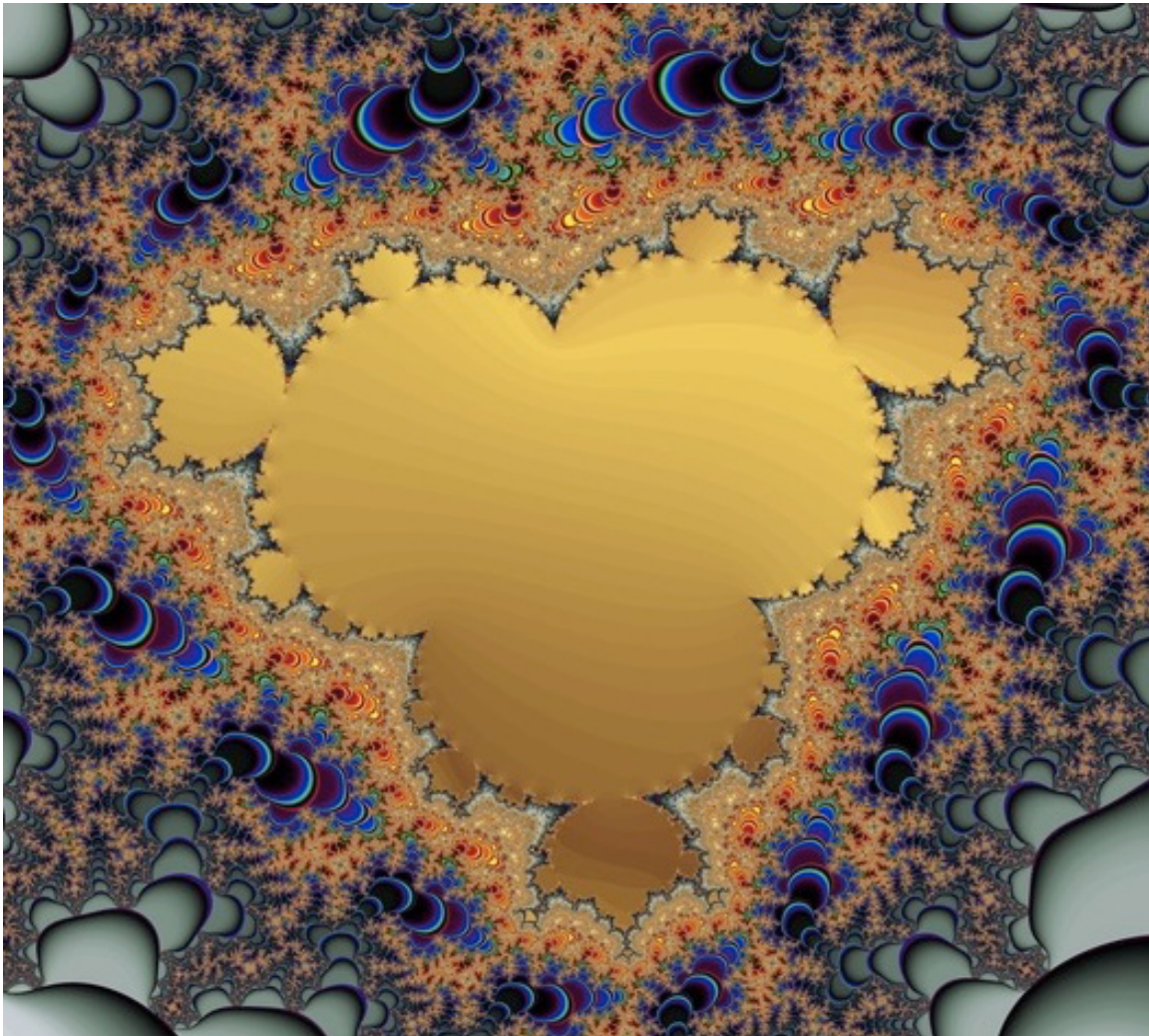


# JOAN GRANT AND THE GIFT OF FAR MEMORY



**Luigi Morelli**

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“I lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was such a one as Christ among my contemporaries....”

“And Hawthorne, too, I remember as one with whom I sauntered in old heroic times along the banks of the Scamander amid the ruins of chariots and heroes....”

As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now as a New-Englander.... As far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of previous existences.

*H. D. Thoreau*

“During the last twenty years,” writes Joan Grant in her autobiography, “seven books of mine have been published as historical novels, which to me are biographies of previous lives I have known.” Each of the books treats a different life, except two that form a sequel. The first book of the series—covering Egyptian history of the third millennium BC—is called *Winged Pharaoh*. It was published in 1937 and is probably the first such event in literature.

Looking at this sequence of lives offers us a wealth of insights into the laws of karma and reincarnation. These lives were not the only ones that Joan could recall; the others simply lacked literary value. But what credit can be given to such revelations? Let us look more closely at Grant’s historical biography before turning to its karmic unfolding.

### **Joan Grant: At Home in Both Worlds<sup>1</sup>**

Joan Grant was born on April 12, 1907. Her mother had distinct faculties of premonition and was interested in the spiritualism of séances that enjoyed

popularity at the time. Her father was an atheist of a scientific, materialistic mindset. Joan grew up receiving instruction from private tutors and was never given religious education. Working for four years as laboratory assistant to her father in the Mosquito Control Institute allowed her to develop some understanding of the scientific method.

At age four, Joan started to experience regular visits from her deceased grandmother, Jennie. These visits were triggered by an accident (she had been trapped under a very heavy door that had fallen on her) that might have been critical in their initiation. Jennie came only when Joan was alone, and her visits were not the only ones. To the child, discarnate entities were not always clearly recognizable from the living. Thus Joan learned to take a cautious approach and to not show recognition of strangers until everybody else did. At age five, she was visited by a Roman Catholic priest who had just died. He appeared in reality to contact her mother and acknowledge to her that he was wrong about his assumptions about life after death.

Together with the ability to contact departed souls and partly through their aid, Joan could also foretell future events. Before the outbreak of World War I, she met a certain Billy, whom she loved and who promised to marry her, but that was not to be. He knew he was going to be killed in the war, and so did Joan. Years later, a similar constellation of events reoccurred. She had met a man by the name of Esmond, who came to her house. The man had dreamt of her as Joan had dreamt of him. Jennie, the deceased grandmother, revealed to her that he would soon die. In fact, Esmond accidentally died while cleaning a loaded pistol, as Joan would learn from a dream before the death was confirmed as fact. It was a difficult experience to digest.

Joan's dream life provided part of the healing. She dreamt of Esmond and derived joy from the experience. In their last meeting, Esmond told her that he had to expend a great deal of energy in order to meet her in her dreams. Then he sent her back to continue her life without him. Joan healed her wounds and never dreamt of him again.

Joan had another unusual psychic faculty, which was revealed to her while she was still a child. Spending her holidays in New York, she chanced to arrive at the metro station just after a man had jumped in front of the train. Joan saw his bloody corpse. At night she had a dream in which she was Agnes, most likely the man's daughter, comforting the man and helping him to die without fear. In the dream, she helped to rebuild his body and reunite him with Agnes.

The years of the war brought about an unusual situation for Joan's family life. Her mother, with the help of professional nurses, had taken on the care of sick or injured soldiers. Joan realized that she, herself, was working with them in her sleep life. She offered explanations to the unbelievers who had died and encouraged others to return to their bodies if it was not yet their time to die. She lived all these experiences as if they were fully physically real, and she would eventually wake up smelling blood and gangrene. The maturity of her soul had to struggle with the physical vehicle of a child's body. She began dreading the moment of falling asleep and tried to keep herself awake. One morning she related to a soldier her experience of having met a young deceased soul the previous night. Piecing together the facts, the soldier discovered his name, regiment, and nationality and verified the events via news reports.

### **Connecting the Pieces of a Puzzle**

In yet other ways Joan came to know the most frightening confines of the soul world. For a time, her house was visited by Mr. Meade, a medium. Joan saw how spirits made use of him. Acting as if possessed, he could speak in foreign tongues with voices other than his own. During a séance, Joan implored him to stop offering himself as a vehicle for spirits of an inferior nature. For three months he managed to abstain from a practice that, after all, defined a great part of his identity. When he resumed, he fell forty feet from a dockyard and remained crippled. It was after that event that Joan resolved to become a “scientific materialist,” and for a time turned her back on the inner world that challenged her intellect and adaptation to life.

Many years later Joan went with her husband, Leslie, to Brussels. In the hotel room she was assigned, she relived the suicide episode of a man who had died there five days before. She was engulfed by his feelings and failed to provide herself enough protection. She saw the scene of the man’s suicide over and over again, and was finally able to release her fear through weeping and sobbing.

The impact of these experiences, and many others, tempted Joan to turn away from her gifts in order to live a “normal” life. Over time, however, she decided to train her psychic ability by waking up at night and writing down her dreams. On average twice a week, she had either a “far memory” dream or “contemporary” dream. Far memory, as Joan called it, manifested in those vivid dreams that related to herself in another incarnation. In “contemporary” dreams she was called to offer psychic succor. An example of the latter was the case of a French sailor, drowned at sea, who did not

know he was dead; Joan had to argue the point with him in order to help him move further on his way. The next day, the news carried an article about a French ship—bearing the name she had heard in the dream—that had burned in the English Channel.

There was yet another significant turning point in the development of Grant's psychic abilities: her meeting with Hilary Durham-Matthews, leading to the first experiment in psychometry. Holding an old sword in her hands, she described the man to whom it belonged, and later found out that she had given the correct information. She carried on other experiments of psychometry at the British Museum and was able to give amazingly detailed descriptions of monuments and events associated with an Assyrian sculpture.

Although psychometry was also the starting point of recollections of her life in Egypt, portrayed in *Winged Pharaoh*, she soon realized the limitations of the method. She decided to sharpen her ability to remember her previous personalities that she already had in childhood. This she did by going to known episodes and trying to extend the recall, concentrating on the details, even the trivial, then trying to alter the scenario. If the scenario changed, she could dismiss the experience as subjective; if not, then the experience would be objective. Another validity check of an experience is to notice whether emotions and feelings of a previous life recall are as strong and vivid as if it were occurring in the present. If emotions are very intense, the results can be felt in the body through physical symptoms.

All of the above point to a highly developed faculty of observation. The care for detail characterizes Joan Grant's description of her recollections, even to excess. It was as if she had the ability to recapture, at will, any given

part of her life, actual or previous, down to every single sense impression, and convey it as if she were looking at it objectively. This—as we will see—seems to be the heritage of the rigorous training received in the Egyptian priesthood, as well as in Greek philosophy and to a more limited extent in the modern scientific approach.

The life that was most likely to be recalled by Joan was the earliest one that had most resonance with the present. She could still remember the episode moments after coming out of the meditative state, but not ten minutes later. When present to the spiritual world, her voice would acquire a wider range of tonalities and emotional qualities than her usual flat tone in her present incarnation.

The psychic also noticed that the physical environment would be prominent when emotions were under control. If emotions were strong, then other sense impressions would come to the fore. In fact, the sense impressions recorded from the same environment would always differ, according to the mood that the previous personality had in the moment recalled. If she worked too hard during a single session, she developed headaches, feeling as if the top of her head were sorely bruised and had become as thin as a fontanel.

Joan's first book came about when Joan was doing psychometry on three ancient Egyptian scarabs. The first two led to barely any result. The last, a turquoise scarab, brought back past-life memories. In one of those, Joan, shivering with cold, relived the episode of her own "temple-death" initiation as Sekeeta in ancient Egypt. It was the beginning of transcripts that later went into the writing of the book *Winged Pharaoh*. Joan's research into her

distant past underwent many gradual changes. At first she was not able to go where she wanted and needed to take episodes as they came. Sometimes she saw her previous self of Sekeeta as an observer; at other times she was totally identified. After the initial recordings, which were done via psychometry, Joan could retrieve far-memory experiences without touching the scarab. Most of her first book consisted of the reconstruction of pieces that came out with no chronological order. Over time, Joan became able to tune in the previous life scene that she wanted to explore.

During the earlier stages of retrieval of her Egyptian life, she could not tell whether she was speaking or not. Neither did she know whether she was speaking slowly or quickly, softly or loudly. Eventually she could accept instructions without interrupting the flow of communication. When her husband Leslie read back the text dictated while in an altered state, Joan could add to what she had said.

Reconstructing the sequence of pieces received via far memory was like connecting the pieces of a puzzle. Interestingly, an interrupted session would often resume exactly where it had left off. Far memory is a very precise form of seeing; it is like pointing a telescope to an exact part of the heavens. As in the case of the telescope, far memory reveals only a limited aspect of a previous life, such as a particular event. Reality as revealed through far memory seldom, if ever, coincides with conjecture resulting from previously available material.

The retrieval of previous-life memories did not occur sequentially. In fact, although her first book portrayed the oldest recorded life, the second one treated the most recent in time, before her present incarnation.



### **The Gift of Many Lifetimes**

We can now rebuild the sequence of Joan Grant's incarnations and see what general trends emerge that accompanied her individuality throughout the millennia.

The first Egyptian incarnation as Sekeeta occurred probably around 5000 B.C. At that time she was Sekeeta, daughter of the pharaoh. From early childhood she was able to receive guidance through dreams. At age thirteen she joined the temple training in order to later assist her brother, with whom she was bound to share the role of pharaoh. In the temple she was trained as a seer of Maat. She could travel out of her body and relate the experience to a scribe, who would record it. She was also trained to bring succor to other souls by giving them instruction through images. The ability to read life records of other people allowed her to be a temple counselor. The culmination of her training led her to undergo the ritual death of initiation. Through it she could experience and overcome all the layers of evil and reach into the pure spiritual world. She took on the priestly name of Meryneyt.

The following North American incarnation as Piyanah—told in the book *Scarlet Feather*—occurred a few millennia before our time. In her American incarnation, the soul of Piyanah was motivated by the need to inspire harmony between men and women in a society that was polarized in this respect. She had been raised with Raki, a boy her own age, son of her aunt who had died soon after the birth. Her mother, with the children and another woman, lived in seclusion from the tribe because, although she was the wife of the chief, she held in her consciousness the knowledge of the cultural

roots of her people. It was the knowledge of the so-called Before People, the civilizations of America that had reached high cultural achievements and whose knowledge had been all but forgotten.

To Raki and Piyanah fell the task of redeeming that knowledge and teaching all those who wanted to follow it in order to form a new tribe. They had to fight against an ingrained culture that kept the sexes separate from each other and was fed by superstition instead of true knowledge of spiritual matters. After acquiring the status of joint-chiefs, by achieving the tests that the tribe had set, Piyanah and Raki led their tribe on a strenuous migration. However, their greatest challenge was to accept that the people were very different from their chiefs and needed education—a long-term process that they actually resisted—falling back on the comfort of the old ways.

The following incarnation, as the man Raab Hotep, occurred around 2000 B.C., but the date was not established with mathematical certitude, at least not during Joan's lifetime. The accounts are spread over the two books *Eyes of Horus* and *Lord of the Horizon*. Egypt was then entering a time of decadence. Raab Hotep belonged to a resistance movement called the "Watchers" and to the nucleus of individuals called the "Eyes of Horus." Their chosen pharaoh, Amenemhet, brought three centuries of cultural renewal and peace.

Raab Hotep was the son of the priestess Oyahbe, initiate of the cult of Anubis. He had the faculty of remembering his dream experiences and wanted to become a priest of Anubis. However, after joining the Eyes of Horus, Raab had to sacrifice these gifts to take on the life of a soldier and, later, commander, all of which smothered the fine sensitivity he would need

in order to lead the life of the cult. For years the Watchers planned an insurrection and the restoration of the cult of the Sun god, Ra. Their aim was to supplant the cult of the false god Set, who fed on rich tributes and human sacrifice. Raab was given leadership of the armies of the south, marching against the usurper Menhet, who opposed Amenemhet, the legal heir and choice of the Watchers. The successful insurrection helped to restore Ra worship against the decadent priesthood for another 300 years.

Another two incarnations occurred in Egypt in the centuries following the reign of Amenemhet. In one place, Joan Grant refers to them as “two happy, uneventful lives.”<sup>2</sup> In a recollection mentioned in the book *Life as Carola*, there is an important mention of a warrior-for-the-light at a time when darkness reigned over Egypt. The warrior had fought with a “dark weapon.”<sup>3</sup>

The soul reincarnated once again in Egypt at the time before the birth of Moses, as seen in the book *So Moses Was Born*. This incarnation had a different tenor. Egypt was facing a time of great decadence due to the spread of the cult of Amen-Ra, a distortion of the previous Ra cult. Political power was barely holding the spiritual authorities in check, and most of the wealth was accumulating in the hands of the latter. The soul, reincarnated under the name Nebunefer, was the legal heir to the throne of Egypt. His mother had died when he was three and he had been raised with Sensen, who was an orphan, and whom he later married.

Nebunefer still had a predisposition for the life of the temple but had to forego the training since the priesthood was too decadent and ill able to offer the way to true spiritual perception. Nebunefer also renounced the throne in favor of his brother Ramoses (known to history as Ramses), because he was

mindful of the delicate health of his wife Sensen.

Foregoing the throne was a hard test for the young heir, who feared being perceived as a coward. He also had to struggle with the loss of power that his new identity required of him. The trial was accentuated by the early death of Sensen. Nebunefer, deep in grief, was prevented from committing suicide only by the active presence of his wife in a dream. Through the help of Meena, Sensen's foster mother, Nebunefer was finally able to integrate the experience; and with Sensen's communication from the other side, he was able to become a helper and counselor to those in need. Sensen's guidance also allowed him to foretell some future events.

Eighteen years after the death of Sensen, Nebunefer returned to see his brother, the Pharaoh, who wanted to father a "winged pharaoh," an initiate king who would restore the old spiritual splendor of Egypt. In a dream, Ramoses had seen that such a winged one would be born to him from a virgin. Nebunefer received confirmation in a dream that such an initiate had been born, and he helped lead his brother to the place where the woman was giving birth. Unbeknownst to the pharaoh, the woman was a Hebrew, and the initiate would later be Moses. Nebunefer was unable to play a further role in the life of the newborn, as he had hoped. A dream indicated to him that some element of impatience prevented him from playing this role in the young man's life.

The soul reappeared in the second century B.C. in Greece (told in *Return to Elysium*). She was Lucina, daughter of a priestess of Hera in Mycenae. Both her mother and father had died very early. The orphan was raised by a simple and uneducated couple on an island not far from the mainland. She

had been carefully kept isolated from any notion of the gods and secluded from social contact until the age of thirteen. At that time she was taken under the wing of a doctor and philosopher, Aesculapius (not the historical one), who lived in Elysium. Aesculapius had already adopted an early form of logical materialism, rejecting any notion of life after death. These ideas starkly contrasted with the world of experience of Lucina. Aesculapius could not accept her world until, propelled by his growing doubts, he decided one day to submit her abilities to a scientific test. A doctor from Athens sent them four patients he could not heal with traditional means. Lucina was able to offer correct diagnoses and heal their soul afflictions. Aesculapius was forced to accept the reality of her world. However, afraid of the harsh trials this world posed to Lucina, he decided to forbid her to live at that level of experience. This and other experiences triggered Lucina's desire to leave Elysium and go to Rome.

In the capital of the empire, Lucina met with Salonus, another doctor. This wealthy man was open to the kind of experience Lucina had, although he did not have it himself. The two had a sincere desire to help their fellow men, coupled with a certain desire for power. As a priestess in a time of great decadence, Lucina's life was very lonely. The established need to be a virgin and the rigorous life that she chose for herself soon created too much soul tension. Lucina finally turned her back on her vocation and mission, and eloped with Nigellus, a married Roman senator. The couple had a son but the union was unhappy, and Lucina came to realize that she had neglected her true calling.

Another Roman incarnation is announced at the end of *Return to Elysium* in which she is the daughter of a Roman father and a Greek mother. It was

brief and ended in suicide. Before the incarnation that the book *Life as Carola* treats, Joan Grant mentions a brief incarnation as a knight. It is not clear where it occurred. However, she knew that it had occurred around the time of the Third Crusade in which the knight was involved.<sup>2</sup> In that life, the soul was completely absorbed in the discipline of the warrior. To that he gave precedence over his wife and home.

The last narrated biography is that of Carola di Ludovici, who was born near Perugia on May 4, 1510, and died in the autumn of 1537. This life, described in *Life as Carola*, emerged before the end of the process that led to the writing of *Winged Pharaoh*. The outline of the story was dictated in about two hundred words in a twenty-five minute session. It took more than 200 sessions to record the whole biography.<sup>3</sup> Carola was born a bastard, abandoned by her father, who was a member of nobility. She was banished at the age of seven, most likely at the instigation of her paternal grandmother, who no doubt feared the residual love that existed between her son and Olivia, Carola's mother, who was a commoner.

