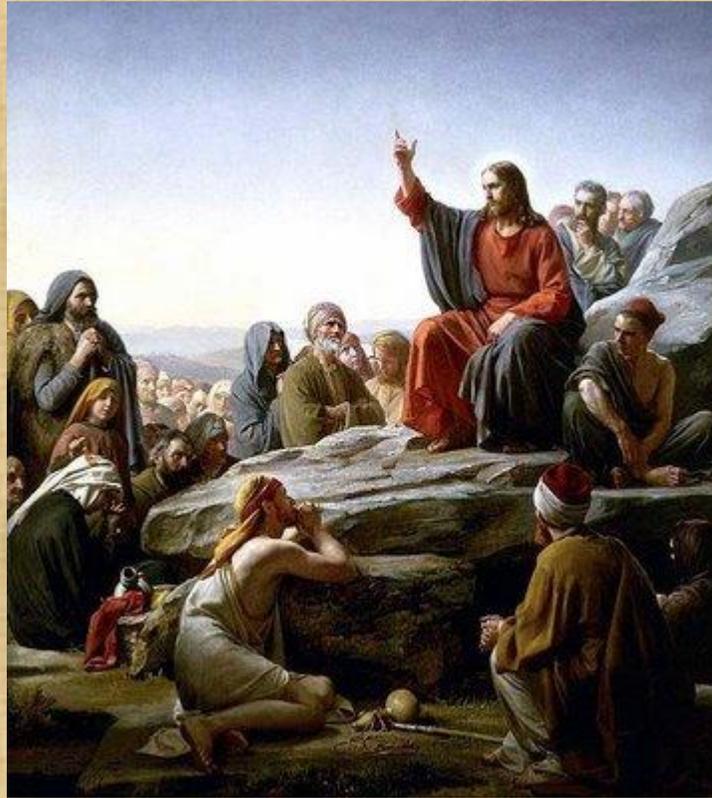


THE LAW OF KARMA



AND CHRISTIANITY

Written By Clay W. Guthrie ©

Most of us are aware that our actions toward others will usually determine what we receive in return, yet few are aware of how far-reaching this principle applies in most every aspect of our lives. This chapter will show that the doctrine of karma was once a core teaching of the original Christian religion, and later omitted from its churches. It wasn't until the 6th century, in fact, at the Council of Constantinople that karma and its companion, reincarnation, were officially excised from the Christian belief system.

What this age-old philosophy maintains is that what we are now living is the result of actions from our past lives, and that *cause and effect* determines not only who we are, but also the family we are born into, as well as how and when we will all eventually die.

THE EARTH LAW

Anyone who examines the world today can see that it is full of injustices and inequalities. For instance, we might ask: Why would one child be born a cripple, mentally deficient, blind, or worse, while another enjoys a perfectly healthy body and mind? Why are some children born into families of extreme wealth with a myriad of doors swinging open to them by virtue of their class, while others live day to day in hunger not knowing whether that day will be their last? We can either accept that human suffering and injustice occurs by random chance, or that we are ignorant of what has been called the “Earth Law.” What the doctrine of karma essentially maintains is that when a person dies, a record of their actions is imprinted upon their soul. When that soul is eventually reborn into another body, those actions, as well as their attendant thoughts, words, and desires, will then manifest in the newborn’s genes and determine the quality and conditions of his, or her life. Thus, the concept of karma is inextricably interwoven with that of reincarnation, as it is the “fruits” of our past lives which determine much of what our present circumstances will be, and the actions of the present which will inevitably be accounted for in the future. In a very real way, we are all the sum totals of our past deeds.

It’s long been held as an esoteric truth that every action produces an equal reaction, and indeed according to the Law of Karma, even our innermost thoughts have a boomerang effect. Just as every action we commit is preceded by a thought, so too is every thought born of a desire. Thoughts and desires are potent energies and whatever energy we put out in the world, however subtle, must eventually return to us. The ‘Tibetan Book of the Dead’ tells us: *“As men think, so they are, both here and hereafter, thoughts being things, the parent of all actions, good and bad alike; and as the sowing has been, so will the harvest be.”*

On a more tangible level, we know that when we truly love others we will experience being loved in return. Conversely, if a person is more inclined to hate and abuse people then they too will ultimately be hated and abused, whether in the present life or in a subsequent one. By this way of reckoning, there is little we’ve experienced from the time of our birth – whether in the blessings of parental love and nurturing, or physical abuse and violence at the hands of others -- that we are not ultimately responsible for in some unseen way. To the Essenes and Christians of the early centuries these were referred to as “stumbling blocks.”

The Golden Rule that guides most good-hearted people today was first coined by Confucius (circa 500 B.C.), who had proclaimed, ***“Do unto others as you would have done unto you.”*** In many ways this much-preached philosophy is karma. Why? Because, again, what we put out into the world invariably comes back to us - if not in the life we are now living, then in a succeeding one, and there are no exceptions to this rule. We can liken our actions to pebbles dropped into a pond. When the pebbles hit the water we see the ripples flowing outwardly, away from us; when those same ripples travel back to us as the source of those pebbles then karma has come around full circle. In other words, it is the cosmic consequence of the Earth Law that says what we do unto others will be done unto us, and it is this Law that governs the world we live in. To date, our Western religious and educational institutions have denied this condition and have placed the greater part of responsibility for our lives outside of us. What would happen if we all knew that we are responsible for the circumstances of birth, family, traumas, tragedies of our life long before we were ever born?



The doctrine of Karma was taught throughout the most ancient regions of the world, from Egypt and Babylon to Greece and Judea. The oldest spiritual scriptures come from India and were written long before the Bible was ever conceived, while “karma” derives from the Sanskrit word *kri*, meaning “to do.” Consequently, all *action* is karma, although traditionally it has most often been associated with the *effects* of our actions. What the Hindu Vedas (the earliest Indian scriptures) reveal is that our soul ***“is reborn into new bodies in accordance with its former works.”*** The Vedas were also the first to proclaim, ***“Whatever deed he does, that he will reap.”*** It would be many centuries later that the writers of the Bible would borrow this ancient wisdom. In the ‘Bhagavad Gita’ we are told that producing karma in this world is about as inescapable as breathing:

“Not by abstention from work does a man attain freedom from karma; nor by mere renunciation does he attain to his perfection. For no one can remain even for a moment (on earth) without doing work [karma]; everyone is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature.”

The 'Mahabharata' (the Hindu epic poem) echoes this same theme:

“Whatever actions are performed by particular corporeal beings, the fruits thereof are reaped by the doers while endued with similar corporeal bodies; for example, the fruits of actions done with mind are enjoyed at the time of dreams, and those of actions performed physically are enjoyed in the working state physically. In whatever states creatures perform good or evil deeds, they reap the fruits thereof in similar states of succeeding lives.”



