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Chapter 1

Death and Ancient Beliefs

Whether it is the death of a loved one or one's own mortality, it is a topic that has puzzled humans since time immemorial. Many people seek answers to questions such as where do our loved ones go after death or what happens to us after we die. Various cultures and religions have developed their beliefs and practices regarding death over the centuries.

Different people hold different beliefs about what happens after death. Some believe that the soul continues to exist in another realm or that it is reincarnated as a different person or species. Others believe that the soul merges with the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and ether. These beliefs have been held since ancient times and have influenced funeral practices.

For instance, the ancient **Egyptians** believed that the afterlife was a continuation of this life, and so they mummified their bodies and provided funerary equipment to prepare for it. They believed that the body needed to be

preserved so that the soul could return to it in the afterlife. The Egyptians also believed that the soul had to pass through a series of tests in the afterlife before it could reach the final destination.

Similarly, the ancient **Greeks** believed that the soul of a person who lived a pure life would go to **Elysium** (abode of the blessed, heaven), while those who committed evil would go to **Tartarus** (the great pit beneath the earth) . They believed that the soul had to be judged in the afterlife based on its deeds during life.

The **Romans** also believed in a similar system, with Elysium being the destination for those who lived virtuous lives and the underworld being the destination for those who were evil. The Romans believed that the soul had to be judged in the afterlife, just like the Greeks.

In India, **Hindus** believe that the soul is eternal and that it discards the body when it becomes deceased and takes on a new body. They believe in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, which is known as reincarnation. Hindus believe that the soul's *Karma* or actions in previous lives determine the

nature of its next birth. They believe that the ultimate goal is to break the cycle of birth and death and attain *moksha*, which is liberation from the cycle of rebirth.[1]

In conclusion, death is a topic that has perplexed humans since the beginning of time, and different cultures and religions have developed their beliefs and practices surrounding it. Whether it is the continuation of life in the afterlife, reincarnation, or the merging of the soul with the elements, these beliefs serve to provide comfort and a sense of purpose to those who are left behind. Funeral practices reflect these beliefs and are an essential part of honoring the deceased and aiding them in their journey to the afterlife.

Chapter 2

Western Religions' Beliefs Regarding Afterlife

Judaism is one of the three major monotheistic religions in the world and is practiced by millions of people. It is the earliest Abrahamic faith, believed to have originated in the Middle East over 3,500 years ago based on the teachings and laws of the *Torah*, which is the sacred text of Judaism. Judaism has a strong emphasis on living a virtuous life in the present, rather than being preoccupied with the afterlife. While there are different interpretations of the afterlife in Judaism, it is generally believed that the focus should be on leading a good life and fulfilling one's duties on Earth.

The concept of the afterlife in Judaism is complex and has evolved over time with different branches of Judaism holding different beliefs. The ancient Hebrews had a belief in **Sheol**, which was a sort of underworld or afterlife realm where both the righteous and the wicked went after death. Later, Jewish beliefs about the afterlife became more refined, with some Jews

believing in a day of judgment, where the souls of the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked would be punished. This belief is similar to the Christian concept of heaven and hell.

Another belief held by some Jews is that the soul continues to exist in a spiritual form after the physical body dies. This belief is known as reincarnation and is a central part of Jewish mysticism, known as ***Kabbalah***. According to this belief, the soul may be reincarnated into a new physical body in order to complete a mission that was not fulfilled in a previous life. This mission may involve correcting mistakes made in a previous life or helping others to achieve spiritual growth.

Despite the various beliefs about the afterlife in Judaism, the focus is on leading a virtuous life in the present. This means following the laws and commandments of the Torah, which include ethical and moral guidelines, as well as rituals and practices that help to connect Jews to their heritage and to God. Some of these practices include observing the *Sabbath*, following dietary laws, and participating in communal prayer and study.

