

Reincarnation

When we reach the mid-century mark our philosophy is often directed toward death and our eventual fate. Christian thought involves heaven and gold-paved streets and the overall picture is appealing and comforting. There are those who believe that there is nothing after this life and what you've got is what you get.

This morning I have been thinking of the philosophy we associate with the transmigration of the soul. Reincarnation. This is the belief that after death the soul goes into the body of a lower animal or the

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body of another human being. If a person dies who has lived like an animal then that person will return to earth in the body of an animal. If he has lived a fairly good life he will be reborn as a human being. His character in his last life determines what he will be in his next.

And this becomes very interesting.

If this philosophy is true, if it has merit, then strange things are in store for me. It could be (because of my flighty existence) that I will come back to earth as a bird. And I wouldn't mind this at all. Singing my lungs out each morning could be fun and I certainly wouldn't mind a prolonged mating season. But my greatest thrill would be flying over the heads of people I disliked and bombing them with organic missile.

Yes, I could come back to this life as any number of animals. A bull elephant. A handsome stallion. An old goat.

But I am pretty sure that my character has been good enough for me to return to this life in the body of another human being.

I wouldn't mind coming back as the Sultan of Zanzibar. I can see myself now...sitting on a huge, silk pillow...a beautiful girl rubbing my back with rose oil...and another pretty female plopping grapes in my mouth. I clap my hands and six girls bring me golden wine and Snickers bars. Then, at night, I put on my orange and blue striped pajamas and visit the harem. I say, "I think I will take the girl with the green eyes and black hair. And...uh...the tall one with the freckles on her knee."

Because of my knowledge of agriculture I could come back as a farmer. I picture myself as having a small parcel of land in Oklahoma. And one day, as I am driving croquet wickets in the ground, I strike oil. With the huge sum of money coming to me each week I buy myself a beautiful home. I then hire fifty-three girls to pop grapes in my mouth and bring me Snickers bars.

Ah! My fear of death is beginning to dissolve. The future, if I believe in reincarnation, could be exciting and filled with adventure.

Maybe I will come back as the world's greatest explorer. I will go into the dark jungles of New Guinea and find a lost tribe of frustrated women. While I recline on a bed of ferns a beautiful girl will rub my back with coconut oil while another gorgeous creature pops crocodiles in my mouth.

This, of course, is the impossible dream. I am building my hopes on fantasy and not reality. You see, I have led a pretty decent life. I have erased hatred from my heart and am constantly concerned with the poor, the sick, and the disabled. I like to spend hour upon hour in philosophical thought. To walk the green forest in silent companionship with nature. And it is because of these qualities that I will probably return to this earth in the body of a poor shepherd tending his flock on a steep Tibetan mountain.

And that is why, with great gusto, I am throwing the theory of reincarnation out the window.