

THE UNDISCOVERED SELF

Introduction: “The Undiscovered Self” is the title of an English translation of a book by the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, as well as the title of a Humanities course that I taught for many years at the State University of New York at Albany. This lecture, and the one which follows, contain most of the ideas of my personal philosophy of life. I used these ideas as the basis for my Humanities course, and I also tried to include them wherever it was appropriate in my Spanish literature courses, as well as my book on Machado and many of my articles. For that reason, there is a complementary relationship between these lectures and the publications I have posted on this website at:

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It is difficult to define or put a label on the type of material I wish to discuss here. It would be proper to say, however, that it contains elements of philosophy, psychology, religion and science, and it also falls partly into the category of what might be called the “mystical” or the “occult.” When I use terms like “mystical” or “occult” I refer particularly to those things which are real, but cannot be explained by rational thought, or by any of the products of human reason such as logic, science, mathematics, and so on. One of the first things we must do, then, is to understand very clearly the difference between what is rationally understood, and that which is felt or intuited non-rationally. We must also differentiate between what we can *prove* logically, and that which we *know* intuitively.

For millions of years human beings have *known* the answer to their basic questions about life. They knew these things, but were not able to express or to describe them in rational terms. As far as we know, the inability to define this aspect of reality was not particularly problematic. It wasn’t a problem, that is, until human beings began to emphasize the use of reason and logic. And this has been especially true during the past three or four hundred years, since the advent of modern science which culminated in the industrial revolution as well as the materialistic or pragmatic philosophies of the past few centuries. Now what human beings had intuitively known to be true for several thousands of years was considered nothing more than groundless superstition or illusion. For the strict rationalist, anything which cannot be proved by reason or logic was meaningless, or unreal. Hence, that vast universe which ancient man had *known* through his feelings and intuitions was ordered and condensed, until it fit into the narrow confines of the universe conceived by reason and science.

The true scientist realizes, however, that although science is a useful tool to understand the workings of the material universe, it will never be able to answer all our questions about the origin and the meaning of life. Science and reason have never been able to prove the existence of God, the existence of the soul, or of life after death. They cannot prove that these things exist but, significantly, they also cannot prove that they do *not* exist. The best answer that reason or science can give us is that they have no answer, that they are powerless to answer these and many other basic questions about life, one way or the other.

In spite of the fact that many atheists feel that they are being completely logical when they deny the existence of God, they are really being no more logical than the religious person who believes in God. In the final analysis, if we really do not have any

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empirical proof of who or what made life, and for what purpose, any belief, scientific or religious, is in reality just an *opinion*.

The so-called materialistic explanation for the origin of the universe, for example, has never been proved, nor can it ever be. Just think about this theory for a moment. It is based on the idea that the universe as we know it appeared spontaneously from nothing and then by some chance, chemical reaction, life was produced, that out of the fundamental disorder of nothingness came all the order that we see around us. But is this really logical? In view of the fact that life does seem to follow certain orderly patterns, which is more logical, to say that all this arose from nothing, or to believe that the origin and continued existence of the universe must be due to some type of intelligent purpose? It certainly seems to me that the latter statement is more *logical*. In view of its lack of basis in logical proof, and in view of its negative consequences for the possible meaning of life, I find it very difficult to understand how anyone can accept the so-called materialistic “opinion” about the origin of life. Obviously some people have done so, but I wonder if they have really considered the implications of their belief.

To those people who prefer an atheistic or materialistic explanation of life, I would like to suggest that, since science has not proved that life has a material origin and since it is not really logical to suppose that this is true, perhaps they should examine some of their basic assumptions to find out why it is that they have chosen such a pessimistic outlook on life when it is not really necessary. And, to any person who has accepted a religious explanation of life, I would like to encourage them to continue in their opinion, because it offers hope, and is in no way disproved by science or logic.

