

Rama ~ Dr. Frederick Lenz

Live in L.A.

Reincarnation & The Tibetan Rebirth Process

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Tonight we're discussing the sophistications of the rebirth process - looking at reincarnation from many different points of view. Reincarnation is a cyclic process. It's a big circle. We end up where we begin in a sense. Where we begin, though, is not this world. We're not really indigenous to this world, this world being a temporal plane of reality. You might say that we're all light. We're all composed of light, and that there are many dreams that are available in existence, and this is one particular dream that we find ourselves in now, what we call this lifetime, this evening, this moment. Birth and death are stages of transition but life has a continuous transition.

Reincarnation is an apprehension of a movement and the movement occurs in time. Without time, there is no reincarnation. Reincarnation is a reflection of time in this world. There are, of course, many people who do not necessarily believe in reincarnation. Their sight is confined to one particular structural lifetime. They'll be surprised. Pleasantly, I hope.

Reincarnation in the larger sense, of course, is the progression of the soul or the Jiva or the Anatman, if you prefer, through a cycle of lifetimes or incarnations. The idea is, of course, essentially quite simple, and that's that we are all part of the source. We're all one with God, we're eternity, and a part of eternity as in that marvelous poem by Andrew Marvell, "A Drop of Dew," just like a little dewdrop separating itself from the cosmos, we separate ourselves from existence for a while, or seemingly so, and we enter into incarnation, into a temporal plane where there's time and space, the world. We have a body. We pass through hundreds, thousands, perhaps millions of existences. In each lifetime, we're exploring another part of our own self, which is eternity. Our larger body is eternity. Eventually, we return to the source in its undifferentiated form, in its absolute form, which is both form and formlessness, but we exist in that sea all the time. We could think of us all as little boats, and we're taking a great journey across an ocean and we have run an odyssey. Each one of us is on an individual spiritual odyssey, and we have, like Odysseus, many adventures in our return to Penelope, which is the source, I suppose, ultimately.

Reincarnation, though, is not simply a logistical game plan of existence. In other words, reincarnation suggests that we have many lifetimes, that there's a particular progression of that lifetime, which we'll be discussing a little bit later, how it works, I suppose. The different fields of attention that we pass through, the different cycles of birth and death, karma, the sophistications of the rebirth process, but at the same time, reincarnation has a value, in the sense that simply the knowledge of how something structurally works doesn't change anything.

So, for example, we know that one day we're going to die, or at least so it appears. That doesn't really necessarily help us, that knowledge, per se. It's just an objective fact, I suppose, if you still believe in objective facts.

So, the knowledge of reincarnation by itself, or of any belief system, no matter what it is, doesn't necessarily help us. Maybe it makes us feel better, maybe when we're lying in the hospital or at the moment of death, suddenly we feel better, because we feel that in our next life, we might be a tomato or something. Maybe we had an affinity for tomatoes in this life, I don't know. There's a sense of continuance. Life is an endless process. We're eternal. There's nothing to fear, unless, of course, you think that life is not something that you like particularly, in which case it would be terrible to know that you're eternal. There's no escape from living. Death doesn't even end it. So, this knowledge by itself doesn't really mean a lot, and again, it's a structured form, it's an ideation. When we meditate, we enter into the supraconscious. We see that it isn't exactly the way we explain it. There are no words to explain the cycle of existence, but we do our best with words.

But what is of value is what we call the "Tibetan Rebirth Process." The idea is that we are an aggregate; a human being is not one individual self. We're composed of many, many selves, and that these selves are growing and progressing within us. As Walt Whitman said, "I contain multitudes." His perception, as a bit of an American poetical mystic, was that we're not one individual. We're everyone. We're all one. We're all connected, not simply as a theory or an intellectualization where we say, oh yes, I can accept that perhaps our life energy is all connected, but rather we are one. This is a dream, and in the dream, we see multiplicity, we see multitudes of people, of beings crossing the Brooklyn Ferry. One of Whitman's poems where he's just remarking on this continuous movement and progression of humanity; of the birth, the growth, the change, the death, just a marvelous cycle that we see in the diurnal world, the world of change and transition, and yet at the same time, we're eternal.

That's the wonderful mystery is that on the one hand, while there is this part of us, this body and this mind that comes and goes, which will never be the same again, which I suppose makes it all very precious and kind of poignant at times, yet at the same time, life is a cause of continual celebration and that we recombine in new ways, like a perennial plant. We just come up again season after season. The winter of death comes by and spring rolls around, and we pop our heads above the ground and look around and see what a horrible world we've been born into. But nevertheless, it's something that perhaps we can add a little bit of beauty to,

hopefully. The world itself is quite lovely, as you know, it's only people who are the problem. And people aren't actually the problem, they just think they are, which is why they create a problem. Just another passing dream. Buddha called it the Nightmare of the Day.

So, the Tibetan Rebirth Process, then, is the awareness that it is possible for a human being, a sentient being, to go through hundreds or thousands of lifetimes within one incarnation. The Tibetan Book of the Dead, naturally, is a guidebook, which teaches us to some extent about the bardo, that is to say the states that one passes through between death and rebirth. This is referred to as the bardo. But as you examine the more esoteric, as opposed to the exoteric, side of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is really understood only by a few initiates, we come to see that what the Tibetan Book of the Dead is, is a guide for the living, not the dying.

The popular use of the Tibetan Book of the Dead today, I don't know that it's all that popular, but ... The popular use of the Tibetan Book of the Dead is instruction for a person who is dying, and the idea is that if you're properly prepared at the time of death, it's possible to seek a higher birth through a knowledge of the after-death states, the states between birth and death, like Arkansas and Mississippi. I think humor has its place in reincarnation, but I suppose it has to be better.

So, then, the Book of the Dead initially appears to be this guide, sort of like a motor club trip-tic, so that when you die, you didn't say, "Well, Alice where are we going to go now? Let's look here. There's this world got a very good rating, it got three stars. It looks good, but they say you have to make reservations in advance and you have to have meditated for several hundred lifetimes in order to get in. I'm not sure if – now the next one is only two and a half stars," you see, that sort of thing. So the Book of the Dead prepares you for the bardo, but that's not really the purpose of the Book of the Dead. That's the popular use that it's fallen into.

The idea behind the sophistications of the rebirth process is that this is the bardo. The bardo is not a place that you go to at the time of death. The bardo, or the bardos, are the levels of awareness, fields of attention that we pass through, and we're in them right now. The mere fact that you have a body is not discontinuous at all with being in the bardo. That's just an objectification that our mind produces or our thoughts produce. In other words, you're already dead. You're passing through the bardo right now, and the Tibetan Rebirth Process then becomes of interest because the idea is that within one given lifetime, again and again, we

can dissolve our form and reunite it into something higher, something purer, something more conscious of its own eternity, and this is the path of, of course, Tibetan Mysticism and Secret Doctrine. But before we move into that world, let's step back to the overall theory of reincarnation.

The theories of reincarnation abound. Reincarnation has certainly been the most popular philosophy in the history of the world. Certainly more people believe in it than any other single philosophy if we look at it on a world population basis. In the most ancient of civilizations, there was a belief in reincarnation, of course, Egypt, Atlantis, and other places. The systems vary that people have, and I don't think that that should be a problem for us. In other words, we'll read one system of reincarnation where a person says, well, this is the rebirth process, this is what happens. Someone else will say, well, this is what happens, and the two versions will differ a little bit, but as far as I'm concerned, those are like different types of Christianity. They're all suggesting the same thing, but they're different interpretations, but if we look at what they're really trying to say, the message is the same. There are simply no words for all of the complexities of the process as we'll find when we move more into the Tibetan Rebirth Process. So this is kind of an amalgamation in this particular map that I will be presenting to you of a lot of different ways of looking at it, and sometimes it might appear to be contradictory. It usually is. That's what makes it interesting.

As I suggested before, the thought is that we are all part of eternity, that at one time, before time, which still exists, of course, beyond time, there was nothing but luminosity, what we call God or truth, the Dharma, Nirvana, Satori, different names for the same thing, and that this infinite self, the supreme reality, sends forth parts of itself on a journey, on an odyssey, and that it's kind of a spiral. We begin by taking incarnation, some people hold, in very basic form. Some people feel we go through the material world first in the sense we have incarnations in the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, then we progress into the human kingdom. It's a very orderly progression. Reminds me very much of the philosophies in the Renaissance, the great chain of being, where they had this long, long explanation of every aspect of creation, all the way up into God, down to the Devil and everyone in between, was seen in this great chain, this very orderly process.

Other views of reincarnation suggest that some of the initial incarnations we have may be extremely advanced. They may be in other worlds, non-physical worlds. There are countless worlds, countless planes of being and reality. The world we're in now is just a small

fraction as we know if we've watched Carl Sagan of what existence is. Well, beyond Mr. Sagan's wildest dreams, there are other dreams. There are the non-physical worlds beyond the Quasars and just on the other side of the Black Hole, and they're endless. We call them lokas, planes of existence, where there are beings, energies, awarenesses, things that are somewhat like us or our field of attention, things that have nothing to do with us, our opposites. Different dreams.

Many of us have had lifetimes or incarnations in those non-physical worlds before we took our initial incarnation here. Sometimes people will incarnate through a succession of different non-physical worlds, then they might come to this world just for one incarnation, sort of a vacation. It's like going to Disneyland. Others will have their first incarnations here and will go through a very long progression, but the word "progression" is reincarnation. It's like going to school, where we're going from first grade to second grade, and so on, through high school, college, graduate school, perhaps, perhaps teaching or something else. With no thought that one aspect of reality or one level of attainment is better than another. Everything is equal in the eyes of God, yet things are different.

So, on more of a cosmopolitan basis, we find ourselves here in this world in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. We're born in America or another country, but some thing has brought you here tonight, and we find ourselves dealing with a society, with a family perhaps, with a career, with a body, with smog alerts, with the world, and yet reincarnation suggests that just over the horizon is eternity and that all of the things you see here are transitory, they don't last. The only constant in this world is change, and that human misery occurs because of attachment and ego, a sense of individual self. We feel that we exist, that we are something special, and it's the sense of being special that interferes with the flow of light or you could say that it's a flow of light in a different direction, but perhaps a painful one.

Reincarnation shows the way beyond pain and pleasure, which does not suggest that one won't feel pain and pleasure, it's just that there'll be no one there to feel it. Reincarnation is the dissolution of the self. It's like going swimming in the ocean, no one ever comes out, because one has become the ocean or what does emerge is something far different.

The goal of reincarnation, if it has a goal, I'm not sure, but that's the way we like to look at things sometimes is not the sensation of being. Some people feel that Nirvana is the end of existence. There is no end to existence. How can that which doesn't even exist and/or how can – to say it another way, that which only exists end. The purpose of reincarnation is not an

ending. If you see that you are one with all things, both material and spiritual, then how can there be an ending? And after the ending, then what? What's the next movie? After we've seen the first show.

The descriptions of reincarnation suggest that you should look beyond the descriptions. That's their purpose. They're designed to give you a central orientation. Here you are now on the map. It's like one of those roadside stands that they have when you're driving across the country and you pull into the little map area, and you're looking at this big map of whatever state you're in and all the highway networks, then there's one little sign, it says "Here you are now," an arrow points down to it, and that gives you a sense of well being. You've found yourself at last in the big universe out there. Now what's on the other side of the map? What's beyond the edges, so that's the novel, the unknown, but we can't worry about that. Certain things one shouldn't dwell on. So, we'll concern ourselves with the map and that sense of well being that we get when we finally know at last that we're safe. Because we know where we are.

So, that's what reincarnation provides for people, a sense of well being, because you finally know where you are. But don't think about what's beyond it.

Karma is not a receipt of a physical experience, because of what someone has done. There is a popular conception about karma, and that is that as you sow, so shall you reap. That's only true if you're a farmer. If you just buy produce, like I do, at the local store, then you reap what others have sown. Karma has to do with fields of attention, levels of awareness. Each one of us is a composite of energy and this energy seeks a particular level or it is a level. Imagine that you're a circle, you're everything contained within the circle, but the circle is empty, and it contains different things at different times. So, each one of us has a field of attention, that is, your awareness, your consciousness. Your field of attention tells you this is and this is not. Beyond the boundaries of your field of attention you don't know. There's only the thought that there's something beyond the boundaries of the field of attention.

Karma means changing planes of reality or changing fields of attention. There will be perhaps a resulting physical action stemming from the change of these fields of attention. Graphic example. Let's suppose you're in a good mood, and the day is going well, and suddenly, you're on the freeway. You're driving along, and someone cuts you off, okay, and they almost kill you. They just miss. You get very, very angry at that person, and you find that there's a traffic jam ahead. It's rush hour, and as fate would have it, your car is about to roll

up right next to theirs and they have their window down and the radio is blaring, and they're just hanging out, and they don't even realize that they just almost ended your life. Completely oblivious. You pull up next to them. A motorcycle passes between you. That's a liberated soul. Not bound by the finite rules of traffic. Probably an old Zen master. So you pull up next to them, and you roll down your window, and you begin to curse them, using a variety of vocabularies from different incarnations. Then, very satisfied, you pull away, except that something has happened. Your anger has caused you to drop into a lower field of attention. Now most people won't be aware of this, because most people live where they are. That is to say their field of attention is limited to the moment, and they immediately forget where they've been.

If you go to the dentist, and you're sitting in the chair and the dentist is probing away, and the dentist touches a nerve. Immediately, your body contracts with pain, and for that moment, it's a terrible, terrible experience. Then, you leave the dentist's office, and no matter how intense the experience was, it's forgotten in the evening's activities. Most people live in the moment. What we're trying to do is live outside of the moment. In the moment, there's very little awareness.

So our friend who was in the car will not really be aware that they changed planes of attention, because all they'll see is what's in front of them, and a kind of marvelous Maya occurs when we change planes of attention. We forget where we were. It's winter in California and it's raining. It's rained for three or four days in a row, and as you sit looking outside of your window, you feel that it's always rained. The rain is forever. We've had 250 days of continuous sunshine, and now in four days, it seems like it's been always, always raining. And it has always been raining, actually, in the world where it rains, because there is no time. But within the structure of time, it hasn't been raining only for a few days. So, maybe you're right after all. Anyway.

Our friend in the car, who has probably made it a few exits further down the freeway by this time, is angry and doesn't feel as well and has changed planes of attention. That's karma. Karma means that your intent produces a resulting change in your conscious awareness. Karma doesn't mean because you do something nice for someone, you give someone a gift, that two days later or in another lifetime, someone is going to come and give you a gift. It has nothing to do with it. Karma simply means that whatever type of energy you project, or you allow to pass through your being, you will become for a period of time. So, those who hate,

those who are violent in nature, live in a world of hate and fear and violence inside themselves, inside their minds, inside their awareness. Those who love and who have a sense of purity live in a very luminous band of awareness.

If you'd like to think of it in a linear way, just as an example, it's not necessarily this way, just imagine a great chain of being again where we have levels, the ocean and down at the bottom of the ocean, there's very little light, hundreds of fathoms down, then as we come up, if we segment it, we'll find that maybe 50 fathoms up, there's more light, 50 fathoms up, there's more light. Eventually, there's a great deal of light, and finally, we break through the surface into the air itself. So, these are planes of attention, levels of awareness.

A human being will normally change planes of attention many times a day, but they're very, very minor changes. When you're born into a particular lifetime, your being is somewhat fluid from about age 1 to about age 4. You start to think, really. It's a very viscous state of awareness. But then, as we're conditioned by the world and society, by our families, by our language, by the vibratory fields of energy that are generated by the beings and the world that we're in, we begin to harden into a form and our attention fixes at a particular level, which of course, is also an outgrowth of our past life activities.

So, we stratify and within that point, within that frame of reference, a person will change, so we'll have a high water mark and a low water mark. The high water mark is what we call being very happy, the happiest you can be or you have ever been. That's the high water mark on your scale of consciousness, be that in a happy jovial sense or in just a very placid, deep sense, if I can use the word "happy" in a wider spectrum of ways. On the other side, of course, we have the darkest, deepest depression, the greatest hate, the anger, the frustration, when we feel absolutely miserable and within those two points, we will oscillate throughout our lifetime and most people will never go further than their happiest point from childhood or lower than their deepest depression from adolescence. And if they do, it does tend to be a rather downward movement or motion.

When we meditate, what we do is change the spectrum, whether that meditation is an active meditation or a passive meditation. Passive meditation, which is not particularly passive, meaning sitting and meditating, stopping all thought or slowing them down and letting go of the description of this world that you now have and going back to your original form, what in Zen they call the original face. Active meditation is selfless giving, when we work for the welfare of others for humanity or for our friends, family, ourselves, whatever it may be, but

without seeking a return on our investment, just for the joy of giving. These are the two forms of meditation that one can practice.

So, when we meditate and of course, we go through the Tibetan Rebirth Process, what we do is we change levels of attention radically. In a particular lifetime, we fixate it from age 4 to age 14, the personality hardens and we'll have that small range that we'll go back and forth in. We may become more knowledgeable. We may become successful. We may become powerful. We'll have a variety of experiences in life, but those really do not necessarily extend the basic emotional tonal range that we have and beyond the emotional tonal range, our conscious awareness.

The Tibetan Rebirth Process, which is ultimately meditation, in variant forms, means that while we were in the ocean and we were going up and down in our little bathysphere, our little submarine, and we picked a certain level, 500 fathoms, and now we're going to alternate between 500 and 600 fathoms all our life, that's what we'll do. It means that we're going to change that, we're going to step outside the structured self and dissolve that and actually take on an entirely new form. We're going to move to a completely different level, a higher plane of being, where they'll be much more light. It is also possible to move in the other direction, to go downward, and drop 200 fathoms and then just stay in a small range there. Nirvana, of course, is beyond any ranges or descriptions, what we call Self Realization. It means that one exists within all ranges, and at the same time is unaffected by them.

The Tibetan Rebirth Process involves what we call the Caretaker Personality. Now, again, in a short menu form, okay, on our screen here, the Tibetan Rebirth Process is the microcosm. Reincarnation is the macrocosm. Reincarnation is this long, involved process where we're dancing our way through thousands of lifetimes; in each lifetime, moving to a higher level of attention as in school, one step at a time until finally one day we reach a point where we have absolute knowledge or awareness. We start from the darker side, you might say, and move into absolute light, although we started in absolute light. It's a circle, we come back to where we were.

The Tibetan Rebirth Process is instead of taking thousands of lifetimes to do this, we'll do it in a few. We'll have all those experiences that we could have had in many lifetimes in a few. We'll speed the process up. It's very, very intensive. The idea being that if we speed it up, we will not eventually come to an end, but we will become endless and beginningless. We'll move beyond the confines of life and death, which does not preclude reincarnation. It just

means that we will step beyond what being human is and the limitations of being human and become limitless.

In one program, it'll take you 18 years to finish your education, in another one year. In the Tibetan Rebirth Process, we use and develop what we call the Caretaker Personality. The idea is that we really aren't a person, we just think we are. We think we're people because we've been told we're people. Since the advent of our existence in this world, we've been told that we're a person and we've been typed. If you were a little boy, you were given a blue blanket, and if you were a little girl, you were given a pink blanket. We were sexed, and someone said this is what a little girl can do and cannot do. They gave us a description as they did for a little boy, and they tell us this is what a man can do and this is what a woman can do. That's not necessarily true at all, but we tend to believe it, and not look beyond the parameters of our education. Self discovery is validation, seeking validation. It means that we're looking ourselves and not discounting what we've been told, but under the theory of the scientific method that one can repeat and experiment and get the same results, we're experimenting with our awareness and seeing if what we were told is true and if not, seeing what is true.

So, we don't really have one particular personality. That is to say, we don't have to be limited to it. You may be. You may be in a very structured personality right now. It's like living in a house, and you're just living in one house, and you may feel that you have to live in that house all your life, and when you started out as a little boy or girl, that house was very small, it was one room. Gradually, you've expanded, and you've added rooms as time has gone on. There have been new aspects to the personality, but essentially the structure hasn't changed all that much. It just has gotten a little bigger, and there's just more to keep clean, and the taxes have probably increased.

In the Tibetan Rebirth Process, we sell the house straight away, and then we begin to explore other houses, and we live in other houses for a period of time, but we don't feel that we are the house we live in. We feel that we are awareness, we are the thin air. We're eternity, and we can take any form, and we begin to explore different forms. Now, naturally, in order to do this, takes a great deal of personal power. You're fixated in a striated world, in a limited field of attention, and what you're trying to do is jump out of it. You've lived so long in one place that you've forgotten that you could live any place. You have great reasons for staying there and those reasons defeat you, because the house is not too expansive. It doesn't have that much light, not too many windows, hard to grow plants.

So, we begin to shop around, but in order to do that, we have to realize that we are free, and that's what meditation is for. When we meditate, we come to see that we're not a particular person in the way that we think of a person. We're not a personality. We have one, but it's like clothing, we can change it. The same is true with the body. So, in reincarnation then, we change bodies from lifetime to lifetime, but the aggregate of ourself really stays the same. It recombines, but it stays the same, and we find ourselves in another lifetime.