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In summary, Judaism places a strong emphasis on living a virtuous life in the present and fulfilling one's duties on Earth. While there are different beliefs about the afterlife, the focus is on leading a good life and following the teachings of the *Torah*. Whether one believes in a day of judgment, reincarnation, or another form of afterlife, the importance of living ethically and morally in the present remains a central tenet of Judaism.[3,4]

Christianity is a monotheistic religion that is an Abrahamic faith. It has 2.8 billion followers worldwide and is centered around the belief that Jesus Christ, the son of God, died and was resurrected into eternal life. Christians believe that those who believe in Jesus Christ will have life after death and will be judged by God upon their death. Depending on their deeds and beliefs, individuals will either receive eternal life in heaven or be punished with eternal damnation.

Roman Catholicism, which is the largest branch of Christianity, has a belief in *Purgatory* as an intermediary state for those who die without mortal sin but are not yet fully purified. This belief states that after

death, some individuals may not be ready for heaven or hell and instead require purification in purgatory before they can enter heaven. This is a unique belief held by Catholicism.

Seventh-Day Adventists have a different belief about the afterlife, with the dead in a state of unconsciousness called "soul sleep" until the return of Christ. They believe that people can be born again through the Spirit and live a holy life through God's law of love. This belief is based on the interpretation of various biblical texts that suggest that the dead are not conscious and will remain that way until the return of Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in physical resurrection of Jesus Christ or an immortal soul. They believe that existence stops at death, and the dead are in a state of non-existence until the resurrection. They do not believe in a traditional afterlife, and instead focus on the importance of living in the present and following God's teachings.

Protestants (Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc.) generally believe that the only way to salvation is through personal acceptance of Jesus Christ.

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They believe that those who have faith in him will live forever with him in heaven. This belief is centered around the idea that salvation is available to anyone who accepts Jesus Christ as their savior and lives according to his teachings.

Despite the differences in beliefs about the afterlife, all Christians agree on the importance of living a moral and ethical life. This involves following the teachings of the Bible, which includes both ethical and moral guidelines as well as rituals and practices that help to connect Christians to their faith and to God. Some of these practices include prayer, attending church, and participating in religious ceremonies.

In summary, Christianity is a monotheistic religion that is centered around the belief that Jesus Christ, the son of God, died and was resurrected into eternal life. Christians believe in life after death, and depending on their beliefs and deeds, individuals will either receive eternal life in heaven or be punished with eternal damnation. This reward or punishment will be determined on the Day of Resurrection when Christ returns to Earth.

While different Christian denominations have different beliefs about the afterlife, they all share a common focus on the importance of living a moral and ethical life and following the teachings of the Bible.[5,6,7,8]

Islam is the third Abrahamic, monotheistic religion with 1-1.8 billion followers worldwide. According to Islam, the present life is a temporary test from Allah, and the choices people make during this life will determine their fate in the afterlife. After death, the soul separates from the body and is escorted by two angels to Allah, who will decide whether the person goes to Heaven or Hell. On the *Day of Judgment*, everyone will gather before Allah and be judged based on their deeds recorded by the angels. Those who have done good deeds will enter Heaven as their final and eternal abode, while those who have not repented for their sins will be punished in hellfire.

In Islamic belief, the soul is an essential part of a human being and is immortal. The soul is created by Allah and is breathed into the human body at conception. The soul is the source of life and is responsible for the

human's free will and moral responsibility. The soul will be accountable for the person's actions and will determine their fate in the afterlife.

Islam teaches that there are two types of souls, one is the *nafs*, which is the ego, and the other is the *ruh*, which is the spirit. The *nafs* is prone to negative traits, such as greed, arrogance, and anger, while the *ruh* is a divine attribute and is responsible for a person's positive qualities, such as love, compassion, and faith. Muslims strive to purify their *nafs* and nurture their *ruh* through spiritual practices, such as prayer, fasting, and charitable deeds.

On the Day of Judgment, all humans will be resurrected in their physical bodies and will face Allah for judgment. The righteous will cross a bridge called *As-Sirat*, which is sharper than a sword and thinner than a hair, to enter Heaven. The bridge is illuminated by the light of the prophets and the righteous. The sinners will fall off the bridge into hellfire. The gate of Heaven will be opened by the angels at the command of Prophet Muhammad, and the righteous will enter into an eternal paradise of bliss.