Representations of death from ancient Egypt show the soul's heart being weighed against the feather of truth on a balancing scale. The heart was a symbol of the dead person's conscience as well as the content of their actions, both good and bad. In the lower right we see the god Thoth, symbolic of the soul's higher "Causal Self," here depicted as a scribe who has recorded the actions of the soul being judged. Hieroglyphs such as these were entirely symbolic and had far more spiritual meaning than what has been generally supposed. The ancient Egyptians

not only believed in reincarnation as a result of man's karma, but also in the transmigration of souls. This was the incarnation of the spirit into lower life forms such as plants and animals as a result of its deeds, a belief that the Hindus have also maintained.

The earliest Greeks believed that karma and reincarnation are responsible for both the gifts

and the limitations of our present life, which would explain how child prodigies such as Mozart came to express their genius. The famous Greek philosopher Plato writes: ***“The choice of souls was in most cases based on their own experience of a previous life... Knowledge easily acquired is that which the enduring self had in an earlier life, so that it flows back easily.”*** Plato had also maintained that karma is the determining factor in man's suffering from one lifetime to another, arguing that ***“In every succession of life and***



death, you will do and suffer what like may fitly suffer at the hands of like. This is the justice of heaven."

Siddhartha Gautama (the original Buddha) sought answers to the mysteries of life, suffering, and death, and knew full well that he could only conquer the latter by freeing himself from the bonds of his own cause and effect. He had warned his followers, ***"Long is the circle of rebirth to the fool who does not know the true law!"***



This same theme is elaborated in the following text when Subha asks the Buddha: "Master Gautama, what is the cause and condition why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen to be short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, uninfluential and influential, poor and wealthy, low-born and high-born, stupid and wise. What is the cause and condition...?" The Buddha replies: ***"Student, beings are owners of their actions [karma], heirs to their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have***

their actions as their refuge. It is action [karma] that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior." By this way of reasoning, what may appear to be blind luck in a person's life may be more appropriately seen as their favorable rewards for their past life's deeds. This is not to say that a person born into wealth has necessarily favorable karma, even though this idea has certainly been exploited in modern times within the caste system in India. Actually, a sheltered and privileged life of luxury might very well be disadvantageous when viewed from the perspective of our soul's greater spiritual mission on earth.

As most of us know, karma and reincarnation are not openly taught to Christians and Jews in their churches and synagogues; however, upon closer examination, both may be found in some of the oldest passages of the Bible. In Exodus of the Old Testament, for example, the Lord warns the Hebrews against serving other "gods," adding that as a consequence of such transgressions he would be ***"visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."*** (34:4) Punishment of innocent children for the "sins of the fathers," if we are to take literally would be quite an irrational judgment and make absolutely no sense. Yet clearly this was the original meaning of this passage, nor the word "generation" used in its literal translation. What it is, however, is a veiled reference to karma whereby the individual soul, having lived many lives, would indeed become the "fathers" of future retributions.



How far does the doctrine of karma go back in the annals of Judeo-Christian scripture? When the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Essenes (the original Judaic Christians) were discovered in Palestine-Israel, in 1947, they were dated at least one thousand years earlier than the then-oldest biblical texts. In the “Manual of Discipline” we learn that one of the unique functions of the Essene “Instructor” was to help the student better understand their present life’s “traits” and “afflictions” by

examining the actions of their hidden past, via an “inner-vision”:

“This is for the man who would bring others to the inner-vision, so that he may understand and teach to all the children of light the real nature of men, touching the different varieties of their temperaments with the distinguishing traits thereof, touching their actions [karma] throughout their lives*, and touching the reason why they are now visited with afflictions and now enjoy periods of well-being.”

The ‘Thanksgiving Scroll’ similarly tells us of the “retribution” and “judgment” that follows each “successive” birth, while “destiny” is directly related to karma:

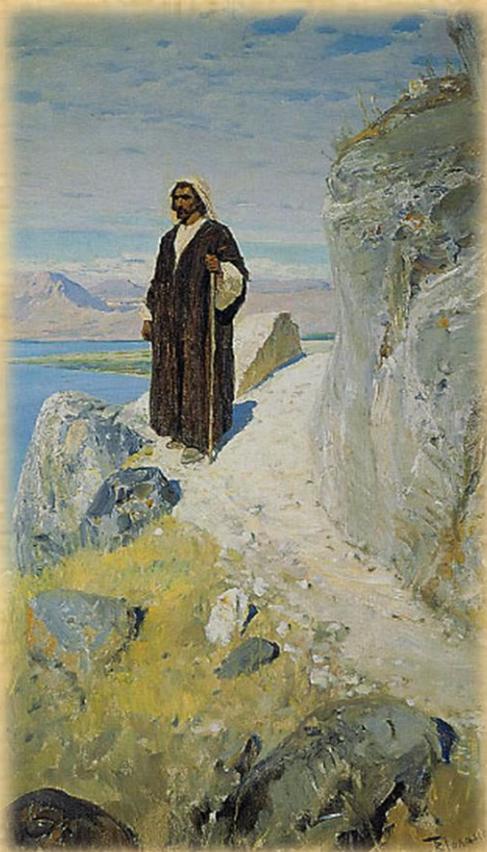
“The spirit of man whom You [God] have formed upon the earth, for all the days of eternity... in accordance with their works [karma]... for successive generations [or ‘lives’] and judgment for their retribution as well as all their punishments... and in the wisdom of Your knowledge You determined their destiny before they came into existence.”

“All things are inscribed before Thee [God] in a recording script, for every moment of time for the infinite cycles of years in their several appointed times... How can man say aught to account for his sins? How argue in excuse of his misdeeds? How can he enter reply to any just sentence upon him?”

These sentences of “judgment” were, again, believed to recur throughout many lifetimes; it was therefore the age-old quest of the spiritual seeker in India, among other places on earth,

to achieve liberation (*moksha*) from this cycle of death and rebirth (*samsara*). Could this be the true meaning of salvation?

HIDDEN TEACHING OF CHRISTIANITY



Just as karma and reincarnation lay the foundation for the teachings of the Eastern-born religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, so too was this the case in Christianity. It may be surprising to many modern day Christians, but the original teachings of the Church were very much in accord with this same doctrine. While Christianity today teaches that we did not exist before our own birth, and that after only one single lifetime we go to either everlasting bliss in heaven, or to eternal torment in hell - this was not always the case. As late as the 3rd century, Church Father Origen had written that ***“every soul... enters this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the stumblings of its previous life.”*** Contrary to some opinion, this statement did not derive from a heretical rogue element in the Church, but actually reflected Christian orthodoxy of its time. Origen also wrote on the subject of karma, rhetorically asking: ***“Does it not make absolute sense that every soul... is guided into a body, and this in accordance with deeds done earlier?”*** Did Jesus teach this same karmic doctrine?

