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ASTROLOGY

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The facts and fallacies of analyzing past lives

Water terrified Bruce Kelly. Even the sight of a swimming pool caused him to tremble. He did not know why, for he never was in danger while swimming or boating, even as a small child. He avoided enclosed spaces and couldn't stand to be in an airplane. Though a natural athlete and a successful sales manager of medical supplies, he simply could not shake these deep-rooted fears. Finally he sought professional therapy. By hypnotic regression, a therapist forced Kelly's memories backward in this life, asking him to remember anything related to water in his teens, then his childhood, then as an infant and then... Kelly shouted at his startled therapist, "Mayday, Mayday"--Anglicized m'aidez, French for "Help me," the international distress call. "We're hit, we're sinking," he screamed. Suddenly his last life and his traumatic death on a World War II submarine had opened to his inner vision, and in that flash, the origin of all his fears was revealed. Finally, water could be his friend.

This fascinating true-life reincarnation case was showcased on the TV program "Unsolved Mysteries." Because Kelly had researched and identified his past life, Hinduism Today was able to obtain the birth charts of both lives, as well as the

horoscope for the moment of death. Upon examination we found definite connections between both birth charts, but many more between the death chart and the present birth chart. This is often the case when a death is traumatic.

In this life, Kelly's ascendant or rising sign is Libra, with Mars, Saturn and Neptune. This is already revealing, as Saturn relates strongly to past life characteristics, and with Mars, the planet of violence, and Neptune the lord of the seas, we start to see a window into his past. In his previous life as James Johnston of Alabama, USA, Rahu (the moon's north node) was in Libra. Rahu is an indicator of one's dharma, where one is headed or directing energy. The unfulfilled dharma of Johnston relating to Libra, became the rising sign of his next life as Kelly. But more significant, Mars and Saturn were in Aries when Johnston's submarine was hit by a torpedo and slowly sank, and in the next life both planets reversed to their opposite sign placement in Libra. To top it off, the ascendant was Libra when Johnston died, which became the ascendant of Kelly. Johnston was born with the Moon in the watery sign of Scorpio, in the 12th house, afflicted by Saturn, an indication of his early death in water in a distant place, while Neptune was in Cancer, in the 8th house (of death). Kelly was reborn with the Moon in the watery sign of Cancer along with Ketu, an indication of the water phobia from the past-life horror of slowly drowning as the submarine filled with water. Jupiter had traveled once around the zodiac since Johnston left his body at the bottom of the Celebes Sea near Indonesia and arrived back again in Taurus when he was reborn, twelve years later, in Glendale, California. In this case, the intensity of the moment of death, along with its planetary positions, were carried forward to the next life. At death the Sun, Mercury and Venus were in Capricorn and at rebirth the Sun, Mercury, Venus and

Rahu were all in Capricorn, as if Kelly was picking up right where he left off. When the planets came back into a similar vibration as the moment of death, the soul of Johnston was impelled to be reborn.

Actual documented case studies of reincarnation have helped dispel many misunderstandings about the process. The first is that if the past life was rather blasÃ© or very short, the present life chart may not relate to it at all, but connect to several lives back. Second, not all of the aspects of your present horoscope necessarily relate to a specific past life. The choice of a new birth, along with the horoscope that accompanies it, is somewhat like buying a new car with unwanted extras. We may be obliged to accept certain anomalies in life in order to acquire the basic birth pattern needed to fulfill our karmic debts. Some aspects of our present life may be simply part of a package deal. For example, a soul may need to take birth when Mercury is in the 12th house in Pisces, to bring forward a great spiritual and internalized intellect, but the same combination could cause chronic feet problems. We should not presume that this person misused his feet in a past life, such as by kicking a cow, and is now paying the price. They have simply accepted a minor inconvenience to acquire the greater asset. For this reason it is not possible to relate every planetary position in a birth chart to a specific past life deed and therefore not possible to indicate precisely who you were in a past life, based purely on a birth chart. But when faced with inexplicable fears or desires that have long puzzled you in this life, it may be helpful to look further back than this lifetime for the original cause.