As a child Carola had retained a connection with the spirit and could communicate with a being she called "the Shining One," who could assuage her fears and answer existential questions. Together with her mother, who could play the lute, and a man by the name of Bernard, she embarked on the life of wandering players, which took her across many parts of Italy. Olivia soon died, stabbed in the heart during riots in the city of Padua. Carola, who had learned to play the lute and sing, continued to travel from town to town with Bernard, the dwarf Petruccio, and the singer Lucia. After being separated from all of them, she returned to Perugia and entered the convent

of the White Sisters.

The first old abbess was kind and understanding of her mystical leanings. The second was a zealot with a cruel streak. The situation inevitably led to a confrontation. Carola, branded a heretic, was tortured with scourging and hot irons. Fortunately, a nun intervened secretly in order to help her escape further torture or death. Leaving the convent, Carola directed herself to the house of Carlos di Ludovici, a nobleman. The encounter was, for her, the recognition of a previous-life tie, dating to her incarnation as Sekeeta and her life in the temple. Carlos married her despite their great difference in age, moved solely by the desire to ensure her financial security. He died soon afterward, and Carola's death followed closely as a consequence of the hardships she had endured.

On different occasions, upon searching her soul in seclusion and peace, Carola came to experience the continuity of previous and future lives. She also realized that the knowledge she once had was not available to her until she could compensate for a deed in the barely mentioned Egyptian incarnation where she had fought for the light but used a "dark weapon."

Two brief mentions of incomplete lives follow. The first was one of the earliest memories of the young Joan. She knew herself as a girl, age nineteen, in Paris. She was held in a dungeon and later beheaded at the guillotine. This was followed by the memory of the moment after death.<sup>4</sup> On another occasion, Joan Grant mentioned the English woman, Lavinia, who had been paralyzed from the waist down due to a riding accident. She had been the wife of a jealous husband.<sup>5</sup>

### **Overview of the Incarnations: A Humbling of the Soul**

In a sense, Joan's most "perfect" incarnation lies at the beginning. As the pharaoh Sekeeta—who co-rules with her brother Neyah—she has undergone the risky initiation-death of the temple. She has also attained the highest political power. The road has been paved for her by heredity alone. Egypt is then in a period of time that is at the height of spiritual development. Although living a life without major blemish, Sekeeta is simply following the mandates of physical heritage leading to the role that she is to play.

In the next incarnation, outer circumstances are similar, although the setting is very different. In her North American tribe, Piyanah shares power once again with her brother Raki, but that is the culmination of a long process. To reach that position, she must first accept isolation from her tribe, and then fight against a culture of separation and superstition that has severed itself from its spiritual roots. She can achieve this goal through the help and love of another soul, Raki, with whom she is deeply united throughout time. In that incarnation, the individual has to work to modify a given culture by first accepting it completely and then working at reestablishing values that lie closer to its original cultural roots. Once again she is in a position of leadership. This time she looks back to restoring the thrust of the original Native-American culture.

Destiny takes the soul to Egypt again. This time the country is undergoing a period of decadence. Raab has to sacrifice the ability to train for the priesthood and become instead a military and political leader. This time he needs to help bring back, at least temporarily, a time of cultural renaissance.

The soul returns to a setting where the previous socio-historical tendencies have been accentuated. Nebunefer has to renounce the priesthood



because of the decadence of the culture. He subsequently renounces political power in consideration of his wife's health. He has to sacrifice everything that has given him an identity and learn to simply be an individual with no special power.

The loss of his wife further challenges him to stand completely on the power of his own individuality. The initiate that Nebunfer promotes is foreign to Egyptian culture. Moses has come to promote a new culture that Nebunfer does not know. In a sense, Nebunfer stands at the culmination and end of a process and participates at the beginning of a new one—Hebrew culture—without consciously partaking in this new development.