The answer is an unequivocal ‘yes’. Yet rarely is this understood by Bible readers, and for several reasons. The foremost is that many of the metaphors and parables used by Jesus Christ in the Gospels were not unique to his generation, but had long preceded it. Many of his sayings did, as we shall discover, parallel those of the earlier Hindu teachings. What is also rarely acknowledged today is that by Christ’s own admission, his parables had underlying hidden meanings contained in them, as he had famously said (Lk. 8:10), ***“To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.”*** We shall now examine what these hidden messages were in his teachings, so that we may all understand what his disciples had understood some two thousand years ago.

CHRIST & THE SAT GURU



India can correctly be called the most ancient holy land on earth. Hinduism is also the world's oldest religion, even predating recorded history. Central to the Indian belief system has always been the "guru," or "master," and the master-disciple relationship. The word *guru*, in addition to referring to a spiritual teacher, has a twofold meaning - "gu" represents darkness, and "ru" its removal. Thus a guru, quite literally, is one who removes darkness from others. The 'Atharva Veda' tells us that "there is no one greater in the three worlds than the guru. It is he who grants divine knowledge and should be worshiped with supreme devotion." The 'Guru Gita' similarly describes the "Sat Guru" (the

highest spiritual adept) as "one who is free from the feeling of duality and non-duality, who shines by the light of His self-realization, who is able to destroy the deep darkness of ignorance, and is omniscient." Accordingly, the Sat Guru was, and is, seen as the intermediary on earth between ourselves and God, or heaven. Probably the greatest measure of a self-realized Sat Guru is said to be their ability to leave their body at will during meditation and to facilitate this same controlled "near-death experience" within the disciple. Perhaps this is why Jesus had declared his "kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 18:36), while the same is affirmed by all true Sat Gurus'. It's been believed that they can experience the higher heavens above the physical dimension, as opposed to intellectualizing, or reading about them. For this reason they tell us that the earth is "maya", or the *illusion*, while the greater reality is that which lies within us.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the first Sikh teacher, was in many ways the quintessential Sat



Guru, having taught of the unifying principle of all religions. Throughout his life he was relentlessly engaged in meditation, and was often in a transcendent state. A true saint, he taught, is one who remembers the Name of the Lord with every incoming and outgoing breath. Guru Nanak also emphasized the importance of seeking a self-realized teacher, saying, "He alone realizes the Lord who finds the Sat Guru," and that "without a guru, no one can attain salvation." Thus, Jesus' proclamation that "Nobody comes to the Father unless it is through me" (Jn. 14:6), is very much in harmony with the teachings of a Sat Guru.

Throughout **much** of the Gospels, I discovered that Jesus perfectly fits in to the traditional role of an Indian spiritual master. Like the Sat Guru, he is the “light of the world” who removes “darkness” from others (Jn. 8:12), although also adding that he is that light “only as long as I am in the world” (Jn. 9:5). This suggests that he did believe in the necessity of a *living* spiritual Christ/Master as his ability to enlighten his followers was by his own admission contingent upon his being in the flesh. Like the Sat Guru, he is the revealer of God’s “mysteries” (Matt. 13:11), and has the power to forgive the sin of individuals and take on their karma (Matt. 9:6). Like the Sat Guru, he also teaches us that the spirit of God is “within” (Lk. 17:21), and urges us to seek that light by turning inward. And that when we finally come to “know” ourselves, we will discover that we are all “sons of the living Father” (Gospel of Thomas, #3), equal to himself. Like the Sat Guru, he also warns us to “renounce the world” and forsake material wealth for the greater Kingdom of Heaven, and to “Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). Lastly, and probably the most revealing statement Christ makes in accordance with a Sat Guru of India, is the following declaration: ***“The light of the body is the eye: therefore, when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light”*** (Lk. 11:33). This is a reference the same “single eye” (*shiv netra*) also referred to as the “third eye” (*tisra til*), that is the *chakra* located between and behind the two eyebrows. Recognized for thousands of years in India, it has traditionally been thought of as the focal point of divine consciousness and the seat of the soul.

All of these examples, I believe, demonstrate that Christ did possess the same attributes, and indeed did teach much of the same spiritual doctrines as a Sat Guru of India. This is why he could rightly say, as other self-realized spiritual masters who’ve attained the ability to rise above body consciousness have said, “I and my Father are One” (Jn. 10:30). This can be interpreted, “I and my Higher Self are One.” Christ may also have thought of himself as an “avatar.” In the Hindu belief system, this is a divine soul that periodically comes down to earth to teach humanity about man’s higher purpose, which is to seek God, awaken to truth, and restore righteousness. All avatars are said to be Sons of God, or God manifested in the living flesh.

In the ‘Bhagavad Gita’, Krishna speaks from the perspective of the divine avatar when he makes the following statement:

“For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age.”

This is the believed function of Vishnu as protector of the world -- to guide it on paths of righteousness. Could this be why Jesus was referred to as a “Teacher of Righteousness”?



In the 1930s, the celebrated Indian guru Paramahansa Yogananda came to America at the request of his guru, Sri Yukteswar, to teach Eastern spiritual practices in the West. While Yogananda often pointed out the many similarities between Christ and the traditional masters of India, he even went so far as to say that Jesus was an ancient guru in his own lineage of spiritual masters. While overlooking the Encinitas, California, coastline, not far from this author lives, Yogananda had written his classic, 'Autobiography of a Yogi'. In it he spoke of the "eternal bond of guru and disciple," and claimed that this same relationship had once "existed between John [the Baptist] and Jesus." Yogananda was one of the first authors of the modern era to recognize that Christ was a Sat Guru, and had a previous life connection with John the Baptist. What sort of relationship did they have? According to Yogananda, Jesus was once the disciple of John during his previous life as 'Elisha', an Old Testament prophet. Who was John the Baptist?

REINCARNATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In one revealing section in the Gospels, Jesus tells his disciples that John the Baptist is none other than reincarnated soul of Elijah, a prophet who had lived many centuries earlier (Matt. 11:7-14):



"While they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John [the Baptist]... 'I tell you the truth, among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist... For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John appeared. And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah, who is to come.'"

