

ALBERT DE ROCHAS

Ancient Beliefs and Magnetic Sleep

SUCCESSIVE LIVES · NOTEBOOK 1

From Egypt to the first regression sessions

PART I · PART II, CHAPTERS 1-2

BLUSABOOKS



Ancient Beliefs and Magnetic Sleep

ALBERT DE ROCHAS · SUCCESSIVE LIVES (PARIS, 1911) · PART I
· PART II, CHAPTERS 1–2

Every chapter — four parts

IN DE ROCHAS'S WORDS

*the complete text, checked against the
French edition of 1911*

IN PLAIN WORDS

what happens in this chapter

TERMS

the chapter concepts explained

WHAT MODERN SCIENCE SAYS

*hypnosis, memory and what is still
unexplained*

A historical text, not a manual.

BlusaBooks · MMXXVI

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FOREWORD

This notebook opens the series "Successive Lives" — a complete English translation, in five parts, of Albert de Rochas's book *Les vies successives* ("Successive Lives", Paris, 1911).

Who de Rochas was. Albert de Rochas d'Aiglun (*Albert de Rochas d'Aiglun*, 1837–1914) was an officer of the French army engineers — his contemporaries called him the colonel — and later administrator of the École Polytechnique in Paris. He became best known as a researcher of hypnosis and "animal magnetism". At his estate of l'Agnélas near Voiron, in Grenoble and in Paris he spent years putting "sensitives" to sleep and carefully writing down what they said and did. Out of these records grew a book about previous and future lives.

What is in this notebook. The author's preface; the first part of the book — ancient beliefs about the soul and repeated lives (from the Egyptians to the Gospels) and the reasonings of more recent thinkers (from Léon Denis to Armand Sabatier); chapter I of the second part, on magnetic sleep and the "fluidic body"; and the beginning of chapter II with the first two cases — the diary of the student Laurent (1893) and the sessions with the servant Joséphine (1904).

How to read it. Every chapter has four parts. *In de Rochas's words* — the author's full text without cuts, with his own footnotes. It is followed by our three parts: *In plain words* — what actually happens in the chapter; *Terms* — the chapter's key notions; *What modern science says* — how these observations are judged today. This is a text of 1911, and we leave its language, its views and the form of its session records untouched; our own assessment appears only in our parts.

In the series "Successive Lives":

1 · Ancient Beliefs and Magnetic Sleep 2 · Back Through the Lives 3 · Eleven Lives 4 · The Astral Body and Premonitions 5 · The Evolution of the Soul

CHAPTER I

ANCIENT BELIEFS

IN DE ROCHAS'S WORDS

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The immortality of the soul has at all times been the subject of the philosophers' meditations, and most religions have affirmed it by invoking the existence of a paradise and a hell; but the question of successive lives has arisen only in the minds of those who, not content with a blind and simplistic faith, have sought what the most equitable conditions would be for rewarding or punishing, throughout eternity, the good or evil deeds committed during the infinitely short span that is our earthly life. In the first part of this book we have reproduced some of the reasonings which seemed to us the most typical, together with a summary of certain ancient beliefs.

To these earlier reasonings there have been added, in our own day, experiments and observations which, without settling the problem once and for all, nevertheless bring information of great importance. We have set them out in the 2nd and 3rd parts. The second is devoted to the detailed description of experiments which appear highly convincing but which are in reality no more than raw material; it will be for the future to discern the share of truth they contain. That task will doubtless be made easier by the study of analogous but less characteristic phenomena, which form the subject of the third part.

In the fourth part, lastly, we have tried to shed some light on these manifestations, in which the true and the false seem to merge. If we have not yet been able to recognise the laws governing regions which are only beginning to be explored, that no more prevents those laws from existing than the apparent incoherence of the planets' motions prevented the planets from obeying Kepler's laws before they were formulated. Centuries passed before man suspected the forces he had at hand in steam and electricity. How then should we wonder that we do

not yet know how to make sure use of psychic forces, whose handling is infinitely more delicate because they are alive?

PART ONE. ANCIENT BELIEFS AND MODERN REASONINGS

THE EGYPTIANS

In an article published on 1 February 1895 by the "Revue des Deux Mondes"¹, M. Edouard Schuré studied the Egyptian beliefs concerning the other life.

¹ Revue des Deux Mondes, issue of 1 February 1895.

After death the soul is said to be drawn upward by Hermes, its guiding genius, and held back below by its shadow, still riveted to the material body.

If it resolves to follow Hermes, it reaches the boundary of the sublunary world, or Amenti, a boundary called the Wall of Iron. The way out is guarded by elemental spirits whose fluidity takes on every animal form, and who assail both the living man who seeks to enter the invisible by magic and the departed soul that seeks to leave the Amenti and enter the celestial region. These guardians of the threshold are represented in Egyptian mythology by the Cynocephali; Anubis with the jackal's head is their master; the Greeks made Cerberus of them.