In the Tibetan Rebirth Process, we're not so much concerned with changing physical bodies but with changing personality structures in fields of awareness, and in order to do this we need not die physically. Rather, what we do is meditate and find that we are light. We are not a reflection of this world. We see ourselves in terms of this world and we're not the world at all. As we meditate, we see that we have attachments. The reason that we stay in one house, even though it's not a very nice one is because we're attached to it. So we see that the attachments are really not helpful and we let go of them, and we see that eventually we would die anyway and the house would be gone, so why be attached to it? Why not let go of it now? Because when we're attached to the house, we always live in fear, fear that it would burn down, fear that someone will happen to it. We identify with it. We think of ourselves as the house. But we're not. We're vast, we're infinite. We're eternal awareness, eternal joy. We're not limited by the body or the structured personality.

So, the person who practices the Tibetan Rebirth Process within a given lifetime sees that all lifetimes exist within a given lifetime, and what the individual does is to assess themselves, to meditate, to step outside of the house for a while and just see what that's like, that's meditation. We go up in the sky. It's amazing, we can be wrapped in our little world with our problems, our decisions, our careers, our relationships, all of the things that matter to us, that make us happy and unhappy, our private heavens and hells, and then we'll go to San Francisco or Denver. We'll get in an airplane, and we'll go up above Los Angeles, and we'll look down, and we'll look at all these millions of little houses and buildings, and in each one, there's a person who's chained to it. Living out their life of despair and frustration and transitory joy. Notice that there are two. You've got the despair and the frustration, only one on the other, the transitory joy, and even that's transitory. Seems to be weighted in one direction.

So, we go up in the plane and we look out the window, and suddenly our problems don't seem as big, because we realize that there are lots of other people who are miserable too.

They all have mortgages or rent payments or whatever it is, and they're all going to die. It's sad. Maybe it's good. It'd be awful crowded in this world if we all lived forever.

Things are only what you make them. Nothing has a value until you assign it a value. The Ferrari is parked outside. A person doesn't care about cars. They walk by it, they don't notice. Someone's wanted a Ferrari all their lives. They've thought about it, grown up reading Car & Driver magazine. When they walk by the Ferrari, immediately images come to their mind. They see themselves driving it, the wind in their hair, sitting next to that perfect person. It's a Hallmark card. The tape player is blaring. So, when they walk by that Ferrari, they stop and they look at it. They think about perhaps touching it, but they're not sure because there may be a very profound alarm system. The other person didn't notice. We assign the values. That's what the Caretaker Personalities are all about, assigning values and creating a structure within ourselves.

When you meditate very well, and stop all thought, the world dissolves. This world goes away, time goes away, space goes away, life and death go away. You become eternal existence itself, formless, conscious, there are no words for it, just arrows that point in that direction.

But in the world, we do need a personal form. It is necessary to dress when you go to work, unless you work in a nudist camp. It's necessary when you interact with the world to have a personality structure, nothing wrong with it. You don't have to kill the personality in order to attain Enlightenment. Well, actually you do, yes, very true. Actually, a lot of times, but you get used to it.

The idea is that your personality was given to you, it was created and you had no choice in the matter, it was structured for you by your parents or whoever was around you in basically the first seven years of your life. It was then modified by educational systems, advertising, cultural thoughts, languages and so on. You didn't have a lot to do with it. No one asked you at three what kind of Caretaker Personality you wanted for the rest of your incarnation, of course, unless you grew up in the Himalayas.

So what you're doing is deciding yourself. We're going to go shopping for cars. We're going to go look at the Chevys, the Fords, the Maseratis. We're going to see which one seems appropriate for us at this time, because we've been driving the old clunker for a while and it's

starting to rattle, and we just know that something's going to go wrong with it soon, if it hasn't already. So, we're shopping for a new self.

Types of Caretaker Personalities. Well, first we have to dissolve the old one, but sometimes we don't want to dissolve the old one until we know what we're going to. You see, that's the safe method, people do that in relationships. They're not going to give up the person they're with until they find the next one. So, we'll go shopping. Well, what are some of the Caretaker Personalities? Well, let's think of them. A good one, one that I like that's very healthy is the student. The student is one who is always growing and learning. There's not a sense of superiority, but of progression and joy in learning, eagerness, enthusiasm. Another Caretaker Personality, of course, is the warrior. The warrior is the person who is fighting their way through life, not in a negative sense, but in the sense that they lead a warrior's life, they lead a very tight life. It's very circumspect. There's power in it. There's joy and efficiency and abandon in their actions. Their lives are not sloppy. Their thoughts are not sloppy. Their emotions are not sloppy. The child, having a sense of awe and wonder, looking at life as a child does. Different Caretaker Personalities that we put on and take off as the occasion seems fit.

