

The Call of Isis

By: Olivia Robertson

CHAPTER 14 **A DRAMA OF MANY LIVES**

One morning in London I was not feeling very well; so I lay on my bed, resting. I was not asleep. Suddenly I was transported to another place in another century. Yet I retained enough of my modern consciousness to record what I experienced.

In personality, I was very young and gay. I was moving swiftly through a charming, fairly small room. I knew it to be in a seventeenth-century French chateau, and in time, about 1672. What made the apartment so delightful was that it was panelled in new oak, a pale golden colour. Nowadays one usually only sees old dark oak panels. Moreover, unlike our present custom of leaving oak severely unadorned, the details of the panelling were lightly touched with gilding. This gave a quaint effect wholly pleasing, yet to our modern eyes, inappropriate. Also the room was much more bare than even the most austere of our interiors would allow; for there were no carpets that I could see. The floor was bare wood, beautifully polished. In fact the place looked new, very well kept, shining with cleanliness.

I cheerfully glided through this room into one that directly led from it, about the same size. At the far end of it stood a short youngish man - about thirty, but possibly younger. He was dressed in the costume of the reign of Louis Quatorze, with brown curling wig and neat brown clothes. What struck me was the natural ease with which he wore his clothes, as if they were a part of him: unlike modern actors I had seen in period costume in the Comedie Francaise, and historical plays and films. There was that indefinable reality of clothes worn in their true period.

Anyway, I advanced towards this amiable gentleman, my arms outstretched towards him. My feelings were those of one greeting a dearly loved cousin.

Then, to my unutterable disappointment, I was back in Kensington, lying on my bed! This experience had been as real as my present-day existence. I was convinced of its actuality. It had not been a mere memory of a past reincarnation, It had been a re-living.

This is why the word 'reincarnation' does not entirely satisfy those who have had experience of re-living another life. As the 'Now' of the experience is as real as the 'Now' of the twentieth century, can one say that previous centuries only bring us memories? Indeed, a re-living of a previous moment in the so-called 'past' is more actual in self-consciousness than mere memory of 'yesterday'.

The vital link, then, in reincarnation experiences is the self-conscious awareness of the Now. It is the juxtaposition of 'I' with time passing.

To understand how consciousness works, one needs to study the process called 'reading a book'. When I was a child, I was told by other children how long it took for one to 'get into' a book, Some books took a long time to enter, but were worth it. Victorian books could almost totally

involve one, so that, hidden in hay-loft or attic, one lost track of meal-times, of time itself. One was totally identified with 'Jane Eyre' or 'David Copperfield.'

Of course we children knew that such identification was transient: that we had to come back from the delicious trance of daydreaming to everyday existence. And, for book addicts, daily life at school and home was less interesting, however apparently pleasant, than the most harrowing adventures in 'book-land.'

When I was about ten I wrote a book about my own adventures in what I called History Land. My technique was to 'go into' a chosen period of history inside a history book. Each of my chapters recorded various adventures, being killed by druids and priests or being chased by Roundheads! However, when I was about to be decapitated, burnt, or stabbed with a dagger, I would escape from the experience 'through the margin'. As each page of the book had this blank margin, it offered a way out.

And this is exactly what we humans do when we have had enough of earth existence. Faced with firing-squad, incurable illness, or just an uninteresting old age, we 'go into the margin'. We wake up into the wider consciousness of our own greater selves. We cease to project into the little character we had thought of as 'me'.

At first, studying reincarnation, one is only aware of the experience of one particular person, usually oneself. Other people are mere foils - friends or enemies, or merely there to be audience! The creature called 'me' is real and pleasant. Other people are only seen in relation to 'me', and hence are subjective, and only matter in so far as they relate to the all-important hero or heroine.

Who does not to a certain extent identify with family, nation and one's childhood religion? It is all a part of the area associated with 'me'. Those aliens not associated with 'me' have different coloured skins, strange religions and politics - are different- and so, not being 'good' like oneself and one's friends - are very probably 'evil'!

In trance and psychic experiences of reincarnation, however, there emerges a wider consciousness of one's Group, 'Us'. For instance, in Roderick's trance experiences, for him 'Us' consisted of Eloise, a Hermetic Healer, a Woodsman and a Knight - people he learnt to know and like, though he had not met any of them in this present life. For Owen, the Group consisted of the three Ladies of the Wood, the Well and the Doves, the Sage and a Romani. These meant more to him, I think, than anyone he had come across today.

So the criss-cross web of living produces not only awareness of 'me' and 'my' admirers and friends; not only 'them' the enemy, the alien people who don't agree with me or like me, but, gradually, 'Us' my group.