All of this is not to say that there is not also a great deal of empirical evidence which goes a long way to support a more optimistic assessment of our position in life. Let’s look for a moment at two specific areas which the rational skeptic has scorned on the assumption that there is no proof of their reality: the existence of the soul, and the possibility of life after death.

The materialist feels that life must have arisen from matter and that consciousness depends on the physical brain. Let me point out, again, that there is no scientific proof that inanimate matter has ever produced consciousness. And again let me also point out the lack of logic in this idea which assumes that *something* can come from *nothing*, that consciousness can somehow arise from inanimate matter which has no consciousness. Logic clearly suggests that, if there is consciousness and intelligence in the universe, it must have as its origin some form of conscious intelligence.

Now let’s look at the other side of the question. In order to prove the reality of something like the soul and life after death, it must be demonstrated that consciousness is not dependent on the physical brain. There is, in fact, some rather convincing evidence which indicates that consciousness may exist independently of matter, that consciousness, far from being dependent on matter, may even affect or control matter.

Some of those who have supposedly demonstrated psychic abilities on television or for live audiences may be frauds. Or they may not. But it is not necessary to rely on this type of proof which could still be falsified. There are today an increasing number of scientific studies which have proved to the satisfaction of many serious thinkers that psychic abilities which go beyond the limits of our traditional five senses do in fact exist.

One of the most important efforts to study extra-sensory perception in the last century was carried out at Duke University under the supervision of Doctors J. B. Rhine and Luise E. Rhine. The Rhines devised a series of experiments which could test four types of psychic ability: telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis. In order to test for telepathy, they used a set of twenty cards with four different symbols; as one person looked at these cards, another would indicate on a chart which symbol the first had seen. In order to test for clairvoyance, the cards were shuffled, laid face down, and the subject of the experiment would indicate on a chart which cards were in the pile without seeing them. In order to test for precognition—the ability to foretell the future—the test subject would try to sense what the order of the cards would be in the next test; after he or she had recorded their impressions, the cards would be shuffled and the order of the cards would then be compared with what the subject had previously written down. In order to test psychokinesis—the ability to influence matter—a machine was used which would roll five dice. The test subject would try to influence the movement of the dice so that a certain number would appear when the dice were rolled. As he concentrated, for example, on the number four, a machine would roll the dice and the number of fours that appeared would be recorded.

Each of these experiments was repeated over and over again, with many different subjects, and their results were analyzed. It was determined that with all these experiments there was, mathematically, a twenty percent probability that the subject would choose the right symbol or the right number by chance or by coincidence. Thus, any percentage which was significantly greater, or less, than twenty percent would indicate that something other than chance was operating in the experiment. In all four types of testing I mentioned earlier, this was indeed found to be the case. Some test subjects were consistently able to achieve a percentage of greater than 20 percent, and other results were significantly less than 20 percent. Enough of these experiments have now been recorded by the Rhines and others so that there is no doubt that some people have the abilities tested. Perhaps we all have these abilities, if we would make an effort to develop them.

Since the Rhine experiments were carried out, other investigators have devised different methods to test for psychic ability. Some time ago, for example, I read about a study which described the ability of several test subjects to influence the pulsations of a stream of electricity emitted by a generator. On television I watched a show, which some of you may have also seen, where a woman was able to use her mind to bend a laser beam. In this case, as in the previous one, the effects were registered on the instruments where were monitoring the experiment. The mind-body relationship—the ability of the mind to affect the condition of the human body—has also become widely accepted. Just recently, ABC's "Frontline" featured an hour long program entitled "Adam the Healer" which showed ability of a young, 19 year old from Vancouver who was able to diagnose and then, in some cases, apparently heal a person's illness.

None of these cases prove what it is that produces these effects, nor can they tell us exactly how they are produced. But they do seem to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there is something in human consciousness that can operate independently of physical matter. They seem to prove, in fact, that consciousness is less limited than has

previously been thought and that it may have even more abilities which are yet to be discovered. Does all this prove that human beings have a soul? No, not necessarily. But the ability of consciousness to operate outside the limits of physical reality certainly increases the probability of its existence.