In Islam, the concept of paradise is described as a place of immense beauty, pleasure, and delight, where the righteous will be reunited with their loved ones and enjoy the company of the prophets and the angels. The *Qur'an* describes Heaven as a place with flowing rivers, gardens, and fruits of all kinds, where the inhabitants will be dressed in fine garments and adorned with jewelry. In contrast, Hell is described as a place of punishment, with fire, boiling water, and other tortures, where the sinners will experience endless suffering and despair.

In summary, Islam teaches that the present life is a temporary test, and the soul is immortal and accountable for a person's actions. The Day of Judgment will determine the fate of each person based on their deeds. The righteous will enter an eternal paradise, while the sinners will be punished in hellfire. Muslims strive to purify their souls and nurture their positive attributes to achieve a place in Heaven.[9,10,11]

The Bahá'í Faith is a monotheistic Abrahamic religion with about 10 million

followers that believes in the unity of all religions and the oneness of God. According to Bahá'í teachings, the soul is an essence that originates from God and has both material and spiritual attributes. The purpose of human existence is to develop both physical and spiritual qualities, and the soul will be judged based on its spiritual development and actions in the next world.

The Bahá'í Faith teaches that the next world is a realm of joy, reunion, and conversation between souls, where the faithful will experience unspeakable joy and happiness. Those who have remained faithful and followed the one true God will return to God and attain a station of great power and glory. The soul is a representation of God, and if it remains loyal to God, it will ultimately return to Him.

Bahá'í scripture states that the next world is different from this world and is difficult to describe in material terms. It is a spiritual realm that exists beyond the physical world, and is a place of eternal happiness and peace. The ability of the soul to function in the next world is dependent upon its actions in life on Earth. The soul, which is eternal, continues to exist after death and undergoes

a process of purification, growth, and advancement in the next world.

The Bahá'í Faith teaches that life is not an end in itself, but a means of drawing closer to God and fulfilling one's purpose. This purpose is to serve humanity and promote the unity of all people and religions. Therefore, the Bahá'í Faith emphasizes the importance of living a virtuous life and performing good deeds in this world.

In conclusion, the Bahá'í Faith teaches that the soul is an essence that originates from God and has both material and spiritual attributes. Human existence serves as an opportunity to develop both physical and spiritual qualities, and the soul will be judged based on its spiritual development and actions in the next world. The next world is a realm of joy, reunion, and conversation between souls, where the faithful will experience unspeakable joy and happiness. The soul is a representation of God, and if it remains loyal to God, it will ultimately return to Him. The purpose of life is to draw closer to God and fulfill one's purpose, which is to serve humanity and promote the unity of all people and religions.[12]

Chapter 3

Eastern Religions' Beliefs Regarding Reincarnation

Hinduism is a religion that believes in the cycle of reincarnation, also known as *Samsara*, where the soul is continuously reborn until it achieves perfection and reunites with God. The soul is bound to a false sense of self, known as *Jiva*, and is deluded by material attachments. Upon death, the physical body and the gross mind return to the earth, and the Jiva is sent to either heaven or hell based on past actions.

After a certain period, the Jiva will re-enter the cycle of reincarnation by being reborn as plants or animals and eventually re-entering the human body through consumption. The reincarnation cycle is believed to be influenced by *Karma*, which means that persons' current life is shaped by their past actions and will shape their future lives.

Hinduism also believes in the concept of *Moksha*, which is the ultimate goal of breaking the cycle of reincarnation and achieving liberation. This is achieved by freeing oneself from the cycle of rebirth

through spiritual realization and achieving unity with God. To attain *Moksha*, one must purify one's mind and soul, practice selflessness, and transcend the ego.

Hinduism also recognizes the importance of various yogic practices such as meditation, devotion, and selfless service in attaining spiritual realization and breaking the cycle of reincarnation. The path to *Moksha* is unique for each individual and can involve various approaches to achieve spiritual realization.