What I'm suggesting is that you can lead your whole life another way, that you don't have to be the person that you are, because you're not anyway. You just think you are, that you are far beyond personality, but you have become locked into a particular personality structure, and that you can change personalities, not just for a period of time, in terms of months or years, but sometimes you can go through many personality structures in a day. If you're a nurse, and you go to work, you put on one outfit. At home, you may be relaxing in your casual clothes, then you might out to dinner, you might go skiing, swimming, you'll change your clothes accordingly, rather than try and wear one thing to all places. So, you can modify and change the personality structure in advanced meditation to suit the occasion, but of course, in the context of the Tibetan Rebirth Process, we're not simply modifying it for social occasions, but we're continually moving to an upgraded structure of being. We're becoming more conscious of our own luminosity, of what we really are, which is eternity. We're overcoming fear, anger, jealousy, hostility, anxiety, hate, things like that, things that limit us and bind us to this or any world. We're becoming cosmopolitan beings who flow through existence, both in timelessness and time.

How do we do it, how do we break through the confines of our structure of our life? How do we change levels of attention? This is the subject matter of self-discovery. Self-discovery is a very, very vast thing. There are many paths in self-discovery. Many ways, many languages that are spoken. But ultimately, they all say the same thing, and that's silence. Meditation is the way that we change levels of attention. When we meditate we bring a power, an energy, a force from within ourselves into our current awareness field. It's also the way that we bring our past lives out.

There are some popular methods right now of past life discovery, and they're neither good nor bad, I suppose, it depends how they work for you. Some people use hypnotic regression to go back and see their past lives. Some use dreaming. There are many different methods. As far as I'm concerned, it's really doesn't much matter what you did in a past life. It's a movie that's already been shown, sometimes it's fun to see the movie again, but we've already played that role. We acted in that particular film, and it's fun to move onto a new challenge, but it is nice if we can bring forward the experience that we gained in the last movie that we acted in. In other words, if we developed our craft of acting before, and we can bring that knowledge with us to our next project, we'll do better.

So, it is valuable then in my estimation to bring forward the powers that we've developed in our past lives. You may have had a thousand lifetimes. You may have practiced self-discovery before. You may have been in the ancient Egyptian cycle, Atlantis, other worlds, where you were much more developed than you are now, in terms of your field of attention, your spiritual powers. The way we bring those back is threefold, or four, actually.

One, of course, is just meditating.

Two is encountering a powerful individual who has the ability to project us into those fields of attention, what we call an enlightened person, a spiritual teacher or something like that.

Three is by going to locations, where in past lives, we have been and stored power, places of power that are places of power on an individual level, not simply revisiting where we lived in another life, but if in another life you practiced the mystical arts, and you were aware that one can store power, and you did, you can go back to those places in this lifetime, and draw that power back, and when you go, you'll change. You will go one person and come back another. After a while, there are many selves inside you. All the different voices from all the

different lifetimes, not in terms of personality or thought, but awarenesses. They blend and merge, because all of them are us. All the people, all the things, all the beings we've been are still there, because ultimately everything exists forever. There is no time in the sense that once time has marched on, that which is behind it dissolves. Every moment exists forever. All incarnations occur simultaneously. That is to say everything goes on all the time. It's like reruns of "The Tonight Show." It's on videotape somewhere, and you may see it again. But what is necessary since we've already seen it, unless you're just fond of it, is to become aware of what's happening now, the live show, or so it appears, or to go beyond it all.

The fourth way, of course, is bringing back the awareness from past lives, aside from meditating, being with a person who is able to generate strong fields of attention and causing us to become conscious, not simply again of where we've been or what we did, but to bring back that which we really are or of going to a location where we've stored power which is not something anyone is – everyone has necessarily done, that's only if you practiced advanced mystical arts in other lives. It's luck. It just happens sometimes, there's no reason, or if there is, we sure can't put it into words. Just one day, you're walking along and you remember. You change for no reason. It just happens.

So, then let's consider a little bit how we invoke that which we are. Under the assumption that there's a lot of money for you to inherit, if you can just remember what your name is, and you can go and say, hey, my name is so and so and they'll give it to you. You see, there's all this marvelous stuff coming to you. Now, we're not assuming that you have all this terrible karma coming. That's kind of like hate mail. But that you're interested in exploring your infiniteness, that's the *raison d'être* of your life.

Then it's necessary for you to become a student of two things – that which is off the map and that which is on the map. Going back to our cross country drive, which we're all on, I think, and we found that map where's a little arrow pointing and saying, "You are here." Well, we have to explore everything here because everything is contained in everything and nothing is contained in everything and everything is contained in nothing. On the other side of the map, beyond the parameter, well that's existence too, but it doesn't exactly work in the same way. One is the known, one is the unknown. Not known in the sense that it's someplace we've been and we've explored before, but known in the sense that it's comprehensible to our reason, our internal software. That which lies beyond the known, we call mysticism. Mysticism is that exploration of various fields of attention, finding out that we're more than just a human being,

that we're limitless awareness, things that there are no words for, experiencing that, having direct experiences where you dissolve in light and you become the Dharma. You exist simultaneously on thousands of levels of attention, and you still have the same shoe size.

So, those are our two fields of awareness that we're dealing with, and they have very different languages and very different methods. The two are ultimately one, but that's confusing at the beginning. I think it's better to think of them as two to start out with, it's easier. In other words, simply because the map stops at a certain point on this big billboard where they're saying, "You are here," doesn't mean it really stops. Everything keeps going, but we've segmented it, because we really don't want to look at a map of all the universes and quasars and other dimensions and lokas and aspects of Nirvana. It's just enough to deal with the map. That's all we need right now to get to where we're going. Why worry about celestial existence? But then there are times when we become very concerned with that, and that's when, of course, we dissolve into the other planes of attention and we become our other selves. We see that we are a construct of luminous awareness and that that can change when we open ourselves up to the forces of existence in a specific way, which is meditation and self-discovery and that's when the fun really begins. So, we deal with both. We deal, in other words, with the pragmatic physical world – career, family, friends, and mostly with the internal software, with our own ideas, our thoughts, our concepts, our attachments, our opportunities.