The whole of these lives mentioned so far has been a process of humbling of the soul, of contraction. Over the millennia, the soul returning to places of power loses spiritual prestige first, then political power. Simultaneously, the reality of the spirit is obliterated by cultures progressively more decadent. Something important obviously happens at the end of this trajectory with the birth of Moses. Joan-Nebunfer intuits the importance of this being but cannot fully reap the fruits of that experience. Here the individuality lives at an important transition point in time. Egypt, no longer able to renew its original spiritual thrust, is now the place for another emerging culture, that of the future Israel. Nebunfer plays a part in a last-ditch effort to restore progressive spiritual values and is instrumental in the cross-pollination of Jewish and Egyptian cultures.

The process moves further with the life of Lucina. It is the time of the death of the old gods. Lucina has the spiritual gifts that she shares with her mother, a priestess. She still has natural clairvoyance but is raised in ignorance of the world of the gods. In Elysium and Rome, she receives an

early form of scientific training. She has to develop thinking and the use of logic, both through the Greek Aesculapius and the Roman Salonus. These skills she allies to her natural perception. In Rome she becomes a lone priestess virgin. She now exerts her gifts in a setting where the seer stands out as an exception, both admired and feared, and mostly alone. The tension between her higher nature and the lower drives is heightened by the priestess's need to remain a virgin and her drive for power. She therefore fails to fulfill her destiny. Here too, the soul lives in tension between the old and the new. She still carries a kind of spiritual perception that marks her as unusual at a time when the rational mind is taking over the intuitive side that Lucina still carries.

A series of short incarnations follows. Her life as Carola stands as an example of the further descent into materialism. Once again, the soul carries unusual capacities of intuition that lie dormant. A veil has descended between the deeper inner wisdom and the conscious person. Carola lives in a century where her faculties of perception can earn her only the name of heretic. In this incarnation, as in at least one before (the knight of the Third Crusade), she stands within Christianity and knows that what she carries inside herself is an expression of the being of Christ at a time when she has neither the strength nor the means to express it. It is a revelation of that life that, in looking back upon her Egyptian incarnation, she can say, "The light of the Two Lands [ancient name for Egypt] was the light of the Christ; the light that burned before the flood was sent, the light that has shone for long millennia since those first fires were kindled from the moon." In this life Carola carries inner faculties that cannot be easily expressed in the climate of religious intolerance and in a society where women live in a subordinate

position.

Finally, at a time when new evolutionary possibilities are emerging, the soul returns as Joan Grant. In this modern incarnation, she can finally express all the gifts of previous incarnations in a completely new way. What was precluded to Carola was finally possible for Joan. The apparent contradiction of her early “pagan” heritage could now be united with her understanding of Christ in a new way. She brought her incarnation of Sekeeta to a new level. Her initiation as a seer of Maat reverberated in her life with the ability to bring succor to other souls, when out of her body. Whereas the Egyptian pharaoh had been initiated within the temple and could only operate within its proximity, Joan Grant could make use of her own inner faculties of perception and healing in a purely individual fashion. That this was possible at all is due to the momentous spiritual event of the twentieth century, Christ’s reappearance in the etheric.

Throughout all the incarnations, a theme worth mentioning is the frequent early death of one or both parents that places the individual in the position and need to fend for her-/himself and develop early independence. Responsibility and independence temper the soul throughout most of the incarnations. Another significant theme is the attunement of natural intuition with the dictates of exact observation, as in the Egyptian priestess training; later the use of logical thinking in Greece and Rome; and, at least in part, the scientific method in present time.

All of the above mostly outlines the path of evolution of the “divine self” of Joan Grant. It would be a serious omission to leave it there. During her incarnations, those of the “earthly self” appear, placing obstacles before the

objectives of the eternal individuality.

### **Shortfalls from Previous Incarnations**

One of the major themes of the individual's development lies in the tension between the position of prominence in the public eye and the soul's need for what makes her purely human: love, affection, and close relationships. In the life of Sekeeta, the pharaoh loves a foreigner from Minoas by the name of Dio. He is an artist of great inspiration. Nevertheless, the two have very different worldviews and values. Sekeeta intuits it somehow, hiding her identity, and hoping that the eventual recognition of her status will be accepted by Dio. The revelation leads Dio to feel betrayed and to react with hatred. Sekeeta is left with her son, of whom Dio has no knowledge. She struggles to accept him and her son without having the opportunity to achieve any real resolution on earth.