Overall, Hinduism teaches that the soul is eternal and continues to exist beyond the physical body. It is bound by *karma* and desires, and the ultimate goal is to attain *Moksha* and achieve liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.[13,14]

Buddhism, which has more than 520 million followers worldwide, originated in ancient India. According to Buddhist teachings, suffering is caused by Desire and can be ended through the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Eightfold Path*. *Samsara*, or the cycle of death and rebirth, is influenced by a person's *Karma*, and determines their existence in

one of six realms. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve liberation, or *Nirvana*, by extinguishing desire.

In Buddhism, it is believed that the cause of suffering is craving or attachment to things that are ultimately impermanent. The *Four Noble Truths* serve as the foundation of Buddhist teachings and explain that the nature of existence is characterized by suffering. The *Eightfold Path* outlines the necessary steps to end suffering and achieve *Nirvana*, which include right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Samsara is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in which all living beings are bound. *Karma*, or the accumulated actions of a person, determines their future existence. The six realms of existence include the realm of gods, *asuras*, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. In Buddhism, rebirth is not seen as the transmigration of a soul, but rather the transference of a stream of consciousness from one life to another.

In Tibetan Buddhism, there is a belief in *Tulku*, which is the reincarnation of a

spiritual leader who holds a specific lineage of teachings. For example, the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas are believed to be the reincarnations of important spiritual leaders who are responsible for preserving the teachings of Buddhism. The search for a *Tulku* involves a complex process that includes a series of tests and observations, as well as divination techniques.

In summary, Buddhism teaches that suffering arises from desire and can be ended through the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Eightfold Path*. *Samsara* is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth that is determined by a person's *Karma*, and the ultimate goal is to achieve liberation, or *Nirvana*. Tibetan Buddhism also includes a belief in *Tulku*, which is the reincarnation of important spiritual leaders responsible for preserving Buddhist teachings.[15,16,17,18]

Jainism is an ancient religion with approximately 5 million followers worldwide. It was founded by Jina Vardhamana Mahavira in the 6th century BCE in India, and shares some similarities with Hinduism. However, it is regarded as a distinct religion. Jainism teaches that every soul is on a

journey through the cycle of birth and death, which is known as *Samsara*. A soul's path is determined by *Karma*, which is the accumulated result of past deeds and thoughts.

According to Jainism, the ultimate goal of human life is to achieve *Moksha*, or liberation from *Samsara*. *Moksha* is attained by breaking free from the cycle of birth and death, which can be achieved through spiritual growth and by avoiding creating new *Karma*. A soul can be reborn into one of four states, namely human, heavenly, animal/plant, or in hell, based on its *Karma*.

Jainism teaches that the soul is a distinct entity that is separate from the body and mind. The body is a temporary abode for the soul, and is subject to birth, aging, disease, and death. The soul, on the other hand, is eternal, and its journey continues even after the death of the body. The ultimate destiny of the soul is to achieve liberation from *Samsara* and to attain eternal bliss.

Jainism also emphasizes the importance of non-violence, truthfulness, non-attachment, and asceticism. Jains believe that non-violence, or *Ahimsa*, is a fundamental

principle of their religion. They avoid harming any living being, whether through thought, speech, or action. Jains also practice truthfulness, non-attachment, and asceticism as a means to purify the soul and to achieve spiritual growth.

Jainism has a unique concept of divinity, which differs from that of other major religions. Jains believe that the universe is eternal and infinite, and that it is governed by natural laws. They do not believe in a personal god who controls the universe or who intervenes in human affairs. However, they do believe in the existence of spiritual beings called *Jinas*, who have attained *Moksha* and who serve as role models for other souls on their journey towards liberation.