Now, on the other side, we have that world of mysticism, which is not reasonable or logical, which is existence, countless worlds, planes of reality, beings, forms, it lies just over the horizon and we go over the horizon, we go through the doorway into eternity, and then we come back again. We go back and forth countless times. That's what an advanced spiritual person does. They're not limited to this body or this world anymore. They don't have to wait for death to be liberated. We call them Jivan Mukta – liberated while living, the guy on the motorcycle who doesn't have to get stuck in traffic.

I'd like to drop back to karma for a moment, if I can. Some people use the term in a negative sense. When they say "oh, that's my karma." You know, they just had a car accident, they are being audited by the IRS. There's always a sense of fear runs through the audience whenever you say that one. Something that they consider bad happens, and they say that's my karma, and karma in America has gotten this sense of something bad that happens to you and that's not at all. Karma is the way out. Karma is opportunity. Karma is the ability to change fields and planes of awareness. The idea is that certainly there's certain things you cannot

control. Okay, you're here in this life now. You weigh X pounds, you make X dollars a year, some people like you, some people don't. And let's say that there's certain circumstances that are out of our control. We may be able to modify them eventually, but right now, they're out of our control. It's going to rain, let's say. Now, while we can't ultimately stop the rain until you become very advanced with the Siddhis. But most people can't stop the rain. What you can do is be happy in it or be very sad in it. You do have that control, that's the ability of a perceiver.

So, then one study is how to be happy in all situations, happy, not meaning running around in a mindless euphoria, giggling, you know, at the misfortunes of others. That's not what I mean at all. Happy meaning being very grounded and having a luminous awareness, being in the world, but not exactly of it, not limited by it, so if it rains, that's nice. If it's sunny, that's wonderful. Seeing beauty in everything, that's what spiritual awareness gives us. As we clear ourselves out, as we rewrite the internal software, that's the Caretaker Personalities. We move to higher and higher forms of attention. There's more light in our being, or let's just say we're more aware of what there really is. The various selves from our past lives come out, the strengths, the powers. We also can see the limitations that we've gone through and avoid them, retrospective knowledge. I made a mistake, it wasn't pleasant, I'm not going to make the same mistake, I'll go onto a new one. This is a learning process.

Then, of course, all that's great, we put the world in perfect order, we understand everything, but we're still not satisfied as beings, because we are eternity. While it's wonderful to have the limited and perfect order, we want the limitless, we want Nirvana, we want Enlightenment. Our heart, our being wants to be free, to be what we really are. That's what reincarnation is for, to do both, to be in the finite in the world, and gradually over a succession of incarnations, to have different experiences and perfect ourselves, get a great education, and at the same time, to go back home. I think that was E.T.'s central appeal, personally. E.T. is this metaphorical journey, this strange Odysseus from another world, who just wants to go home. Obviously, home must've been better. And we're all trying to get home, and it's a long, long journey, but the journey is home. Home is not a defined place. Nirvana is not a location, there's no zip code, unless it's 00000.

Infinite awareness is everything. This is the bardo. All possibilities are open to you right now. You can move into any field of attention, once you know how, and once you've cleared up a few old bills, and learned to meditate perfectly and developed humility and purity through selfless giving and caring about the welfare of others more than your own welfare.

Then, you're at the core of life, as Lao Tzu would say. You've understood that the purpose of life is not to attain Enlightenment for ourselves, but to be of some service to others without a sense of inflated self-importance or that we're ultimately necessary, and if Enlightenment is a useful experience, if in some way, as we developed through our incarnations or within an incarnation, if you progress, you can do more. If you have more money, you can be selfish with it, or you can help others out.

So, then, karma is this opportunity. It says that yes, certain things in life are fated, are destined, but yet within that framework, there is freedom. This is what the I Ching is about, freedom within limitations, that we have both. You are on this planet, at least at the moment, for a while anyway, or so it appears in this dream, but there is something that you can do. You can be active. You can change things. You can move to higher levels of attention. You can understand that which is truth, that which is right, and come to know your essence.

So, that's why I find reincarnation ultimately the most happy philosophy because it suggests not that we're fated prisoners in some bizarre process that was cooked up in some other world in a think tank. You see, when they were figuring out to run the universe, and these guys were sitting around, and they said, "Well, you know, let's give them a million lifetimes, and run 'em ragged. You know. Why just give 'em one? What's time anyway?"

That reincarnation is a process whereby we can become conscious and the trick is to do it before you die, not after you die, because after you die, you'll be dead, and then you'll just be reborn again, and you'll forget. You have to go back to the starting point, and you don't get to collect the two hundred bucks, you see. So, reincarnation suggests that you are able to change your destiny, that destiny is just the way you see life, and that the choices you make, you do your best with, but you actually have many more choices available to you than you realize, but within the structured self that you now have, you only see, "Well, I can do this or I can do this." So, to step outside of that and to become something other, to go beyond the limitations of what we call being human and at the same time, to enjoy the things in humanness that are enjoyable. That's what this study is for, that's what the knowledge of reincarnation gives you, not simply a map and you are here and this is where you're going, but that the journey itself is wonderful and that you can use karma, intent, to do anything, that what you project to others is not what you'll get back from them. That's not true, you can love others and they can hate you. Look at Mr. Gandhi who lives a life of service for others and he gets shot for it. You see, the world is not necessarily kind to you just because you're a nice person. Quite the contrary,

usually. But what it does suggest is that every time you think a positive thought, you give of yourself, you meditate, increase your level of awareness, that you will become happier, more complete, more aware, and thus can do more for others or just enjoy being. But to do that, you have to change.