Another type of what we might call “circumstantial” evidence is now appearing which not only seems to show that consciousness operates independently of matter, but also seems to indicate that it may very well survive the death of the physical body. In what follows, I want to mention three examples of this type of evidence.

Some of you may have heard of Episcopal Bishop James A. Pike, who was a prominent religious figure before his death some years ago. In a book called *The Other Side*, Bishop Pike describes what happened when his son became addicted to drugs and then committed suicide. After the son’s death several strange things happened that seemed to indicate that he was trying to contact his father from the “other side,” as it were. Although he was skeptical at first, Bishop Pike eventually visited several mediums who relayed messages that supposedly came from his dead son. Eventually, Pike became convinced that he really *had* contacted his son. Beside the fact that his son spoke convincingly of his existence on the “other side,” he also mentioned several personal things which were unknown to anyone except Pike and his son. There have of course been other occasions where someone claimed to have contact with a person who has died, but seldom have we had the opportunity to examine the description of such an experience from a person who is as credible as Bishop Pike.

The second example of circumstantial evidence I want to mention first came to light after the publication of Dr. Raymond Moody’s book, *Life after Life*, which deals with what has come to be called the “near death experience.” In this book Dr. Moody describes a group of interviews with people who had been pronounced dead, but later revived. Often they were accident victims, or they had suffered a severe heart attack. In most cases, they were checked by a physician who observed no vital signs and felt that they were “clinically” dead. These people reported to Moody that, while they were in this state, their consciousness continued to function in a way that convinced them that life after death is real.

Moody compiled the following “model” which includes the most common experiences of the people he interviewed: “A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. He begins to hear an uncomfortable noise, a loud ringing or buzzing, and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long dark tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body, but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator. He watches the resuscitation attempts from this unusual vantage point and is in a state of emotional upheaval. After a while, he collects himself and becomes more accustomed to his odd condition. He notices that he still has a ‘body,’ but of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind. Soon other things begin to happen. Others come to meet and help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind that he has never encountered before—a being of light—appears before him. This being asks a question,

nonverbally, to make him evaluate his life and helps him along by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events in his life. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthy life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to the earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point he resists, for by now he is taken up with his experiences in the afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love and peace. Despite his attitude, though, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives. Later he tries to tell others, but he has trouble doing so. In the first place, he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes. He also finds that others scoff, so he stops telling other people. Still, the experience affects his life profoundly, especially his views about death and its relationship to life.”

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the well-known author of *On Death and Dying* who writes the foreword to Moody’s book, states that she has also observed these phenomena in many of her patients and will eventually publish a book of her own on the subject. In my own reading, I have found several other examples of this experience. For Example, in his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, C. G. Jung describes an episode following a heart attack which was similar to that of Moody’s patients. And Dr. John C. Lilly, in his book, *The Center of the Cyclone*, tells how he had a similar experience after an experiment with LSD. Another important work is *Recollections of Death*, by Dr. Michael Sabom, a cardiologist whose patients have described a near death experience; and equally important is the work of Dr. Kenneth Ring, a psychologist at the University of Connecticut, who has established the International Association for Near Death Studies. Ring’s book, *Life at Death: a Scientific Investigation of the Near Death Experience*, makes a convincing, scientific analysis of the main points discussed in Moody’s book.

As Moody states in his latest book, *Further Reflections on Life after Life*, these studies do not actually prove that consciousness continues to exist after physical death—it could always be maintained that these people were not really dead, since they eventually revived, and that all this was merely a hallucination brought on by oxygen deprivation, or emotional stress. One might ask, however, if that is the case, why it is that so many different people have had a hallucination which repeats the same, or similar experiences? Furthermore, most of these people describe a very strong, intuitive feeling that their near death experience was absolutely real, and they tell us that having it has completely changed their attitude toward death and dying.