Here we are clearly informed that Elijah's soul had come back to earth as John the Baptist. Christ's reference to "all the prophets" who had "prophesied" the return of Elijah, is primarily alluding to Malachi (3:1), who in fact identifies the "messenger" who was to incarnate in the world as "Elijah the prophet" (4:5). In truth, this was not the only occasion in the Gospels where Jesus tells us John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah, we also have the following confirmation (Math. 17:12):

"But I say unto you that Elijah is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the son of man suffer of them. The disciples understood that

He spake unto them of John the Baptist. "

If Jesus was Elisha (the successor to Elijah in a previous life), as Yogananda had maintained, and John the Baptist was Elijah in that same lifetime, then what brought them back together would have undoubtedly been their interconnected karma. This is the close relationship and spiritual union of the guru and disciple which is said to be able to transcend all space and time. It would also explain why Jesus allowed John to baptize him in the River Jordan, even though in that lifetime he had reached the higher "Christ" level of consciousness. Furthermore, those who are familiar with the Old Testament (*2 Kings*) accounts of Elisha know he is credited with performing most all of the same miracles as Christ, including: the multiplying of the loaves, suspending a heavy object on water (in this case, an axe), the filling of empty jars (in this case, with oil), the prophesying of future events, the curing of lepers, and yes, even the raising of the dead! The name Elisha in Hebrew means "God is salvation," while Yeshua (Jesus' Hebrew name) means "God's Salvation." Coincidence? I do not believe so. In addition, we have the mystery as to why Elijah, along with Moses, "appeared" to Jesus in the famous "Transfiguration on the Mount" episode in the Gospels. If he had been a disciple of Elijah's in a previous life as Elisha, then such an appearance would make absolute sense because, again, the disciple and master relationship follows such souls throughout many lifetimes.

Christ's connection to India, I believe is far more profound than Christians today might ever suspect. For this reason, I wasn't surprised when I discovered an ancient Hindu Sutra claiming that Jesus ("Isha Natha") had come to India as a teenager and had been taught by a guru named "Chetan Natha":

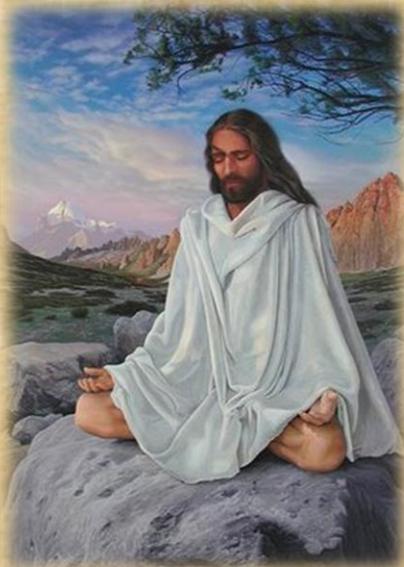
"Isha Natha came to India at the age of fourteen. After this he returned to his country and began preaching. Soon, however, his brutish and materialistic countrymen conspired against him and had him crucified."

Here we discover that Jesus began preaching in Judea only after leaving India, which would suggest that he was incorporating the same spiritual laws and doctrines he had learned there into his own ministry, and was introducing them to the Judeans. This would also explain the "lost years" of Christ's life prior to starting his ministry at the age of 28. We've seen that he did teach reincarnation, but does he also directly reference karma?

CHRIST'S TEACHINGS ON KARMA

Throughout many of Jesus' sayings in the Gospels he does actually reference karma, although through the centuries they may have been thought of as the reactionary reward of God based on one's conduct. The 1st century Church Father Clement, in his First Epistle, quotes one such saying in its original form (Lk, 6:35):

***“Be ye merciful and ye shall obtain mercy; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: as ye do, so shall it be done unto you: as ye give, so shall it be given unto you: as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye are kind to others so shall God be kind to you: with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you again.*”**



Whether Christians today are aware of it, or not, this teaching is entirely based on the principal of karma. What is essentially being said is that all actions, whether good or bad, have direct reciprocal consequences as mandated by the divine Law of God. If we extend the boundaries of this reciprocity then we enter into the essence of *cause and effect* and its relationship to reincarnation. There are other teachings of Christ, as we shall discover, which are even more explicit and may only be discernable when read in light of the spiritual mysticism of India.

The Indian Vedas, for example, had made this comparison of man: ***“As a mighty tree... so in very truth is man. His hairs are like the leaves, his skin the outer bark.”***

Extending this analogy, just as a tree produces several outgrowths, so the *effect* of karma (as previously quoted) was often referred to in the Hindu scriptures as “fruit” due to its sweet and bitter resolutions, such as the following: ***“Karma does not dissolve without its various fruits being tasted and consumed.”*** The Sanskrit word *Sinchit* was often used to describe man's “store” karma, which are the karmic debts we have accumulated from one birth to another. Understanding these common words in a greater spiritual context, and used as metaphors, we should all be able to interpret the following sayings spoken by Jesus in the Gospels and their greater underlying meaning:

“A sound tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor a rotten tree bear good fruit. Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. I repeat you will be able to tell them by their fruits.” (Mat. 7:18-20); ***“A good man***

draws good things from his store goodness; and a bad man draws bad things from his store of badness.” (12:35-36)

In the ‘Book of Thomas’ (Nag Hammadi texts), Jesus uses much of this same karma symbolism only less veiled, saying to his disciple: ***“Listen to what I am going to tell you and believe in the truth. That which sows and that which is sown [i.e., karma] will dissolve in their fire [human desires]...and they [the karmic effects] will hide in tombs of darkness. And after a long time they shall show forth the fruit of the evil trees being slain in the mouth of the beasts and men at the instigation of the rains and winds and air and the light that sings above.”*** The “fruit” of the “evil trees” can be seen as the effects of our own negative karmic lives, which as Christ tells us will in turn determine how we are to die – violent, or otherwise. That Jesus used much of the same word symbolism as the antecedent Indian scriptures may not have been by accident. There is ample evidence, again, that he not only traveled to India in his childhood, but had returned to Kashmir where there are ancient temple inscriptions of his ministry there.

EXPULSED FROM PARADISE

Before we leave the subject of the Tree and its Fruit in connection to our soul and our inherited karma - I’d like the reader to consider another famous Biblical allegory. In the Genesis chapter of the Old Testament we are told God planted a garden in the “middle of Paradise”, and in this garden grew the “Tree of Life” and the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”. Like most all other Bible fables, however, these trees clearly symbolized something far greater than their literal interpretation. Father Origen writes, ***“Who is so foolish as to believe that God... planted a Garden of Eden, in it a Tree of Life that might be seen and touched..? I do not suppose that anyone doubts that these things figuratively indicate certain mysteries, the history being apparently but not literally true.”***



The unfortunate truth is that millions of people are “so foolish” to believe in the literalism of the Bible as history. And yet the earliest Judaic Christians (the Essenes & Ebionites) subscribed only to the allegorical interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life were, accordingly, seen as symbolic for the higher dimensional planes we originally came from before we incarnated in the flesh. The fall of man, in reality, was simply the fall of man’s spirit dimensionally from the higher Causal Plane

(Adam, or “heavenly Man”) to the lower Astral Plane (Eve, or the “Woman”), and ultimately even lower into physical matter (“Seth”, or Satan).

In the Indian ‘Upanishads’, we are presented with the following passage which very well may be referencing the same “Tree of Life”:

“I have become one with the Tree of Life... I have realized the (Higher) Self who is ever pure, all-knowing, radiant, and immortal.”



Here the ‘Tree of Life’ is synonymous with the higher Universal Soul referred to in the Hindu texts as ‘Brahman.’ Returning to the Bible - the ‘Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ can be interpreted as the positive and negative effects of our karma. In Genesis, for instance, we are told it was “the Serpent” who beguiles “the Woman” (i.e., human soul) to partake of the *fruit* of this Tree of Knowledge. The 1st century Judaic writer Philo Judaeus had stated that the Serpent actually symbolized the pleasures and desires in the world which have been said lure us away from God. And of course by eating this fruit, or the karmic *effects* of her actions both good and evil, the “woman” (human soul) and her

husband, or Causal Self (i.e., ‘Adam and Eve’), are then thrown out of Paradise. ‘Paradise’ being symbolic for the greater spiritual realm, or ‘heaven’, we once occupied before we incarnated in the flesh. Our being expelled from Paradise is, of course, played out daily with every human birth that occurs in the world. This is also figuratively reversed in the Gospels during Christ’s crucifixion where he is made to say to one of the thieves next to him: “You shall be with me in Paradise”, here meaning: when we free ourselves from our bodily vestures, and our collective karma in the world, we will indeed return to the heavenly realm from which we originated.

Karma is the reason why we reincarnate on the earth plane as the result of our actions both negative and positive. In both instances, it is our actions which determine what our future fate will invariably be from one lifetime to another. And as we have seen, this same doctrine was shared by the original Judaic Christians which in time became more of a hidden teaching of the Church only now represented in portions of the Gospels that have escaped their revision, or in some cases total expulsion.



Just as we have witnessed Jesus in the Gospels telling his disciples that John the Baptist was the reincarnated soul of Elijah (Matt. 17:10-13), a prophet who had lived centuries earlier - the following passage has also gone widely unnoticed by much of the present day followers of Christianity (Jn. 9:1-2):

“He [Jesus] went along, He saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?””

Here even the most fundamentalist Christians must ask themselves and acknowledge: how could a man have been born blind as the result of sin if he did not exist before his own birth and had lived before? Jesus’ disciples evidently believed that the man was born blind as the result of karma from a previous life. While Christ goes on to restore his sight and tell us that his blindness was the result of the ***“works of God”***, earlier in the same gospel he had healed another person of a disease while admonishing him, ***“Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee”*** (Jn. 5:14). The underlying meaning is evident, and that is that like the blind man that this person’s illness was the result of having sinned in the first place. In both instances, their conditions were considered to be their karmic retributions for their previous life, or lives’ actions. In the case of the blind man - the disciples’ reference to his “parents” would certainly have not been his biological parents, but referencing his previous incarnations. The *‘Clementine Homilies’* (an early ‘Ebionite’ Christian work) also quotes Jesus saying of this same incident that his restoring of the blind man’s sight was to demonstrate the ***“power of God might be made manifest through him in healing the sins of ignorance.”*** This suggests that there is karma we commit daily which we are not aware of and is the reason why spiritual masters have throughout the ages repeatedly warned us that we are all ultimately accountable for our actions, knowingly, or otherwise. I realize that this idea pretty much negates much of the present day Christian dogma telling us that a sinner is saved and redeemed by the mere belief in Jesus as their savior, although this is most certainly not what he had taught. Remember, Christ is quoted in the Gospels as saying that anyone who violates even the lesser of his Father’s Commandments would find themselves “the least in heaven”.



Many centuries before Christ - Krishna of India had similarly encountered a blind man from birth, a great yogi, when he asked him, “You are blind from your very birth. What caused it? What karma have you incurred the result of which you are blind from birth?” The blind sage then told him, ‘By yogic power I know up to one hundred births back, and I have found no action the result of which I would be blind.’

Krishna then allowed the yogi to see back even further into his previous lives, much as we have been told the Essene Instructor could facilitate this same “inner-vision”, where in his 106th birth he discovered the actions that were the cause of his blindness in his present life.

To anyone who has compared the teachings of Jesus and Krishna realize they are often times remarkably similar. This is especially true in the ‘Dialogue of the Savior’ (Nag Hammadi texts), where we find Matthew asking Christ:

“How does the small [the lower spirit] join itself to the big [the higher Self]? The Lord said, “When you abandon the works which will not be able to follow you then you will rest.”

To “abandon” one’s “works” is to abandon one’s karma, which will in turn free our soul from the cycle of rebirth in the world, as all actions do indeed “follow” us from one lifetime to another. Similarly, Krishna is quoted in the ‘Bhagavad Gita’:

“The wise unify their consciousness and abandon attachment to the fruits of action [i.e., effects of karma], which binds a person to continual rebirth.”

If the reader needs even more convincing, let us return to Christ’s admonishments in the Gospels: “Do not judge and you will not be judged; because the judgments you give are the judgments you get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given.” Is this not entirely consistent with the precept of karma which mandates that all actions will in turn be reciprocated? Quite literally, if we hate then we will be hated, if we judge and we will be judged, if we forgive then we will be forgiven, etc... The true meaning of the “turn the other cheek” and “love your enemy” teachings of Christ were also very much in accordance with karma as well. Even though such practices were considered by the Jews of his era to be radical and bizarre who very much believed in the eye for eye retribution. These teachings were very much in accord with the Buddhist, Pythagorean and Hindu monks many centuries earlier. What He is essentially saying is that it is the non-retaliatory response to our enemy’s actions which allows us to pay back our own karmic ‘debt’, and thereby transcend the reincarnation cycle. In Christianity, this would in time become more of a hidden teaching of the Church cloaked in the symbolism of Christ’s parables, as well as in the allegorical narrative of the Gospels, themselves.



In Matthew's gospel, Christ tells us, ***“Anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court.”*** Here he is alluding to the court and judgment following our own death. Although, subsequent to this passage it does mention the “Sanhedrin”, it is nevertheless cloaked spiritual truths being revealed. He goes on to say (Matt. 5:22-26):

“Come to terms with your opponent in good time while you are still on the way to the court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge [i.e., the causal self] and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown in prison. I tell you solemnly, you will not get out till you have paid the last penny.”

Being “thrown in prison” was once understood by the ancient mystics to being thrown back into another human body, or again reincarnating in the material world. How do I know this? Because this same “prison” metaphor was famously used by the Essenes for the human condition, as well as by Plato and many others. In the 1st century Christian writing *‘Mathetes to Diognetus’*, we are told: ***“The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body; and Christians are confined in the world as in a prison.”*** This was the perceived imprisonment of the soul while in the world of matter and at the mercy of its actions. Thus when Jesus tells us above that ***“you will not get out till you have paid the last penny,”*** he is essentially saying that we will not get

out of this lower dimensional earth realm where there exists pain, hunger and the perpetual birth and death drama until we have paid off our last karmic debt. This is why we must “come to terms” with our “opponent” and forgive everybody who has wronged us, as well as forgive ourselves for the people we have wronged.

[Note: For me (the writer) the most liberating aspect of my own life was the realization and acceptance of karma as the impetus behind much of my own experiences. By examining my own traumatic childhood, for instance, such as being raised by a mentally unstable mother and father who died when I was at a young age, I realized that the pain I felt was a necessary karmic debt I had to pay. From personal experience I can also say that the forgiveness of others is crucial towards obliterating even the darkest of shadows we allow to follow us. How often do we see people today with a chip on their shoulder for traumas that have happened to them in their childhood? How often do we hide behind the ‘I am a victim’ syndrome which we use as an excuse for our ill behavior towards people? By constantly re-living the trauma of any event, or even bearing resentment towards anybody for anything we give that emotion power. Healing can only occur by altering our perception of the past, and in the greater understanding of why these events have happened in our life. Furthermore, as Christ tells us - it is only through our forgiveness of others that we can forever cut the karmic chord with them.]

In the Old Testament, we are told that ***“He who sheds man’s blood, shall have his blood shed by man.”*** (Gen., 9:6). This is actually another reference to karma. What few of us realize is that to judge any event, or even a person who commits a horrific crime against another, can be profoundly detrimental towards our own spiritual growth if we understand that this had happened because of an earlier cause committed by the apparent victim. In a greater spiritual context there can be no such thing as a ‘victim’ in this world. Essentially, if they had not perpetrated a similar act in the near or distant past then they in turn would not have been ‘victimized’. I know this is hard for many people to accept today when they see innocent children exploited or murdered, but in reality there are underlying reasons why even these awful events occur and we cannot judge them, or the perpetrators. The ‘Mahabharata’, tells us: ***“Just as a cow would find its own mother out of a thousand other cows, so also does the karma would never miss the right person to whom it may belong.”*** This is why Christ, Buddha, Krishna and other spiritual teachers have repeatedly warned us to love our enemies and not to judge anything or anybody because when we do we in turn will bring that same judgment upon ourselves. As difficult as this might be for some to emotionally accept we are all living a particular fate that has been decided for us long before we were born. In the case of a person’s murder, or exploitation at the hands of another, this could very well be the soul’s healing process from a previous life which has led to this particular path. This is not to say we should not be

sympathetic and compassionate towards the families and loved ones under such circumstances, but rather not to make rash judgments when these things occur.

KARMIC 'DEBTS'

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all born into the world with karmic debts. It's been said that the person who gives a gift should never remember it, and the recipient of such a gift should never forget it, such as the kindness of a stranger. Conversely, the Law of Karma maintains that when somebody has abused somebody and has caused them pain then they in turn will be abused and will experience a similar-like-condition, if not the life they are now living then in a future one. They must eventually suffer an equally measured retribution, while this has been referred to as paying off that karmic "debt". Cause and Effect forever mandates that we are paid back a 'tooth for a tooth', 'eye for an eye', and that there is an equal reaction to every action we perform. This also applies to good deeds as well where we in turn will be the beneficiary of what we have



measured out. To quote the ancient sage Hermes, *"That which is sown is not invariably brought forth, but that which is brought forth must have invariably been sown."*

Just as the effects of our actions follow us from one life to another the karmic doctrine also emphasized the necessity to erase these debts and not create new ones. When Jesus said to forgive our debts and the debts of others in the 'Lord's Prayer', he may very well have been alluding to man's karmic debts. This is why it is important to forgive everybody who has caused us pain in our life and forgive ourselves as well for the people we have hurt. This is crucial towards cutting the chord of that karma. For instance, if we have killed in a prior lifetime then we will experience a similar fate in this, or in a future life, no exceptions. But the person we killed maybe a thousand years ago must forgive us, and we must also forgive ourselves for that previous action. Otherwise, these two souls may follow each other from one life to the next until forgiveness is granted. This is why the 'victim' and the 'victimizer' will often times reincarnate together, not only in case of someone's death, but in most all conflicts where pain has been caused. Sometimes we are inexplicably drawn into abusive relationships, or born into them in the case of family because of this tension, and these same old relationships will continue over many lifetimes until love and forgiveness is granted. The scenarios played out between these individual souls might differ from one life to the next, however, the emotional attachment and the guilt associated will not. Again, from a

greater esoteric point of view there can be no accidents in life as all must occur as the cleansing of our cause and effect, and for the greater-hood and lessons of the soul.

MARRIAGE OF SOULS

By now it shouldn't be surprising to the reader that many of the sayings of Christ represented in the Gospels reveal something far more profound about ourselves than what our religious institutions have led us to believe. This allegorical interpretation I believe has remained hidden primarily because the Christian religion in time became a means through the centuries to inhibit inner-knowledge rather than encourage it. Just as the following statement of Jesus quoted in Mark's gospel has far more spiritual meaning to it than one might at first suspect:



“If a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery” (Mk., 10:12)

For the literalists who have interpreted this saying through the centuries - in ancient Judea, women possessed no such rights to divorce their husbands. If this was not the meaning then what was Christ referencing? It's clear that he was alluding to how we as spirits *marry ourselves to other souls* from one lifetime to another by way of the intertwining karma we commit with them. The term “woman” is actually used many times in the Bible as a metaphor for the human soul. Why would the soul be described as female? This was commonplace in the ancient world because she (our soul) was believed capable of giving birth to her greater Christ-Self, so to speak. In the ‘The Exegesis on the Soul’ (Nag Hammadi texts), we read: ***“Wise men of old gave the soul a feminine name. Indeed she is female in her nature as well. She even has her womb... as long as the soul keeps running about everywhere copulating with whomever she meets and defiling herself, she exists suffering her just deserts.”*** In other words, such a soul would be “guilty of adultery” by forsaking her Higher Self, or “husband” as Jesus tells us. The ‘Clementine Homilies’ repeat this same symbolism, only more plainly, saying: ***“to those who know the mystery, death is also produced by spiritual adultery. For whenever the soul is sown by others [i.e., commits karmic acts with others], then it is forsaken by the Spirit [Higher Self] as guilty of fornication, or adultery.”*** This mystic marriage symbolism thus refers to the higher and lower aspects of the spirit, or the karmic union of two souls, and is elsewhere repeated in the Gospels such as the Wedding at Cana, and in other Jesus' proverbs.