The parable of the Coyote and the Road Runner saves us at this point. You all know the Coyote and the Road Runner cartoons, with the little Road Runner who runs around, beep-beeping, and as Coyote, old Wily Coyote is always trying to catch him. It's one of these karmic relationships that they have. Clearly, they've been doing this for many lifetimes. Probably, they switch from lifetime to lifetime. So, in this lifetime, they reincarnate in the cartoon world, which is quite a world to end up in. Many possibilities, many variables. And in the cartoon world, of course, there are certain operable laws, as there are in any world. As long as it's a world, it has laws. Okay. Why, I don't know, it's just the way it is. In Nirvana, there are no laws.

So, in the cartoon world, the laws are very simple. Coyote does not catch Road Runner, or even if he grabs him, somehow that Road Runner's going to get away, because otherwise, there'll be no cartoon. Once the Coyote gets the Road Runner and eats him, that's it. Then we have the Coyote hour. So, the Road Runner can't be caught. Now, why can't the Coyote catch the Road Runner? Well, it's a Zen question, I suppose. It's because he's a Coyote, because under the definition of Coyote in that structured cartoon world, Coyote does not catch Road Runner. Can't do it. Road Runner is always going to outwit him. Now, the Road Runner is basically a brainless critter. That's his strength. He doesn't know anything. He just runs around all the time. And he's this happy little thing. This Coyote is an intellectual, he reads Hegel at lunch. This is a smart Coyote, see. I mean, that's what it says - if you've ever read the cartoons, it says, "Wily Coyote, Genius" on his mailbox. This is one smart Coyote. He's a got a Ph.D. Okay.

So, what this Coyote is trying to always do is figure out how to catch the Road Runner, and impeccability for the Coyote is trying to catch the Road Runner as best as he can, and not being discouraged, knowing that he'll never catch him, because it doesn't matter, because in that world, it's always happening. Keats wrote a poem, and it's about some dancers on a Grecian urn. I think it was Keats, it might've been Shelly. But Ode on a Grecian Urn, and on the urn, it's one of these long romantic poems, where they're sitting around, languishing, which they liked to do in that period, and they're the dancers that are on this urn, and he's saying well, it's so great because here they are, and it's on this urn, on this big pot, there are these

painted figures, and the guy is chasing the girl, you see, and she's sort of dancing away, and he's saying, how great that he'll never catch her, because they'll always be happy this way. Once he catches her, they'll move to the suburbs, you see. And they'll get a Kenmore washing machine and probably get talked into the service contract. "It's a good deal, sir, you know, if we have to come out time, it'll cost you a thousand dollars, whereas for \$40 here" – so he says, you know the romantics love that stuff, they love to sort of look at the life that way, their aesthetic modality, and he's saying this is great, they're always going to be happy on this vase, not like us. That's always the understatement, you know, in all the romantic poems.

So, that's the creation of the Coyote and the Road Runner. It's in a new form. Coyote is happy trying to get that Road Runner and he never gives up. How could the Coyote catch the Road Runner if he wasn't a Coyote? He has to change. So, if he took a quick course in the Tibetan Rebirth Process, he could change forms and no longer be a Coyote, and then he could grab that Road Runner, but maybe in the process, he'd learn to be a nice guy and leave the Road Runner alone. Then, the Road Runner would chase him. That's karma.

And, of course, I've always held that the Coyote is a Siddhi master. You know, the Siddhis, these are the powers, the ability to project your body to different locations, to manifest things, to walk on yogurt, to do different things like that. These are the Siddhis, to reconstruct your body, things like that, and the Coyote is the Siddhi master because whenever anything bad happens to him, if he gets blown apart, in the next scene, he's back together. So, clearly, he's a master at many, many occult powers, but in spite of these occult powers, he doesn't have what the Road Runner has, which is Enlightenment. He's mindless. Idiot Road Runner running around, but then again what would the Road Runner do if the Coyote didn't exist? Be happy probably.

So, the Tibetan Rebirth Process essentially is the transition from the human phase into the suprahuman. It's the transition that you will make when you go beyond the human fields of attention into the supraconscious and move through the various stages of Enlightenment and it's possible to do that within a given lifetime. Naturally, one would have had many lifetimes of advanced spiritual practice before that lifetime in which you made the final transit from the human world to Enlightenment. It won't happen in a first birth certainly, but after a number of lifetimes where you've practiced meditation and self-discovery and you've strengthened your field of attention, you've worn off your rough edges through service to others, you've learned to be kind and loving and so on. Then, it's possible within a given lifetime, through meditation,

through working with an enlightened person, going to places of power, pilgrimage, and with a little bit of luck or grace, whichever you prefer, to do something uncommon in existence, and that's to go off the map. What's out there? Who knows, it can't be described, but that's the journey of existence.

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