

Unanswered Questions

ARE YOU AFRAID TO ASK those primary questions you may have first posed as a child because of the frustration you will experience when a snide joke or dead silence answers you? Those questions are so pressing, so basic, yet we gradually learn to not to ask them, to forge them, and in so doing we begin to narrow the natural outreach of our curiosity and feeling for the largeness of life, thus placing artificial boundaries on our very consciousness.

And yet, we are reminded by Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living. And what are those primary questions? You know them: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What is the purpose of life? Historically, it has been the province of philosophy, and especially religion, to address and resolve these questions. With what success? Well, the reigning schools of philosophy don't even attempt to deal with what they consider unwieldy, nebulous issues. They have trouble getting beyond the very meaning of the terms involved and stall in tortuous semantic exercises. Orthodox religions, on the other hand, postulate creeds by mandate and maintain that they must be accepted on the authority of their source; that is, because the church, Bible, rabbi, guru, Pope, shaman or imam says so; not because their inherent truth makes its irresistible appeal to the God-given faculty of reason.

Here, then, is the dilemma confronting so many modern persons: Their mind seeks answers and solutions to perplexities and problems posed by life, but they seem to be denied the means of satisfying that fundamental need. They are told, rather, that inquiries are futile, that there are no answers, that they are guilty of pride of intellect, that they lack faith and piety; or, they are convicted (God forbid!) of independent thinking.

My friends, answers do exist. Logical explanations for world mysteries are available, explanations that can give order, meaning, purpose and direction to a life that may have been aimless, incomprehensible, or despairing. A body of Teachings has been provided, by Ones far wiser than we, with a view toward satisfying the demands of an

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aggressive intellect, which, understandably, will not permit substantive attitudinal and life changes, changes of the heart, until its own rational needs have been met. What is known as the Western Wisdom Teachings offer a logical and sequential formulation of truths that explain the origin, evolution, and future development of man and the cosmos in which he lives. They are Christian in essence and reasonable and lucid in their presentation.

In the brief time allotted us, let us consider one central tenet of these Teachings—the Law of Rebirth. The Law states that, inasmuch as human

beings were created in the image and likeness of their Creator; and inasmuch as Christ Jesus enjoined us to be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect; and since we have been placed on earth to acquire the experience which will enable us to consciously grow in wisdom and power and love commensurate with our Ideal; in view of these facts, the time also to achieve this divine assignment, the attainment of God-like perfection, must also have been given.

It should be apparent to the impartial reviewer that such a sublime prospect of human achievement cannot possibly be attained in the course of one life's span, no matter how exemplary and productive. The spirit, a very spark of Divinity differentiated in God, requires many lifetimes of earthly embodiment before it can extract from the physical dimension all the understanding and soul power necessary for mastery of that realm and permanent residence in higher realms.

As for biblical references to the Law of Rebirth and the continuity of life, there are several:

(1) His disciples asked Jesus (John 9) whether the man born blind sinned or his parents, that he should be so afflicted. How could he have sinned unless he had lived previously and was now reaping the bitter fruit of some prior planting? Surely he could not have sinned in his mother's womb.

(2) Christ Jesus asks His disciples who people say He is (Matt. 16). Strange question, is it not? Jesus is Jesus. His disciples answer that some say He is John the Baptist (now beheaded), some Jeremiah, some Elias, or some other prophet. What is necessarily implied in both question and responses? That Jesus pre-existed in a prior physical embodiment. Nor does He correct them by saying, "You know better than to believe in rebirth," as any teacher concerned with imparting truth would do.



Stained glass, Master of St Severin (c. 1485-1515/German). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England

The Transfiguration

Moses, bearing the Decalogue, and Elias (the Greek form of Elijah) appear with Christ Jesus at the Transfiguration. Moses prefigures the Truth, Elias, later John the Baptist, points to the Way. Christ Jesus is the embodiment of the Way, the Life and the Truth. His three most advanced disciples are overwhelmed by Christ's glory.

(3) Coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John (Matt 17), Jesus alludes to his death and resurrection. His disciples object, saying that, according to Scripture, Elias must first come (that is, come again). Jesus replies that Elias has already come and the Jews knew him not but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Then the disciples knew that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. Earlier (Matt. 11), in reference to John, Jesus says, "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear."