Another such example is the following saying of Christ, although, instead of condemning our soul's karmic "marriage" with others, he now allegorizes its liberation from them (Mk. 12:24-25):

For when they [spirits] shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

In Luke, there is added the even more revealing line "***neither can they die anymore***". What does this mean? Simply this – that when we as spirits cease to bind ourselves "in marriage" to other souls from one lifetime to another, via the karma we mutually sow with them, then we will not be reborn again in the world, which is to say "die anymore". To "rise from the dead" is analogous to being reborn in spirit as opposed to repeating human birth in the world. To become like "the angels which are in heaven" is also synonymous with the 'gods' of other ancient religions who were free from incarnation, and were thus referred to as immortal. This interpretation becomes all the more certain when we again refer to the *Clementine Homilies*: "***For in the resurrection of the dead, when they have been changed, as far as their bodies are concerned, into light, and have become like the angels, they shall be able to see Him... God is light seen out of the body...***"

Interestingly, in the many near-death-experiences people have related around the world they are often times remarkably similar. This is where they see a brilliant light, most frequently at the end of a long tunnel and similar to our own sun only far brighter. Almost invariably this light manifests itself in accordance with the person's own religious beliefs. In other words, if they are Christian - they will see Jesus in the light; if they are Buddhists – they will see Buddha; if they are Muslim – they'll meet with Allah, etc... In actuality, what they are all experiencing is the emanation of their own Higher Consciousness, or what the ancients had universally worshipped as the 'Logos', or 'Word of God'. It was, and is, this same Over Soul that rewinds the film of our life, so to speak, when we die where we in turn will experience first-hand the effects of our actions towards others.

THE MESSIAH-CHRIST

A Christ, or Messiah ('Anointed One'), while having the same literal meaning has traditionally been thought of as a man of God who would liberate the Jews, or in the case of Christian theology who died for our sins to save the entire human race. Originally, however this designation was very much synonymous with the 'Master', 'Buddha', or 'Sat Guru' title as used in India. It was, and is, this enlightened individual who was believed to be able to free the disciple's karma and thereby allow them to transcend rebirth; and to ascend into the highest heaven during and after their life on earth. Below is the dramatic

art representation of Moses parting the red sea in order to free his people from their long held “captivity” in “Egypt”. What is certain is that this was not a literal history, but again an allegorical representation.



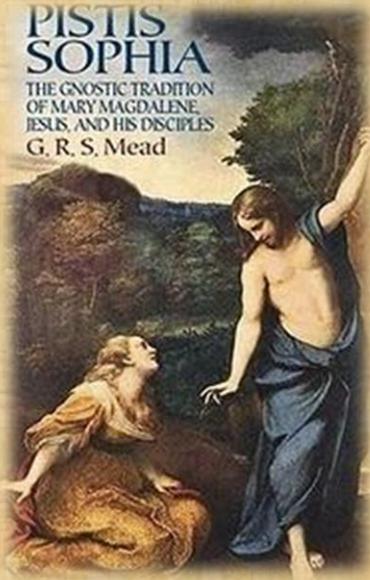
In the Nag Hammadi text ‘Origin of the World’, we read:

“The souls that were going to enter the modeled forms [human bodies] of the authorities... And it is they who were taken captive, according to their destinies, by the prime parent. And thus they were shut into the prisons of the modeled forms.”

Here we may have arrived at the true meaning of the many saviors of man who we are told have incarnated on earth throughout the ages. They are the heralded deliverers, or the theoretical impetus to release us from the captivity of our karma. Moses was the believed Messiah in his time who had symbolically freed the Hebrew ‘slaves’ from their ‘captivity’ in Egypt. While many have believed this to be a literal history there has never been any evidence that such an exodus of Jewish slaves ever took place. The term ‘Egypt’ as told to us by the 1st century Judaic writer Philo was yet another symbol for the human body, or again referring to the earth realm. Hence we find the greater meaning of Christ proclaiming in the gospels, ***“Your captivity is over... captivity in sin”*** - which is to say captivity in one’s karma. In John’s gospel, he becomes even more explicit in this teaching, saying, ***“everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.”*** This is absolutely true as for every action we commit we are indeed a “slave to” while having to play out a particular fate as its eventual consequence.

PISTOS SOPHIA

In the 1785, the Gnostic Christian gospel 'Pistos Sophia' (Faith Wisdom) was discovered and brought to the British Museum. Even though the early view had incorrectly ascribed it's authorship to the Gnostic Christian teacher Valentinus who died somewhere the middle of the 2nd century, this theory was abandoned in time. Scholars to this day generally do not comment on this work because like the Nag Hammadi Christian texts it reveals a much more mystical Christ who had taught many of the age-old Eastern doctrines that have all but been erased.



In the following passages, Christ once again tells us that we are all intrinsically bound by our fate, or destiny, from the moment we are born in the world as a result of our karma. Moreover, how even our own deaths and how we will die has been foreordained by our previous lives' actions:

“...the babe is born. Small in it is the compound of the power [the divine spirit], and small in it is the soul; and small in it is the counterfeiting spirit. The destiny on the contrary is large and followeth the soul and the counterfeiting spirit, until the time when the soul shall come forth out of the body on account of the type of death by which it shall slay it according to the death appointed by it by the rulers of the great Fate.”; “... is he to die by a wild beast, the destiny leadeth the wild beast against him until it slay him; or is he to die by a serpent, or is he to fall into a pit by mischance, or is he to hang himself, or is he to die in water... or through another death which is worse or better than this, in a word it is the destiny that followeth every man until the day of his death.”

In another fascinating exchange, Jesus explains to his disciples the fundamentals of karma:

“If on the contrary he [man] hath sinned once or twice or thrice, then he will be cast into the world again according to the type of sins which he hath committed...”