Once the soul is outside the Amenti, it has the full memory of its previous lives, which on leaving the body it had recovered only in part.

It then sees its past faults and, enlightened by its experience, goes where it must go and re-enters the sphere of the earth's attraction. Those who have hardened themselves in evil to the point of losing all sense of truth have killed in themselves even the last memory of the celestial life: they have cut the bond with the divine spirit, they have pronounced their own annihilation, that is to say the dispersal of their consciousness among the elements. Those in whom the desire for good survives, but overmastered by evil, have condemned themselves to a new and more toilsome incarnation. Those, on the contrary, in whom the love of truth and the will to good have prevailed over the instincts from below, are ready for the celestial journey, in spite of their errors and passing faults. Then the divine spirit gathers into itself all that is pure and immortal in the soul's earthly memories, while all that is false, impure and perishable dissolves in the Amenti with the empty shadow.

Thus the soul, through a series of trials and incarnations, destroys itself or makes itself immortal, as it chooses.

THE CHALDEANS

The Chaldean civilisation is perhaps older than the Egyptian. The Magi held that the soul evolved by a continuous ascent towards perfection. Unconscious at first, it passed successively through all the kingdoms of nature before arriving in the world of humanity, where it appears with the intellectual faculties it has gradually acquired in the course of its past existences. It is destined to develop still further and to experience thousands of degrees of higher intelligence.

During the human period, incarnate souls are guided by *férouers*, who are the souls of the dead remarkable for their virtues; when it is incarnate, each soul creates for itself an envelope more or less subtle, more or less brilliant, according to its actions, which is called the *Kerdar* (it is the *Karma* of the Hindus). In each existence it forgets its previous existences, but it keeps its *Kerdar* with the faculties it has acquired. When, after a series of incarnations, it has reached a sufficient degree of purity, it is no longer reincarnated, and its *kerdar*, now become a *férouer*, remembers all its previous existences.

THE HINDUS

The *Bhagavad-Gita*, or Song of the Blessed One, supposed to have been composed about the 10th century before Christ, tells how Prince Arjuna, on the point of joining battle, recognises in the enemy army kinsmen whom he loves; and as he is crushed with grief at the thought that in the fight he might cause their death, Krishna consoles him by revealing to him the doctrine of transmigration:

"These bodies which enclose the souls, which make their dwelling in them and which are eternal, incorruptible and incomprehensible, are finite things... Both I and thou have had many births. Mine are known only to me; but thou knowest not thine... He who, by conviction, acknowledges my birth and my works for what they are, does not, after leaving his mortal remains, enter another creature, but returns into me myself²..."

2 *Bhagavad-Gita*, translation by Ch. Wilkins and Parraud, Paris, 1922, pp. 25–52 and 53.

The Hindus believe that successive lives create for the soul an envelope called Karma, which is modified for good or for ill according to all its good or bad deeds.

THE GAULS

Caesar, speaking of the Gauls, says: "... Above all they wish to persuade men that souls do not perish, and they believe that after death they pass from one body into another³".

3 In the *Guerre des Gaules* (The Gallic War) (vol. VI) Caesar, speaking of the Gauls, says: *In primis hoc volunt persuadere non interire animas sed ab aliis post mortem ad alios transire putant.*

PLATO

"...Above all, one must put faith in the lawgiver in all things, but chiefly when he says that the soul is entirely distinct from the body; that even in this life it alone makes us what we are; that our body is only an image which accompanies each of us; and that it is with good reason that the bodies of the dead have been given the name of simulacra; that our individual being is by its nature an immortal substance, which is called the soul; that after death this soul goes to find other gods, to render them an account of its deeds, as tradition says; an account as consoling for the good man as it is fearful for the wicked.

...We must by no means believe that this mass of flesh which is carried to the tomb is the very person who is so dear to us. On the contrary, we must bear in mind that this son, this brother, this person whom we mourn and to whom we pay the last duties, has left us after completing and fulfilling his course. *Les Lois* (The Laws)⁴

4 Plato, *Les lois* (The Laws), translation by Grou, Paris, Garnier, n.d. Book XII; pp. 491–492.

... Let us always keep faith with those old and holy beliefs, that the soul is immortal, and that after its release from the body it meets judges and terrible punishments. *Lettres* (Letters)⁵

5 Plato, *Lettres* (Letters), translation by Dacier and Grou, Paris, Charpentier, n.d. Letter VII, pp. 376–377.

It is a very ancient opinion, says Socrates, that souls go from the earth to the underworld, that they come back again from the underworld to the earth and are born again from the dead. If this is indeed so, and if the living are born again from the dead, where then would our souls be, if not in the underworld? for they could