describing a new mathematical theory for calculating mass transfer in hollow-fiber dialyzers: *A Mathematical Theory for the Capillary Artificial kidney* (Hippokrates, Stuttgart, 1974).
2. Many articles on reincarnation and regression, published in German, Swedish, English and Slovenian.
3. A text-book on past-life therapy that has become a standard reference in the field in the German-speaking area. 1st edition published by himself in German as *Emotionale Befreiung durch Rückführung* ("Emotional Release through Regression"; Basel, 1994), 2nd edition by Scherz Publishers, under the new title *Rückführung in frühere Leben* ("Regression to Past Lives", Bern, 1998), a 3rd edition was published as *Reinkarnationstherapie* (Heyne, München, 2008).
The book has also been published in Swedish as *Emotionell befrielse genom regression* (Solrosen, Västerås, 1997) and in Dutch as *Putten uit vorige levens* (Synthese/bres, Den Haag, 2004).
4. After extensive research in university libraries throughout many years a book in German that goes further and gives a more comprehensive answer to the question about reincarnation and Christianity than has so far been published on the subject, with many new hard facts: *Reinkarnation, Christentum und das kirchliche Dogma* ("Reincarnation, Christianity and the Dogma of the Church", Ibero, Vienna, 2001). It has been well received by the public but representatives of the Church seem to avoid mentioning it, so far...

This text is the English translation of that book: