

Reincarnation

AND THE SOUL'S *Becoming*

BY LYNN SPARROW CHRISTY



"I hope this is my last life."

"I hope I don't have to come back."

How many times have we heard this sentiment arise within the world-weary community of reincarnation believers? Maybe you have said these things yourself. It's not surprising that we might feel this way at times. I freely admit that I quail at the thought of once again sitting in a high chair, learning how to find my mouth with a spoon (not to mention the other indignities of infancy)! As we diligently make our way through the lessons and learnings of this life, it's understandable that the thought of doing it all again can be more than a little daunting, especially when the personal or collective challenges we face loom large.

But when we are eager to be done with incarnation, are we missing an important opportunity? Over the many years I have specialized in teaching, writing, and working with clients on reincarnation and past lives, it has become increasingly apparent to me that we can too easily see incarnation as little more than a necessary evil, a chance to untie the knots that we have created during our earthly lifetimes so that we can make our exit.

Doing that reparative work is no doubt important, but does incarnation hold any value beyond its corrective opportunities?

The Cayce readings strongly assert that it does. They say, for example, that the experiences the soul amasses in the earth are important "towards its own development, *and in that development of the creation or world.*" (3744-5, emphasis mine) Nor is Cayce an outlier in taking this position. The Tibetan Buddhists speak of "precious human birth" when describing the rare opportunity and sacred responsibilities of incarnation. In the Native American traditions, humanity has a special responsibility to care for the earth. The Hindu concept of Dharma calls us to serve the whole creation, not just our own developmental needs. The Judeo-Christian story of creation situates us as caretakers of the garden-world God created.

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The Edgar Cayce readings affirm the value of life incarnate in the way they describe our purpose as companions and co-creators with God. Most students of the Cayce material can easily recite this catchphrase about being companions and co-creators with God. Most who walk the spiritual path described in the readings accept the concept as foundational. But do we really get it in those moments when we find the constraints of living in the earth in a physical body tiresome and feel impatient to be “done?” When we view our earthly incarnations as primarily remedial, simply the way to correct the mistakes of the past with as little delay as possible so that we don’t have to come back, we miss the expansive, co-creative agenda for our lives in the earth. But when we remember the sacred call to be co-creators who have been given the opportunities of “precious human birth,” focus shifts from a story about wayward souls working their way back to the halcyon days before we got involved here, to a story leading us forward through an astounding process of creation and becoming.

Being and Becoming

The cosmology of the Cayce readings gives us a hint at why a universe was birthed in the first place: “Spirit is in the image of the Creative Forces and seeks manifestation.” (391-4) Spirit seeks manifestation. And as Spirit expresses in manifestation, it takes on form; matter comes into existence. “Spirit moving in space becomes matter” is the way one reading describes it. (873-1) As C. S. Lewis once quipped, “God likes matter; He invented it.”

Here we are forced to probe the great paradox involved in something coming out of nothing. This paradox, as addressed in Eastern and Platonic traditions, tells us that Spirit, God, the Absolute, Creative Force (however we care to designate it) exists in both manifest and unmanifest realms. In its unmanifest state, it is simply the Ground

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of Being, perfect, changeless, formless, and unnamable—because, as the Taoists say, the Tao that can be named is not the Tao. Names create boundaries of this/not this, and the Absolute is boundless. Nevertheless, as the reading we are looking at reminds us, Spirit seeks manifestation. And when it does, it expresses in a realm where things are not changeless and formless. They have form. They grow, develop, and evolve. We can describe this process as “becoming.”

As part of “becoming,” Spirit seeks expression in individual—even personal—form. “KNOW that the Creative Energy called God may be as personal as an individual will allow same to be. It may take that personality, that will be allowed by the individual itself.” (391-4) This is where we come in. For who, among all the varieties of biological life on this earth, has better capacity to develop individuality and personality? Spirit, as the Source of all things, permeates every atom of the universe. But is Spirit awake and aware in nonsentient life? As contemporary integral thinker Ken Wilber has said, “Both humans and rocks are equally Spirit, but only humans can consciously realize that fact, and between the rock and the human lies evolution.” The readings would suggest that we are equipped to be the vessels in which Spirit wakes up in matter as individual, personal expressions. They further suggest that the impetus behind such personalized, individualized expression is the Creator’s intention for each of us to “be His companion, one with Him in each of the activities.” (1549-1)

There is a lovely connotation here of companionable partnership. “Co-laborers” is sometimes added to the description of our core function. (391-4) And it is here on earth that we are enabled to prepare for this level of “companionship” with God. (5284-1) To be a co-creator is an awesome thing, when we stop to really think about it. But to be on the intimate footing of companion to That which

comes before the big bang, companion to the Source and Essence of all that is, companion to the power behind every law of the universe and the answer to every mystery—now that is really something! We each have a role to play, no matter how unworthy or unready we may feel. “That of the spirit is the spark or portion of the Divine that is in every entity, whether complete or of the evolution to that completeness . . . Each and every person . . . has its individual force toward the great creation, and its individual niche, place or unit to perform.” In this way, our development will “be of assistance to the world.” (3744-5)

For every one of us, our overriding purpose is to undergo our own development in service to creation itself, to be the means by which the original Divine intention is carried out. And we do that not only by co-creating the world but by co-creating our unique, individual Selves.

Reincarnation and the Soul’s Becoming

At a time when Morton Blumenthal, early supporter of the Cayce work, was attempting to get detailed information concerning the how and why of reincarnation he asked, “As created by God in the first, are souls perfect, and if so, why any need of development?” Why, indeed, do we have to go through all the trials and tribulations of life in a physical body? Why couldn’t we have been launched as full-fledged companions and co-creators?

In response to Blumenthal’s question, the Cayce source explains the “evolution of life as may be understood by the finite mind” in this way: “In the first cause, or principle, all is perfect.” But just as an entire universe is evolving from a first cause, so, apparently are we, for the response continues: “In the creation of soul, we find the portion may become a living soul and equal with the Creator. To reach that position, when separated, must pass through all stages of development, that it may be one with the Creator.” (900-10)

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Notice that this reading makes a distinction between all being perfect “in the first cause” and the need for development in order to reach a potential that is no less than *equal with/one with* the Creator. We can see a similar developmental process reflected in every earthly incarnation. A newborn baby exists in a kind of oceanic oneness, with its sense of self not yet formed. That baby may exist in a love-merge with its parents, but it will be many years before it can be a true companion who meets the parents as a peer. The small child co-creating a cake with its mother may be doing its best to “help,” but only with development will that child co-create as an equal. In much the same way, our birth as souls is only the beginning of a long process that leads us from our infancy as souls to our maturity as “adult” soul-selves who can step fully into our calling.

There are intimations in the readings that the path through incarnational, earthly existence was something that we ourselves chose at the dawn of time and that it wasn’t necessarily plan A. This is hinted at in reading 900-10, above, where it says, *when separated* we must pass through all stages of development in order to be





one with God. We also find, “Then those so *entering* MUST continue through the earth until the body-mind is made perfect for the soul, or the body-celestial *again*.” (262-99, emphasis mine) But the Cayce source warns that a full explanation of this divergence from plan may be so confusing as to be worse than any questions we have about it! So for our purposes here, let’s just assume that we are involved in a Plan B that allows us to use the opportunities within the manifest realm to evolve into our perfect “celestial bodies” and our companionable, co-creative oneness with God. We are using the blessed opportunity of incarnation to become what we always had the potential to become.

Along the way, we make mistakes and we take detours that may require lifetimes to set us back on course. Like the toddler who unknowingly wreaks havoc in a fit of self-will, we can blindly dig ourselves deeper into the mire of separation from our true nature as divinely ordained beings. That is where a remedial need shapes the opportunities that incarnation sends our way. We land in situations that allow us to heal problem relationships with other souls. We are offered opportunities to correct the wrongs we have done and make recompense for any hurt we have inflicted on others. Over time, though, we also engage in an expansive agenda. We develop more and more of the attributes implanted within us as souls made in the image of God. In so doing, we are not only conduits for the manifestation of Spirit in flesh and blood—we also actively participate in forming our true Selves as unique expressions of the Creator.