In usual consciousness, we are cut off from other people and the rest of life by lack of true communion of thought and feeling. We have a family, yes - and friends and colleagues - but there is a blank wall when it comes to telepathic rapport. Every man is an island, Solitary, until he can touch the universal web of inter-communion. The Communion of Saints is meaningless to us until we experience it in reality.

So man is the most lonely of all creatures. He is the only being that believes in that ultimate solitude, Death. Can anything be more horrible than to imagine losing the ever pleasant friendship with oneself? One's soliloquies, jokes, pleasures? No animal faces such a threat. They do not die as we do. They shed the physical body but otherwise, like Angela's cat, proceed as usual.

So we are more cut off from God than any other being, because we have lost communion with the rest of nature. We talk to each other in words, and through this very cleverness - we lose heart

and mind communion. How many times do we, as we argue, lament that we cannot truly communicate what we really mean? In final failure to achieve any true contact - we take to mass violence, killing each other in war.

And even then we sin in ignorance, for hopefully we kill an adversary, thinking to be rid of him, whereas in his soul he stands and watches. So far from seeing the last of somebody we disagree with death only brings the enemy nearer. And he will return to life again, and avenge himself.

I like the story Hari used to tell us of the butcher killing the lamb. Next life the lamb was born as the butcher, the butcher as the lamb. The killing was repeated. This reversal of roles continued for many lives, each taking alternating parts, the butcher and the victim: until one day the lamb sat up, just before the butcher cut his throat, and said: "Hasn't this gone far enough? If you kill me I shall assuredly return and slaughter you in my turn!"

The butcher put away his knife . . .

Would that humanity might do the same.

What can we do to be able to listen to the voice of the lamb, and understand its speech? All we hear now, as we raise the knife, is merely a pathetic bleating - and unrepentant we kill, and eat lamb for lunch.

The answer is simple. We progress in nature's way, despite our petty selves. As we develop, we become more sensitive: and we learn to hear the thoughts of others, whether those of people, animals or trees. We feel for others. So, in this advanced state, advanced beyond the ordinary human, we cannot torture another person, because we would suffer the torture ourselves. One remembers Valentine's stigmata when I read to her of another's suffering. As for killing, what is the point, when one can psychically see the dead soldier arise from the body one has shattered?

The first stage, then, in this inter-communion with all nature, is the joyful awareness of one's own true spiritual group.

The best analogy of this inner working with a group incarnating on earth, is to imagine a circle of participants in group meditation. We are seated in the drawing-room of the Castle, and I am taking these people on a psychic trip. The curtains are drawn, incense sticks burning, and there are seven candles lighted. We have agreed on our area of shared projection: a beautiful grove of trees by the sea. So I describe the desired scene as vividly as I can, psychically projecting the scene as I speak. The stipulated time of silence is half-an-hour. I say that after this period of earth time, my voice will summon the astral travellers back to the drawing-room. So off we go. But I only half project, and keep an eye on the circle, to see how things are going.

The small group of astral tourists duly project to the woodland grove near the sea. Two members of the circle are fully on the spot, and are intelligently surveying the scene. Another, an intellectual, is day-dreaming, because he dislikes losing himself. Half of himself is in the drawing-room, and I am amused to note that he is watching me through one half-opened eye! He is suspicious of hypnosis. So he is half by the sea, half in the drawing-room - like myself.

Now, though the group locate themselves in the same area, in a grove of trees, they are apt to wander off on their own. Most of them, being seasoned travellers, make themselves happy and comfortable. Anyway, they are aware that this is a projected trip, and that they are to return at the right time, called by a Voice. Meanwhile, they pursue their various aims, whether studious, helpful or artistic.

But one of our tourists is a newcomer. He gets into difficulties., He not only loses himself in the grove of trees, but he loses himself also in the projection. He completely forgets that his greater self is seated in the Castle drawing-room!

He has an unpleasant time. I ask him what is happening, and he is able to tell me. He fights a duel with a dark man on a black horse. He attacks an upraised cobra. Not only this: he announces that one of his fellow travellers is evil, and that he is going to kill him. I realize that this person has become emotionally disturbed. Also that he is upsetting the young man next to him. I recollect that they were arguing over religion and politics, though in a friendly way, at lunch. So this was the outcome in the psychic sphere!

Do I leave them to sort it out? Or do I bring back the disturbed young man, at once?

In this case, I would play safe and bring everyone back straight away. Otherwise the unpleasant atmosphere might spread through the group.

I have later to explain to the young man who had been so aggressive, that he was not yet ready to work with us in trance state. But I might be able to help him on his own.

And here we have a reflection of what actually happens in that group dreaming that we call earthly life. So it is our business to learn to project in a wise and happy way in daily living. And, above all, not to forget that we dream. Otherwise we may lose contact with the Reality that the ignorant call non-existent; the wise, the World of Archetypes.