

Reincarnation FAQ

From Blavatsky.net

<http://www.blavatsky.net/topics/reincarnation/reincarnation.htm>

According to Theosophy

Background: The idea of reincarnation was first brought to the West and popularized in the latter part of the nineteenth century by Madame Helena Blavatsky. Now, according to a recent Gallup poll, 27% of the United States population believes reincarnation to be true. Blavatsky claimed to have been taught details of reincarnation as an integral part of a larger fragment of the ancient perennial philosophy by masters of this knowledge who had preserved the ancient knowledge intact. The empirical results we are finding today on this subject match the statements made over 100 years ago, that in turn were alleged to be the knowledge from millennia ago from "those who know."

So we present here information from Blavatsky and her student William Q. Judge along with numerous places to visit for more information.

Also available is an extensive set of **direct quotes** from Blavatsky on reincarnation.

FAQ

Is reincarnation true?

Yes. We repeatedly are reborn on earth taking up another life using another body and with a different "personality."

Are we ever reborn as an animal?

No. That is a misunderstanding in some traditions. (The original teachings of those traditions did not hold this view.) Once an individual has reached the level of complexity of a human being, he or she must reincarnate as a human being to continue to work out the relationships of the past and to develop and grow in an environment of suitable complexity.

By the way, you mention "he or she". Could I have been one of the opposite sex in a previous reincarnation?

Yes, definitely. The soul is sexless. It may reincarnate in either sex and it may change from one to the other gender in different lives.

When I die, do I come back immediately?

No. There is a definite cycle of life as a whole. Our life from infant to old-age is a part of that cycle. Death itself is a process divided into recognizable stages. There is a period of long rest between "lifetimes". Typically, for the mass of humanity, that period of rest is about 1,000 to 1,500 years. Then the individual is reborn.

But exactly what is reborn?

A "higher" spiritual part of us is reborn. Theosophy says the "personality" was left behind at the previous death. Certain of that personality's tendencies, lessons learned, character and pure spirit are assimilated from the previous life and remain with the "individual" to be reborn again. The important distinction is between "personality" and "individuality." Over the course of lives, the individuality increases and the personality becomes of less importance.

Strictly speaking, we should not say we "have" a soul. Rather, we *are* a soul and the soul "has" a body it has acquired and is working through. Part of our task is to become aware of this truth.

Why don't I remember my previous lives?

It was a different brain that knew the details of your previous life - so that life and the proceeding ones are not normally remembered in detail. The influences of those lives will of course remain. However at the moment of death we will sometimes see the past life details and as we progress in our individual evolution we come to be able to remember the past lives that had previously been forgotten.

Are such things actually known facts?

Yes - there are masters of wisdom, great adepts, who are actual living human beings that collectively retain and advance the knowledge of these matters. They can see the progress of the soul as it moves through these stages. For them, this is directly observable information. It was taught to Blavatsky during her stay in Tibet and she promulgated it to the world during the 19th century.

What is the point of the reincarnation?

We must back up a little. Our souls are all part of one soul. At root we are one. Brotherhood is actually a fact in nature when we look to the underlying reality. Each of these seemingly separate individualities gains experience and learns lessons - and ultimately, the consciousness of the universe gains increasing experience, increases in relative perfection, and increases in self-consciousness.

Does reincarnation then, never stop?

Yes and no. From our relative point of view we are aiming for perfection. This will take many, many more incarnations. At a very advanced stage we may choose to take a well

earned rest or to return as a Bodhisattva to help suffering humanity. But then the cycle continues at a higher level. In the largest sense, there is no end to the cycle and no end to increasing perfection.

Returning to an earlier question - don't some individuals reincarnate much earlier than 1000 - 1500 years?

Yes. Children who die young may return quickly. Those who die from accidents may return quickly. Those committed to service and the cause of spiritual truths may return faster to speed up the service and growth and the help to humanity. However, compare the rise of Rome some 1500 years ago to the rise of the industrialized West.