The obvious conclusion that can be drawn from all of this is that, if there really is something that can be called a soul which exists independently of matter and which survives the death of the body, it must be something which can only be experienced on another level of consciousness, or on another level of reality. The instruments of our scientific technology can tell us about what happens to physical existence. But they obviously are incapable of detecting life on other levels. This does not mean, however, that there is no life other than physical life, only that our instruments cannot detect it, because they were not designed for that purpose.

Imagine, for a moment, that life is composed of energy that is capable of vibrating at many different frequencies. Imagine also that a set of instruments has been devised to

detect the vibrations of this energy within a given frequency range. Whenever this energy begins to vibrate outside this limited frequency range, it would not register on our instruments, and anyone who is using them would say that there was no other energy because nothing was registering on the instruments. Our physical senses are like these instruments; they can only detect reality as long as it falls within the limits of what they are able to perceive. The only thing this proves, however, is that our instruments, our physical senses, are limited and that they really cannot tell us anything, one way or another, about the possibility of other levels of reality.

The “instrument” which *can* tell us something about different levels of energy, that is, about different levels of reality, is our consciousness which is capable of becoming aware on more than one level. Rational consciousness can tell us a great deal about physical reality, and the strict rationalist usually limits his or her awareness to that level of existence. However, anyone who has feelings or intuitions *knows* that rational consciousness is limited and that reality extends far beyond the limits of what reason can tell us. What is needed, therefore, in order to find out more about life on these other levels is not more instruments to measure the vibrations of physical reality, but rather we need to train and develop our consciousness so that it becomes aware of these other levels of reality. There are people who can already do this, and some believe that we all are capable of achieving this greater awareness if we are willing to make the effort to expand our consciousness to include these other levels.

Here is another analogy which can help to explain the limits of rational consciousness. Imagine, if you will, a world where for one reason or another, people decided that it was a good thing to wear blindfolds from the moment they were born. Perhaps somewhere back in history, someone had looked too closely at the sun and their eyes were injured by the brightness. Then after this, the custom was adopted to protect the eyes from light until, over many generations and many centuries, it was forgotten by all but a few people that human beings actually had the ability to see. The small minority of those who dared to remove the blindfold and, little by little, began to regain the use of their eyes, would of course report the results to those who had never tried to see. And these reports would undoubtedly be considered superstitious nonsense by the majority of those with blindfolds. Since they had never tried to see, they would have no actual proof of the things sight could reveal and, therefore, it would be easy for them to deny that the things people could see really did exist.

What we need today, therefore, is to take off our blindfolds and train ourselves to see all the things that our awareness can reveal to us. What we need is to learn to broaden the limited range of our consciousness so that we can *see* at other levels of reality. Since we are stubborn and need to have proof, we should try to experience these things for ourselves, and not reject them out of ignorance. If one is interested, there are many methods for expanding conscious awareness. And if one method doesn't work for you, try another, until you find one that produces results.

Returning, then, to our previous line of discussion, let us examine a third type of circumstantial evidence which, if it could be accepted, would confirm the independence of consciousness as well as the reality of life after death. I am referring to the belief in reincarnation, which is widely accepted in certain parts of the world and yet is ignored, or

denied, in other parts of the world. But before we see what evidence there might be to support a belief in reincarnation, let's take a brief look at the background of this idea to get a better idea of what is involved and how it works.

The theory of reincarnation is based on the idea that an individual lives not one, but many different lives on this level of physical reality. This evolutionary process is usually seen as part of a pantheistic concept of reality. Pantheism is based on the idea that God is everything that exists, or that everything is part of God. Traditional Christianity offers us the somewhat illogical idea that God created the universe out of nothing. But according to pantheism, God *is* the sum total of all existence. There was no real creation, therefore, because everything always was and always will be part of God. Hence, each individual soul is a small part of God's infinite being and carries within itself a spark of the divine essence.