Returning to Our Maker “Bearing the Name”

In a series of readings on the topic of “Destiny” we find a powerful reference to this charge to co-create our Selves:

“As it has already been given, the *Destiny of the Soul* is to return to the Giver, the Maker. To man, in the body, does there remain the destiny of whether it, that soul, shall return (as of the creation) empty, or bearing the name.” (262-82)

What a fascinating idea! Of course the soul must return to God. The Absolute encompasses all and there is nowhere and no way for a soul to exist that is not part of the Ground of Being. But it may return “empty;” that is, devoid of unique identity and personhood or “bearing the name;” that is, bearing the individual, personal stamp of Selfhood.

Significantly, it is “in the body” that this destiny is carved out. It’s tempting to think that, if we could just shake loose of these pesky bodies and all the nonsense that earth life seems to generate, we would become wise, enlightened, and free. However, it’s not that simple. Time and space are the necessary means through which the “forces of the divine” bring developmental changes in souls “who seek to become one with Creative

Energies.” (254-95) Being incarnate involves us in a deep purposefulness where our personal soul development and the evolution of the material world are interdependent. With a purpose and destiny that is tied to the ongoing manifestation of Spirit in the world, we have a long-term stake in this admittedly troubled marriage of spirit and matter.

Ultimately, “each soul must know itself to be itself and yet one with God.” (254-114) Here we encounter yet another great paradox of our existence. The oneness of unmanifest and manifest, formlessness and form, being and becoming, Self and God. Two things that seem mutually exclusive, irreconcilable to the three-dimensional mind, and yet they are not. Nowhere is this mystery more enticing than in the implication that only when we are our true Selves we will also be one with God. It is tied to the idea that we are intended to be individual expressions of God—yet we are also developing toward completed consciousness of our oneness with God. One reading addresses the apparent contradiction in this way:

“What then is the purpose of the entity’s activity in the consciousness of mind, matter, spirit in the present? That it, the entity, may KNOW itself to BE itself and part of the Whole; not the Whole but one WITH the whole; and thus retaining its individuality, knowing itself to be itself yet one with the purposes of the First Cause that called it, the entity, into BEING, into the awareness, into the consciousness of itself. That is the purpose, that is the cause of BEING.” (826-11)

Elsewhere in the readings this concept is expressed in terms of knowing ourselves as “I AM, in and with the GREAT I AM.” (262-86) Every one of us is in the process of individualizing, evolving through the medium of experience into unique identities that are simultaneously one with God. Wanting companions and not automatons, God gives us the free will and the means to become what even God cannot predict. (1402-2; 257-113) Apparently, our developmental task carries an element of “Come back and delight me with what you’ve created.”

This idea first struck me during my early years of motherhood. My son was little and loved to play with Legos®. He always wanted

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the latest extravaganza Lego kit, even though he was far too young to follow the complex steps for building the item. Consequently, my husband or I would spend hours painstakingly assembling the kit according to the step-by-step instructions—only to have him take it apart within minutes, it often seemed. Then he would use the pieces to make his own creations. One night when I stopped to make a final bedtime check on him, beside his bed was a little Lego vehicle that he had made. It had five wheels, two windshields, antennas sticking out at jaunty angles, and a little Lego man sitting up on top of it all with a Lego smile on his face. As I looked at that creation, I saw the essence of my son’s quirky little personality in the thing he had made. And from somewhere within me, pure delight bubbled up. It was a deep delight in this representation of my son’s essence. With it came what felt like bedrock truth: *This is how God desires to experience us. Not what we put together with step-by-step instructions, but what we do with our own creativity.*

Life in the earth affords us the opportunity to return to our Maker as a personal, individual Self capable of oneness with the All. This is the “new name” promised in the Book of Revelation to those who overcome (Rev. 2:17). When Cayce was asked about this verse, he said that in each incarnation we have a name which serves as an identifier of a particular point in our development. Ultimately, our choices to align with Creative Forces will give us that new name that is “white, clear, known only to him that hath overcome.” (281-31) Then, we return to our Source not “empty,” as we were at our creation, but “bearing the name.” In the meantime, we can put aside our impatience to end the cycle of incarnations. Instead, we can celebrate and cherish the precious opportunity that each incarnation brings. 🌐