Christ then tells his followers that the ***“destiny followeth every man until the day of his death.”*** They then ask him: ***“My Lord, a robber and thief, whose sin is this persistently, when he cometh out of the body, what is his***

punishment?" Jesus answers by saying that such a soul would in his next life be *"cast... into a lame, halt and blind body."* Andrew: *"An arrogant, overweening man, when he cometh out of the body, what will happen to him?"* Jesus again explains that such a person would be *"cast... up into a lame and deformed body, so that all despise it persistently. This is the chastisement of the arrogant and overweening man."* These teachings of Christ, although never canonized in the Bible, were and are absolutely authentic, and further illustrate how he did indeed teach reincarnation and karma to his followers. Furthermore, how every birth in the world is not by random chance, but rather dictated by our previous lives' actions.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST

The redeeming value of Jesus' death, as well as the many other pre-Christian saviors of mankind who we are told also died for our sins, would have little or no meaning unless applied to the law of karma. Just as we have individual karma binding us in the world it has also been said that we have collective karmic debts as well. And it's these debts that prevent us from ascending to higher dimensional planes, or "heavens", and the theoretical reason why greater evolved souls ('avatars') such as the ever-present Guru/Christ/Buddha, etc., incarnate in the world, in part to absolve us from these debts. As we come to this point in our understanding and the realization that much of the events in our lives have occurred for a specific purpose - the question arises: why was Christ crucified? More to the point, how could he have suffered such a violent death if he was indeed a God-man who was born without sin as Christian dogma would have us believe? For those of us who are familiar with the Gospels account of his trial and tribulations also realize - many times over



he could have easily escaped from those who wished him harm, and yet did allow his capture and crucifixion to take place. While traditional Church dogma would have us believe this was all God's mission to cleanse the world of our sins - this may have been a partial after effect, but I believe the true reason for his crucifixion was far more personal than this. And that is that Jesus knew full well this was his inherited karma he had to play out in order to absolve himself of a past life debt. As a true spiritual master, which I believe he was, like all other enlightened men of God he would have undoubtedly been aware of his past lives and the karmic actions associated with them. Remember, it's in the Gospels that Jesus is recorded as saying, *"Before Abraham ever was - I am"* (Jn. viii, 58). A Christ, or enlightened soul, is rarely born into the world completely sin free, but can often

times be at the tail end of their own karma they must fulfill and obliterate in order that they may free themselves and others from the earth plane.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna informs his disciple Arjuna: ***“Many are my lives that are past and thine also, O Arjuna; all of them I know but thou knowest not.”*** Similarly, Buddha is said to have been aware of several of his lives as Bodhisattvas long before he became the ‘Enlightened One’. Did Jesus have past lives? He most certainly would have had to if he came into the world as he, himself, tells us before the time of Abraham. The American psychic Edgar Cayce had maintained that among Jesus’ many lives he had incarnated as Enoch, Melchizidek, Joseph (the patriarch) and *Joshua*. In regards to the latter, for anyone who has ever read the early Church Fathers accounts of Christ realize - he was believed to be the reincarnation of ‘Joshua son of Nun’ who was the successor to Moses. For instance, St. Irenaeus (2nd century), writing in his ‘2nd Apology’, states: ***“Joshua was a figure of Christ... Jesus, as I have now frequently remarked... was named by Moses ‘Jesus’ (Joshua)... For I have proved that it was Jesus who appeared to and conversed with Moses, and Abraham, and all the other patriarchs without exception...”*** This same theme is also repeated in ‘Barnabas’, which was originally part of the Christian canon: ***“...because the Father did manifest all things concerning his son Jesus in Jesus (Joshua) the Son of Nun.”*** These passages may very well shock present day Christians, although, it is known that the Essene and Nazarene sects had anticipated their future Messiah would be the reincarnation of Joshua son of Nun. ‘Nun’ literally translated means ‘fish’, and this is one of the earliest symbols of Christ. Joshua and Jesus are also the same identical name, the former is the Hebrew translation, and the latter is the Latin.

This takes us back to my earlier question, and that is - if we are to accept that the Law of Karma does exist then how could Jesus have been crucified if he was born without sin as the Christian Church would have us believe? Doesn’t this same Law tell us that he would have had to have performed a similar act upon another in a previous lifetime to warrant such a violent end? The answer my research has led me to may very well upset many Christians today and Jews alike because the truth has always been right in front of them in the form of the Torah, or Old Testament of the Bible.

In ancient Judea, the Jews are known to have crucified those whom they believed had violated their law as we are told in the Old Testament: ***“If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung [crucified] on a tree, you must not leave his body on the tree overnight.”*** [Deut. 21:22-23]. What makes this passage particularly relevant is because Paul describes Jesus as having been crucified in this exact manner in his letter to Galatians. Although, to him Christ’s death was man’s

redemption from 'the law' (of karma?): ***“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” [Gal., 3:13]. In ‘Acts’, we are similarly told that Jesus was crucified not on a Roman cross, but on a tree: *“The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had Jesus put to death by hanging him on a tree.” [13:39]; and again *“They took him down from the tree”* [13:29]. In the ‘Letter of Peter to Philip’ (Nag Hammadi texts) we have the same declaration: *“Jesus came down... he was crucified on a tree”.*****

There is a reason why I have enumerated these earliest accounts of Christ’s crucifixion as we shall soon discover. That having been said, I went in search for a similar act Joshua might have committed against somebody which would have warranted what had befallen the same spirit who had manifested as Jesus Christ. To my amazement, and what must now be viewed as the most compelling evidence as to why Jesus was actually crucified, I not only found a similar act, but almost an exact karmic replica.

In the Old Testament, we have the following account of Joshua crucifying the “king of Ai *on a tree*”, which bears more than an uncanny resemblance to Christ’s death:

“He (Joshua) hung (crucified) the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take his body from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day. – (Joshua, 8:29)

As previously stated, even the greatest God men born in the world can have karma inherited from a previous life. This does not diminish the greatness of Christ, but rather reinforces the greater meaning of his crucifixion which in turn should help us understand our own plights in the world. This astonishing account of a “king” having been crucified by Joshua-Jesus may also be the reason why Christ was referred to as the “king of the Jews” during his own crucifixion. In the final analysis, it was his awareness of his previous life’s karma that he had committed as Joshua (i.e., crucifying the “king of Ai”) which allowed him to endure his enemy’s wrath as Christ, and why he asked God to “forgive them”. In essence, because he knew the same Law of cause and effect that placed him in that tragic circumstance would be the very one inevitably back-lashed upon them. Christ’s last words are said to have been “it is accomplished”. This he did indeed do by absolving the karmic debt he had inherited as Joshua and ultimately triumphing over death. An ancient adage of India exclaims, ***“a saint is simply a sinner that never gave up”***.