Do we have ears to hear? Perhaps you might find yourself repeating the words of the disciples from another context, equally unsettling: "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60) Or, in disbelief, you may hear Jesus reproving you, "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not,

how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” (John 3:12)

The Law of Rebirth is really an extension of a foundational law of the physical sciences: For every cause their must be a proportionate effect.

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Christian scripture is rife with renditions of this law, which is applicable on all levels of existence—physical, moral, mental, and spiritual: “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:1); “as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee” (Matt. 8:13); “They that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matt. 26:52); “God...will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. 2:6); “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Who we are, our character, our station in life, our physical person, is the composite effect of all our past causes. Now, today, we are experiencing the effect of actions and thoughts which we initiated in prior times. Likewise, by our present thoughts, words, and deeds we are laying down the causes which will determine who we shall be. It is evident that the twin laws of Consequence and Rebirth imply our full responsibility for what we make and have made of ourselves; for how could we grow in all things unto a perfect human were we but automatons, the plaything of inscrutable forces, or the victim of blind fate?

A familiar maxim states that character is destiny. The archetypal character toward which individual humanity is evolving, contrary appearances notwithstanding, is the Christ. Daily living, sowing and reaping teaches us how that divine Person is to be attained as our own Identity. Not only this, but greater works than He did shall we do. When?

Surely, for most of us, not in our present life’s time. Yet the promise remains, to be fulfilled.

So then, *rebirth*. It is the solution of and explanation for a myriad of apparent inequities and injustices we see about us in the widely varying aptitudes, degrees of material prosperity, moral development, physical health, and mental capability shown by individual humans. How account for such vast discrepancies were not some larger order, some unseen factors, operating in accordance with inviolable and beneficent laws to the ultimate fulfillment of our divine potential.

The Rosicrucian Christian Teachings do not threaten or intimidate. They do not enunciate beliefs but spiritual facts which are provable by any who develop the requisite ability to confirm them first hand. It is for the seeker of truth to determine for himself what warrants his assent. And surely that assent wants the ratification of the intellect. If

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world mysteries become intelligible once a particular hypothesis is advanced, one proceeds with that hypothesis, as in the physical sciences, accepting it as provisionally true, further investigating its application and relevance through its capacity to order and explain particular data.

Western Wisdom Teachings propose, at the outset, not that you believe, but that you not disbelieve; that, with an open mind, you become familiar with the science of spirit and bring it to bear upon your experience, viewing your life in the light of its disclosures. Does it clarify what was formerly obscure? Does it rectify what formerly

you considered gross inequities in human benefits and aptitudes, which inclined you to think a dark god, or no gods, existed? Does it confirm in you your own powers of reason, even as it provides you the occasion to open your heart and gladly give your whole being to the enterprise of living in the world with zest, intelligence and commitment, knowing where you are going and how to get there?

These are surely acceptable criteria by which one may judge the relevance and value of what one is invited to investigate. The Wisdom Teachings of Rosicrucian Christianity are, in some respects, the antithesis of Christian orthodoxies. They do not enforce belief. They do not use the ploys and threats of institutional authority to exact compliance to codes



The Christ of the Cathedral of Amiens

and consent to creeds. The only real authority is Truth, and Rosicrucian Christianity teaches that Truth, ultimately, can only be recognized and identified from within, though one must continuously evolve to participate in higher revelations of Truth. Therefore, the Teachings emphasize that there is no more sacred province than individual free will.

It is with this understanding that the Rosicrucian Fellowship invites you to investigate the science of spirit for yourself, to determine whether there really is a body of spiritual facts that can explain the world mystery and, by its compelling reasonableness, can enlist your whole-hearted involvement in our shared life, knowing that by it you may realize your God-given destiny. □

—C.W.

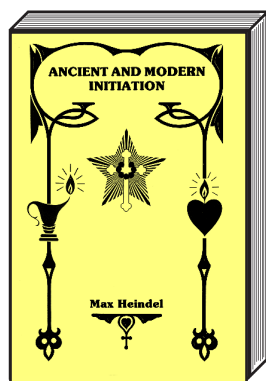
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