

Yes, You Have Lived Before!

By John Lloyd

Some ten years ago a religious fundamentalist group in Egypt massacred a party of some 60 Swiss tourists. At about the same time my daughter was in Azerbaijan showing the families of one religious grouping, who had all lost their men folk to another religious grouping, how to grow food. Some 20 years ago my son spent a year in the Balkans to prevent one religious group imposing itself upon another. Some 40 years ago, serving in a Royal Marines Commando unit, I spent 2 uncomfortable months in Belfast preventing one religious group trying to destroy the lives and homes of another religious group. And so it goes on today, and on, and on. Lots of people, all convinced they are right, and determined to impress their convictions on other people and yet they must be wrong, for surely any belief system that has to be imposed with so much force must be peddling the wrong message.

My curiosity was aroused. It seemed that there was a salient weakness in the cultures of mankind that required the surrender of responsibility to some external authority. This Authority is then delegated to enthusiastic individuals who then consider themselves justified in enforcing *their* interpretations of the Authority, however ill defined it may be, upon their fellows. To my mind this was an absorbing mystery that required exploration but to do this meant that a load of assumptions and presumptions that had been injected since childhood needed examination. Parents, preachers and teachers had all stamped the shapes of their opinions and convictions upon the growing child, and these all needed to be filtered and closely examined. It was necessary that I shed all forms of mind-patterns and belief systems, and set off to explore territory that had not only been ignored by my society but was mostly denied by it as well. Anything I discovered had to be accepted at face value until I had proved it false, whereas my society with its scientific emphasis required the exact opposite; anything new did not exist unless it was *proved* to exist. Through a series of experiments and explorations I slowly discovered that I was breaking into an unexplored world, the world of, what Carl Jung called, The Unconscious; Not the mind of the neuro-scientist, nor the mind of the psychologist (with one or two brilliant exceptions) but the world of the Spirit-mind or, more romantically perhaps, the Soul.

At first it seemed that my discoveries could be classified in two parts, 'Wow!' parts, and those that pointed on to something perhaps a bit more meaningful. But in time I began to find out that even the Wow! parts served their purpose for they showed that there lay something beyond mankind's reasoning; that there were other horizons which were not necessarily lying in the direction of my path, but at least *seemed* to point somewhere. Among these I included UFOs and Dowsing, and various forms of esoteric healing. My path lead through these and on to an apparently intellectual area that included the Gnostic Gospels, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Carl Gustav Jung and his ilk. But, dear reader, fear not! I shall not tarry long in such academic quarters except to stress that they taught me to examine certain belief systems of my childhood and, where necessary, exorcise them so that I could take on board that which I had found out for myself.

As I progressed along my path I noticed that I was becoming very slowly more

sensitive in certain directions. My dream life started to liven up, and it seemed that books I picked up, and people I met were all playing an almost deliberate part in moving me onward until, in my 50th year I was, so to speak, stopped in my tracks by a series of violent and frighteningly dark visitations; a succession of black religious nightmares, each one worse than its predecessor, and each one concerned with a nameless terror enveloping me with a menace that no hysterical Christian prayers could turn aside. I was startled awake into a voiceless scream. As time went on, the dreams became so bad that I was afraid to go to sleep, and greeted each bedtime with dread.

I was quite palpably into territory that no orthodox practitioner could treat except with drugs and ignorance. By this time I had got to know quite a number of people who had knowledge and wisdom way ahead of my own scanty ration, and it was interesting that as the pace of my education (education?) picked up there seemed to be always just the right sort of person around who could help me. And so I found myself visiting a clairvoyant, who told me several things that did not particularly impress me, one or two things that did impress me, and who ended the session saying; "You have lived many, many lives, do you know that?" Well, I didn't, but I had to admit that the thought had crossed my mind. "You should see a regression hypnotist to help you go back", she said, and so I did.

The time had come for the biting of bullets. Excited and nervous I signed on, and in no time found myself sitting comfortably in a chair, facing a young lady called Helen. She explained quite firmly that anything that happened would happen not because she or I wanted it to happen, but because *I* needed it to happen. I had come there for a purpose and my unconscious self (ha! Jung again) would determine the best way to redeem that purpose. All that would happen would be that she would relax me to a state in which I could access my 'inner' or 'unconscious' Self, that part of me which, according to Jung was autonomous and immortal.

A short countdown, and suddenly I was aware that I was holding my head in a strange posture, with my hands stretched out before me. I was puzzled at first, and then with a wail of dismay, realised that I could not see, that I had been deliberately blinded and that I was consumed not only with pain and grief, but also a sensation of intense loneliness. I was a young priest. I had been tortured, and my crime was heresy. Then something very interesting happened. So great was my apparent distress that Helen started to bring me out of the 'trance' state. But I stopped her. There was, I told her firmly, "another lesson to come." This shows with remarkable certainty that myself, the subject, was ultimately the controller of the situation, not the hypnotist, and that within myself there was a core of knowledge that knew exactly what required to be done. This core, I later concluded, was what Jung called the Unconscious and was that part of us with which most of us sever communication at an early age. Culturally speaking we severed the lines many tens of thousands of years ago; we call it the Fall of Man. In most societies today, the damage to the individual is perpetuated by our elders and betters who, in their genuine desire to help the growing child, impose *their* truth, one that denies our own divinity.