The same tension appears, for different reasons, in the life of Lucina. The priestess-seer heightens the tensions of the cultural expectation of her virginity by imposing a soul austerity that is fueled by a sense of pride, which does not allow her to confess vulnerability. Help is offered to her from another Roman seer, who calls himself Calchas, but Lucina only calls him in her sleep or during illness, and then refrains when fully conscious. When the tension becomes unbearable, she seeks release in the illusion of romance with a man, the Roman senator Nigellus, who cultivates very few of her interests. They stage a mock death at sea in order to elope to the hills of Umbria. However, even after the birth of their son, Marius, the chasm between the two widens, fueled by Lucina's deep feeling of having failed at

her life mission. She dies young of a very sudden illness, and her lover Nigellus commits suicide.

In her life as Carola, the two meet in a situation that reproduces tensions that were never previously resolved. Carola recognizes Nigellus in the soul of her husband Carlos's godson, Alcestes. Carlos's marriage is a gesture born out of the deep love that united the two; however, it is not a physical love. Carola and Alcestes are strongly attracted to each other despite their very different soul developments. They both understand the need to respect Carlos. Carola struggles with Alcestes's incomprehension of her life as a wandering artist and his failure to offer real empathy for her experiences in the convent. Alcestes is spellbound by Carola's deep knowledge and the bond that unites them but cannot fully align himself with it. Alcestes, who is a sailor, soon returns to pursue riches in a manner with which Carola disagrees, and which leads him to his death.

The latter theme also appears in Lucina's incarnation in Rome. Here it is her love for a younger man that sets the stage for a tragic outcome. She is a woman who has difficulty in admitting the ageing of her body. This leads her to stage a pseudo-suicide in the hope that the man will realize how much he would miss her. Once the attempt is uncovered for what it is, she is not able to turn back from suicide because of her pride. In Joan's life a few close relationships—Billy, Esmond—played themselves out tragically. Joan's romantic life, although much more mature, still had a tumultuous element, judging from the little she confides in her autobiography.

Pride and the desire to exert power over others led to a relative downfall during Carola's life. As a woman who chose the convent voluntarily, she has the right to leave it voluntarily, before taking the vows. Her desire to fight

against the second abbess does not earn her any allies among the other nuns. They are either too gullible or too afraid to offer any resistance. Carola reacts by looking down on the other nuns, who ostracize and torment her at every opportunity. Too proud to seek another solution, Carola resorts to instilling fear in them and feeding their belief that she is a witch. This leads, together with direct antagonism from the abbess, to her torture as a heretic. These strong feelings have sufficient strength to form an island in Joan Grant's soul. The first time that Joan is sent to boarding school, she dreads her classmates and the religious rules of the school. She attempts an escape, even though she is only eight, and causes herself to be sick so that her parents will take her out. When her mother sends her to a convent in Cavendish Square, Joan is terrified. Twenty years later she realizes that the fear belonged to the previous self of Carola.<sup>6</sup>

Other deeds stand as obstacles between Carola's incarnation and her full potential. That particular life was very connected to a previous, brief Egyptian life, in which we are told that she was a soldier who, fighting for the light, had used a "dark weapon." Carola has to stand powerless at the burning of a woman who was accused of being a witch. Carola, who is her friend, knows that her knowledge and ability to offer help are veiled from her conscious self because of the deeds in the previous Egyptian incarnation—only alluded to—that she now must atone for. The incarnation as Joan Grant forms a nodal point, where many of the previous tensions come to a significant degree of resolution, allowing her to be a vehicle for the pursuit of a new, important revelation and the healing of many of her fellow human beings.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1) Joan's biography is developed in Joan Grant and Denys Kelsey, *Many Lifetimes* (Columbus, OH: Ariel Press, 1997 [1967]) and Joan Grant, *Far Memory: the Autobiography of Joan Grant* (Columbus, OH: Ariel Press, 1985 [1956]).
- 2) Grant and Kelsey, *Many Lifetimes*, 61.
- 3) Ibid, 22.
- 4) Grant, *Far Memory*, 31.
- 5) Grant and Kelsey, *Many Lifetimes*, 100–103.
- 6) Grant, *Far Memory*, 57–58.

### COVER IMAGE

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