In summary, Jainism is a religion that emphasizes the importance of non-violence, truthfulness, non-attachment, and asceticism, as a means to achieve spiritual growth and *Moksha*. Jainism teaches that the soul is on a journey through the cycle of birth and death, which is determined by *Karma*. The ultimate goal of human life is to attain liberation from *Samsara* and to achieve eternal bliss. Jains have a unique

concept of divinity and believe in the existence of spiritual beings who have attained Moksha and who serve as role models for other souls on their spiritual journey.[20,21,22,23]

Sikhism is a religion that emerged in India in the 15th century, founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It is the fifth largest religion in the world with about 25-30 million followers, mostly in India, but also in other countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Kenya. Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism doesn't worship idols and has its own scriptures, principles, code of conduct, and initiation rituals. The religion believes in one God and the teachings of the 10 Gurus, along with their holy scripture Sri Guru Granth Sahib, which includes hymns composed by six Sikh Gurus, and saints and devotees of all faiths.

The concept of reincarnation or the cycle of birth and death is a fundamental belief in Sikhism. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) contains at least 2,000 references to reincarnation, and the best Punjabi translation of this scripture is Guru Granth Darpan by Prof. Sahib Singh. The scripture is written in the Gurmukhi script and includes

words from various languages spoken in India about 550 years ago. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib talks about the cycle of birth and death and emphasizes that the soul can be reborn in different forms until it attains enlightenment and liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.

There are several references to reincarnation in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib that explain the concept in detail. For instance, on page 700 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib line 2, it says that people's loved ones and relatives are met with through Destiny, which is carved in a previous birth, but they do not accompany the person in the afterlife. This passage implies that if there are previous births, there could be births after this one.

Another example is in Sukhmani Sahib, a popular composition read daily by many Sikhs. On page 264, Ashtpadi 2 stanza 3, Guru Ji states that a person gets born, dies, and is reborn. In this way, they keep going through the cycle of births and deaths, and only by meditating on God's name can they find perpetual rest.

The hymn recited by a famous Indian devotee Kabir Ji, included in SGGS at page

326, further elaborates on the concept of being born and dying in countless species. The passage states that people have lived through many species, such as immovable trees, movable animals, insects, and moths, implying that the soul can be reborn in different forms.

According to Sikhism, the reason human beings keep going through the cycle of birth and death is that they do not develop a true loving relationship with God and follow the guidance of the Guru by meditating on God's name. Guru Ji states on page 1019-1020 that those who do not cultivate a loving relationship with God, suffer the pain of the rounds of birth and death, and are awarded severe punishment. They keep going through the cycle of births and deaths again and again.

In summary, Sikhism teaches that people continue to reincarnate until they become pure souls, develop a true relationship with God, and follow the guidance of the Guru by meditating on God's Name. This process allows them to reach a state of eternal rest, and union with God and thus break the cycle of reincarnation.

Reincarnation is a fundamental belief in Sikhism, and the Sri Guru Granth Sahib contains many references to this concept, emphasizing the importance of spiritual growth and the attainment of enlightenment. [28,29]

Chapter 4

Medical Observations- Near Death Experiences

Dr. Raymond Moody is a psychologist and philosopher who has been researching near-death experiences (NDEs) for over four decades. He first came to the public's attention with his book *"Life After Life,"* which was published in 1975. In this book, Dr. Moody describes the accounts of 50 individuals who had near-death experiences (NDEs), and he found remarkable similarities in their reports despite differences in their backgrounds. This led him to conclude that there may be a universal experience that occurs during NDEs, and that this experience may offer insight into what happens after we die.

A near-death experience is a phenomenon where individuals perceive that they have died, and they have an out-of-body experience. The exact cause of NDEs is not known, but it has been linked to the brain's response to reduced oxygen or increased release of certain chemicals. In some cases, NDEs have been reported during surgical

procedures, cardiac arrest, near-drowning, or other life-threatening events.

Despite the reliability of NDE reports being questioned, Dr. Moody believes that the accounts are sincere and based on emotional reactions. He acknowledges that the experiences described by NDE survivors can be subjective and may vary depending on the individual's cultural and religious beliefs. For example, some people may experience an NDE as an encounter with a religious figure, while others may experience it as an encounter with a loved one who has passed away.

