

I don't think I really have anything to say about the consciousness I had before I was born, though I do believe contemplating such a thing can help trick the mind out of some of its habits, the constraints I place on my notion of who I am, the idea that my life started at a given point in time and that before that time I was not here. I think of a mind that is not centered in my body, first just trying to push the locus away from this "me," and then diffusing it and trying to work with the notion of something vast and without boundaries. I ask myself, what does it mean to be born. Is anything ever born? Is there any beginning? I am always wanting to begin anew, to wipe away all the ick I've accumulated, the bad habits, the attitudes, especially the often super-negative ideas about what I can and can't do, that get in the way of my seeing anything as it really is... if I could only get rid of or fix all these ideas that stop me from living, if I could only start over, get back to the beginning of the timeline before all the trouble started accumulating. Maybe it would be more helpful, instead of yearning either toward some sort of new birth or to somehow erase myself back out to existence, to consider the idea that I was never born in the first place, that the whole timeline is false. What if I was never new, never separate from the bad stuff, never in a more pristine state. But always somehow outside that whole picture.

Then there is the other aphorism, about following the inner witness verses the outer ones. This one seems really appealing on first glance, especially for an introvert like me who can become terrified of other people for long stretches of time, but I know that's a mistake. Separating "inner" from "outer" in terms of self vs other seems problematic to me, so I doubt that's what the aphorism is about. My second take on it is that outer witnesses might refer to the senses, but that isn't particularly satisfying either.