I hasten to remind my reader, who may otherwise be exploding at my presumption, that I had merely rediscovered a truth voiced by such pillars of wisdom as Socrates,

Jesus, Giordano Bruno, and hundreds of others who were all executed for voicing it - 'We are all gods'.

It would bore the reader were I to go over my experiences of the next ten years, how each experiment, each meditation, each healing, each awakened memory led me to the next milestone; so for the time being I will beg pardons and run briefly over part of the story that was slowly revealed to me, indeed is still being revealed. I would stress that at no time did I rely on other peoples' attempts to read my past for I was, as I stated at the beginning, only interested in finding out for myself without relying on the second hand beliefs of other people. Though occasionally a medium would mention perhaps some incident of the past, I discounted the revelation unless I had personal experiences to back it up, and I must say this happened more often than not. The more experience I gained, the more I found myself surrounded by those who also had past lives to recount. It became clear to me that, in my part of the world at least, there were many people who had memories beyond this present life. In my second profession, as a primary teacher, I came to suspect that quite a few children come into this life bearing memories of previous existences.

Here is my story of that particular life as far as I can piece it together.

Somewhere around 1240 I was a woman priest in the South of France, living among the lower slopes of the Pyrenees. I was 'good Christian' or Heretic, what we call today a Cathar. I was large and buxom with everything sticking out in front, if you see what I mean. My hips were so broad that my hands rested easily upon them, and I often stood in that position with my feet apart, dressed in a russet robe with a thinnish leather belt. I was very content at first for we Heretics had the Knowledge, passed down from certain early Christian sects (this Knowledge, or Gnosis as it was then called) incidentally included healing skills, and an acceptance of reincarnation). I looked on the people in the villages below me, hidden among verdant pastures and woodlands, as 'my' people. I was if you like a little smug, but confident that the country was peaceful and settled. Later (actually there is no such thing as 'time' when in trance and 'dream' world) I became aware that some of the villages were burning, and I knew then that the Pope's armies (the crusade of Pope Innocent 3rd) had arrived and were putting the countryside to waste. They were wasting and killing every village, and in due course they captured me. I was tried as a Heretic, and condemned to burn. The condemnation did not worry me overmuch as I had committed myself to God as soon as the verdict was announced, and as far as I was concerned I was already dead. Our priestly training (we were called 'parfaits') in deep meditation and healing had prepared us for this moment. When they burned me I did not suffer very much but had trouble breathing because of the smoke. I soon lifted out of my body and as I looked back I could see my blackened corpse with the white teeth showing, still tied to the stake. I felt no anger at the priests of the Inquisition but considered them to be foolish and unintelligent men, motivated by ignorance and love of power. I had already determined that I would return, as did all my colleagues when faced with similar situations.

During this 'regression' I was dismayed to discover that I returned again only some 40 or 50 years after my death. I have to accept that my decision to return then was for some purpose, but it needs to be understood that my 'unconscious' or 'higher' self, that part of me which always knows what it is doing, would have made the decision.

The dismay was expressed by my conscious self, which is motivated by desire. I discovered that I had returned in memory to a time when I was still a priest, but a male one this time. He was a very slight figure and I could see his features very clearly. He was born into a time when the Cathar influence was already waning, and the priests, after two generations of merciless harassment, were not so well trained. He was the priest I had met in the first session. This time I was in Provence, and the inquisition caught me after questioning my niece, aged ten. They tortured me most horribly and as I lay on the wooden bench, securely strapped down with wide thick leather straps I suddenly realised that this was the precise scene of my nightmare, terror prayers and all. I opened my eyes in the middle of the torture, and said brightly to the therapist "That's' it, that was my dream exactly!" The poor therapist was a little startled for I had been making a lot of noise and this change of mood was not quite what she was expecting.

To cut the story short, I was castrated, my eyes were removed, and my tongue taken out. I discovered how exceedingly difficult it is to drink with no tongue, to cry with no eyes, and to walk with a raw wound where the genitals should be. I was in due course put to the stake, but before this I had a brief flash of my poor twisted body lying in the corner of a filthy cell, cursing Jesus and all that his minions had brought upon me. At the stake I screamed most horribly; very different from my previous incarnation. Religions can be very persuasive, otherwise how would they survive? I had no more nightmares.

This experience was the beginning of a series of adventures, all revealing incidents in past lives that ranged from mediaeval times to the Great War. Some simply 'happened', sometimes during normal meditation; others were assisted by 'regression' therapists. There was one salient lesson that I learned from these experiences, namely the existence of a dimension or 'framework' that was higher than my conscious Self. This higher Self contained a Knowledge (or gnosis) that was infinitely more profound than that exercised by the Ego. Indeed, one theory holds that the Ego lost touch with the Higher or Unconscious Self hundreds of thousands of years back in the history of mankind; perhaps when he no longer considered himself an animal? The Higher Self, or Soul, is considered by some to be the main instrument in forging the spiritual evolution of the individual, if only we would let it!

Today we need teachers to tell us which doors to open. We do NOT need teachers who insist that *they* know what lies behind those doors, and that there is no need for us to open them. It is time for a change.