Dr. Moody also recognizes that there is a diversity of religious beliefs among NDE survivors and that the possibility of reincarnation must also be considered. However, he suggests that further study of NDEs should be conducted through methods other than interviewing those who have survived close calls with death. He believes that other approaches, such as laboratory experiments or studies of brain activity, may provide more objective data to support or refute the experiences described by NDE survivors.

The reactions to Dr. Moody's findings have varied over the years, with some believing in an afterlife based on NDEs and others suggesting they are simply hallucinations. Some people see NDEs as evidence of a spiritual dimension or an afterlife, while others see them as purely biological events with no spiritual significance. Some skeptics have even suggested that NDEs may be the result of a temporary breakdown in the normal functioning of the brain, rather than a glimpse into the afterlife.

Regardless of personal beliefs, Dr. Moody's research has provided valuable insight into the nature of near-death experiences and has sparked discussions about the nature of death and what happens after we die. While the exact cause of NDEs remains unknown, and the experiences described by NDE survivors may never be fully understood, Dr. Moody's work has encouraged others to consider the possibility of a life beyond this physical realm.

In conclusion, Dr. Raymond Moody's research on near-death experiences and the publication of his book "*Life After Life*" has been groundbreaking. Despite the controversies surrounding the reliability of

NDE reports and the diversity of interpretations of these experiences, Dr. Moody's work has encouraged us to question our beliefs about death and to consider the possibility of an afterlife. While more research is needed to fully understand NDEs, Dr. Moody's contribution to this field will be remembered for years to come.[30]

Chapter 5

True Story Of Hypnotic Regressions Into Past Lives

Dr. Raymond Moody conducted research on Near Death Experiences (NDEs), which were accounts from individuals who nearly died due to serious accidents or illnesses. During the time medical professionals were attempting to save them, the individuals' souls separated from their bodies and had extraordinary mystical experiences before returning to their bodies. From the similarities in these accounts, despite the diverse backgrounds of the individuals, Dr. Moody formed the subjective conclusion that there is a world beyond death, but could not make any conclusive determinations about afterlife or reincarnation based on his NDE research.

Another well-known study was done by **Dr. Brian L. Weiss** and is described in his book "***Many Lives, Many Masters***".

"*Many Lives, Many Masters*" describes the case of one of his patients, who suffered from severe anxiety, panic attacks, and

phobias. After failing to find the root cause/causes of his patient's problems through traditional psychiatric techniques, Dr. Weiss used hypnosis to help her recall past life memories that were the root cause of her symptoms. Through hypnotic regression therapy, she remembers past lives, experiences after death, and interactions with Master spirits.

During the hypnosis sessions, she connects with advanced spirits and even reveals intimate details about Dr. Weiss' life, which had a positive impact on him and improved his relationships with colleagues and patients. The experiences also impacted Dr. Weiss' life positively, making him more loving and compassionate. He learned about the importance of attitudes such as charity, hope, faith, and love, and the Master spirits advise him to share his knowledge of reincarnation and the afterlife with others.

Dr. Weiss concluded that the information and messages came from advanced souls or Masters, and the patient learns that physical possessions and power are not important, but true knowledge of the self and God is. The Doctor begins to believe in reincarnation and that we change race, sex, and

nationality in different lives to learn different lessons and experiences. The goal is to live life fully with inner peace, love, and harmony towards others, and to overcome the fear of death. He warns against the medicalization of psychiatry, because chemicals do not solve all problems, and emphasizes the importance of talking to patients, promoting understanding of illness, and inducing self-knowledge.

Through past life therapy, incredible healing has occurred, such as the disappearance of phobias, fears, pain, and psychosomatic illness. The book provides a message of hope and encourages people to overcome their fear of death and live life fully. Dr. Weiss believes that compassion, love, non-violence, non-judgment, non-prejudice, patience, generosity, charity, and hope are essential in life.

In summary, "*Many Lives, Many Masters*" is a book that describes the case of a patient who underwent past life therapy to heal her severe anxiety, panic attacks, and phobias. Through hypnosis, she remembers past lives, experiences after death, and interactions with Master spirits. The experiences impacted both the patient and the doctor

positively, and Dr. Weiss concludes that the information and messages came from advanced souls or Masters. The book provides a message of hope and encourages people to live life fully with compassion, love, and harmony towards others, and to overcome the fear of death.[31]

Chapter 6

Children Who Remember Previous Lives

On January 5, 2014, **Jim Tucker**, a professor of psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences at the University of Virginia, shared a story on a National Public Radio show about a 2-year-old boy who had recurring nightmares about a plane crash. The boy correctly identified the copilot and his own past life as a pilot who died in the crash. The story was confirmed to be true after investigation by the boy's parents. Tucker believes that consciousness is separate from physical reality and can continue after death, resulting in past life memories. He references the view of Max Planck, the founder of quantum theory, who believed that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of existence and that matter arises from it.

The belief in reincarnation, the concept that a person's soul can be reborn into another body after death, is found in many regions and cultures around the world, including Southeast Asia, Western Asia, West Africa, and East Africa, among people of different religious backgrounds, including those who

have converted to Islam and Christianity. Surveys in Europe and the United States have shown that a significant percentage of people believe in reincarnation.

Ian Stevenson, a medical doctor, investigated 2500 cases of children who claim to have memories of past lives in his book "*Children Who Remember Previous Lives*", published in 2001. He provides brief summaries of 14 typical cases of children who remember previous lives, including examples from India, Turkey, and England. Dr. Stevenson suggests that those interested, especially skeptics, should read the book for more detailed information on these cases and the names of the individuals involved.

The three typical cases described by Dr. Stevenson regarding children who claim to remember past lives are as follows. In the first case, a 2 and a half year old boy from Delhi, India, claimed to be a high cast (Brahmin) from Mathura and provided details about his previous life, including the name of his wife and the chemical company he owned. His father went to Mathura and confirmed that the details matched a murder case that happened there.

In the second case, a boy from Turkey was born with a malformation that resembled wounds sustained by certain man who had been shot and killed. The boy began speaking coherently at a very young age with knowledge of the man's life and family and considered himself a member of the family. The author investigated the case and confirmed the existence and death of the man.

In the third case, identical twin girls in England made statements and recognized objects that suggested they remembered the lives of their two older sisters who were killed in an accident. The girls also had similar behavior to their deceased sisters. These cases suggest that the belief in reincarnation is widespread and the phenomenon of remembering past lives is not limited to a specific culture or religion.

In chapter 5 of his book, Dr. Stevenson discusses typical cases of reincarnation and why only a few cases are reported. He suggests that in many countries where reincarnation is not believed in, children who display behavior or make statements about previous lives are discouraged and punished. He also notes that in some cases, the

deceased predict when and where they will be reborn and what identifying signs to look for. He found this to be common in the Tlingit of North America.

Dr. Stevenson also states that birthmarks and birth defects occur in about 35% of subjects in claimed reincarnation cases, and nearly all of them correspond to wounds to the previous personality. He believes that this provides superior evidence compared to oral testimony. Dr. Stevenson reflects on the idea of life after death and suggests that the postmortem world would reflect a person's personal experiences and attitudes, and that it would be pleasant or painful depending on their conduct during life. He suggests that after death, we would exist exclusively in the mental realm and some people may become associated with new physical bodies, which is referred to as reincarnation.

Overall, Dr. Stevenson's book provides evidence for the phenomenon of reincarnation, including detailed descriptions of specific cases where children claim to remember past lives. He suggests that the phenomenon of remembering past lives is not limited to a specific culture or religion, and that birthmarks and birth defects can

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provide evidence of past lives. However, he notes that the phenomenon is often not recognized in many countries, which may limit the reporting of cases.

Chapter 7

Recent Research into Reincarnation.

Dr. Satwant Pasricha, a researcher on the topic of reincarnation, published her findings in a book titled *"Claims of Reincarnation: An Empirical Study of Cases in India"* in 1990 and 2005. Her research was based on the methodologies of Dr. Ian Stevenson, but she modified them to investigate 45 claims of reincarnation, mostly in North India. In her book, she discussed her investigation in general and provided brief stories of some of the typical and atypical cases she studied, including the following two summarized stories.

One of the cases she investigated was that of a girl born into a family of Brahmins which had lost four daughters before her birth. When she was around two years old, she began saying that she belonged to another village and gave detailed accounts of her previous life, including the name of her father, brother, and the day she died by falling into a well while fetching water to bathe a statue of god *Shiva*.

A man from the village where she claimed to have previously lived, came to her village and recognized her as his deceased niece, and the family became convinced she was their daughter reborn. Her previous family requested her present family to allow her to stay with them for a few days, which they agreed to. Dr. Pasricha states that out of 23 statements the girl made about her previous life, 19 were found to be accurate and that there were no signs of alteration of consciousness during her narration and no apparent motive for contriving the case. She showed no signs of altered consciousness while narrating the events of her previous life. She is also said to have had a fear of going to wells, preferring to bathe at home.

Another case Dr. Pasricha investigated was that of a four and a half year-old boy living in a small village in India. He claimed to remember details of a previous life, including his previous wife's name, the number of brothers and children he had, and places he had lived and contributed to. He also exhibited unusual behavior consistent with his previous life's faith customs, such as preferring filtered water and avoiding killing insects. His claims were investigated by Dr. Pasricha, who found that the previous

personality was a prominent figure in the city and that there was no evidence of consciousness alteration or extrasensory perception in the boy. The investigation also revealed that neither of the families had any prior direct contact with each other. Dr. Pasricha concluded that the case was authentic and that the boy's family would not have contrived it dishonestly.

Dr. Pasricha compared her study of reincarnation cases with those of Dr. Stevenson and found many similarities between the subjects in both studies, such as recalling previous names, having a strong connection to previous families, and having birthmarks matching fatal wounds from previous lives. However, Dr. Pasricha also considered alternative explanations such as childhood fantasies, mental illness, fraud, and extrasensory perception, but found that these explanations did not fit the majority of the cases she investigated. In fact, 84% of the cases she studied were verified, with only one instance of fraud and five subjects being descendants of the previous personalities. Dr. Pasricha argues that the best explanation for the phenomena she observed is reincarnation, although she

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acknowledges that it is not a perfect explanation.

Chapter 8

Concluding Thoughts:

The concept of reincarnation is a prevalent belief in many religious traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Reincarnation suggests that our soul lives beyond the death of the physical body and is reborn into a new body. This cycle of rebirth continues until the soul reaches a state of spiritual enlightenment, at which point it is released from the cycle of birth and death.

Although reincarnation is a prevalent belief in many religious traditions, it is not universally accepted. Some religious traditions, such as Christianity, believe in judgment after death and the possibility of eternal life or eternal damnation. Others, such as Islam, believe in the concept of the soul continuing on after death but do not subscribe to the idea of reincarnation.

In the medical field, there have been numerous cases of individuals experiencing near-death experiences and claiming to have had experiences of an afterlife. These experiences range from seeing a bright light

to encountering deceased loved ones and spiritual beings. While these experiences are not conclusive proof of an afterlife, they do suggest that there may be more to our existence than what can be observed through physical means.

Memories can be accessed in more ways than just having lived the experience being "remembered." 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Head of the Bahá'í Faith 1892-1921, said, "When I need to know something, it is pictured before me." [] This indicates a source of knowledge and information that is beyond typical, daily human perception. Such a source is also mentioned by others. Could this not be the source of those past lives memories? Also, just as there is the range of precognition, where a person perceives an event that has yet to take place, through dreams or some other form, there is also retrocognition, the experience of past events as if you were there.

In conclusion, while the concept of reincarnation is a prevalent belief in many religious traditions, it is not universally accepted. However, scientific studies have found numerous cases of individuals recalling specific details from past lives, and medical

observations have suggested that there may be more to our existence than what can be observed through physical means.

Ultimately, regardless of what one believes happens after death, it is important to live a life of honesty, love, and gratitude towards our fellow humans and our Creator, who has given us this precious gift of human existence.

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