The so-called "Fall," which was symbolized by Adam and Eve's expulsion from paradise, happens when the individual soul becomes conscious of its freedom to choose its own existence. This freedom has been misused, and a life is chosen which is *self*-centered, rather than *all*-centered, or *God*-centered. Thus, although in its inner essence it is still part of God, the soul sinks into the selfish imperfections of physical existence and forgets its divine origin.

The purpose of life on the physical plane, then, is to give each soul the opportunity to evolve, not only physically, but also spiritually, to the point where it is again able to blend its individual will with that of All That Is. Traditional Christianity gives us only one lifetime before we are either "saved" or "condemned" for all eternity. But the concept of reincarnation implies that each soul has as many lifetimes as it needs to perfect itself, and that all souls will eventually be reunited with God, or as Paul says in First Corinthians XV, 28, "God will be all in all."

This entire evolutionary process is governed by a universal law which is called *karma*. The law of karma means basically what is expressed in the biblical saying: "You reap what you sow." The processes of the universe, then, are based on a principle of absolute justice: do good and you will receive good; do evil and evil will be returned to you. This law applies not only to our present life, but also to future lives as well. The results of our actions and choices are not always immediately apparent, but they will have their effect, sooner or later.

Let's enlarge on this a little. According to the theory of reincarnation, each individual soul has the opportunity to choose the basic circumstances of its life before it is born. Free will is involved, but it normally chooses those circumstances which will help it move forward on its evolutionary path to reunion with God. Since the total self includes both masculine and feminine characteristics and has a potential which can never be realized by a single personality, the soul will choose many different forms. Sometimes it will choose to be incarnated as a man, sometimes as a woman; sometimes rich, sometimes poor; sometimes black, sometimes white, and so on. An individual's karma, then, will be determined by the way he or she reacts to these circumstances which he or she has chosen. In this sense, karma can be either "good" or "bad," although I don't like to think of "bad karma" as punishment in a negative sense. I would rather state it more positively and say that each individual has a number of problems to solve in their

life, and if he doesn't solve these problems, they will keep on reappearing, either in this life or in some future life, until they are solved. On the other hand, living a life according to the principle of love creates "good karma," with the result that in this life and the next, good will be attracted to you. Another form of good karma is that, when certain abilities are developed, they may be carried over from one life to another.

If is how life operates, then, everything that happens to us has a purpose, even though, in the short run, we cannot always see that purpose. Everything that happens to us, including those things which, from close at hand seem bad is for the purpose of helping us develop our full potential as a divine entity. Like all other aspects of creation, we are a part of God, and as we grow and develop the totality which is God also grows and develops, as part of a never-ending creative process which is the essence of life.

Looking back over all this now, we see that the theory of reincarnation has the advantage of providing logical answers for some of the basic questions which Western theology has never been able to answer in the same meaningful fashion. Besides making unnecessary the illogical idea that the universe was created out of nothing, it also removes the basic injustice which results from traditional Christian thought. If it is true, as orthodox Christianity teaches, that we only live once and that our entire existence in eternity depends on what we do in this one lifetime, how can one explain the fact that some people have it so good, while others have it so bad, through no apparent fault of their own? If we live only once, how do we explain the fact that some people are born into favorable circumstances, while others, though no fault of their own, are born into difficult conditions that make a good life nearly impossible? If God is truly love, as the Bible says, how can we explain the existence of evil?

If we can accept the idea of reincarnation, the soul doesn't have just one opportunity to live, and if things are bad this time around, they can be better in future lives, if the individual makes the right choices in this life. And according to the law of karma, everything that happens to us not only is the result of our own past choices, but has the educational or developmental purpose of helping us perfect our soul. In the long run, then, there is no such thing as evil; it only seems that way because our limited consciousness has not yet expanded to the point where we can see the larger purpose of life. Even the worst things that happen to us ultimately help us learn to act in such a way that we no longer need to have these experiences. According to this point of view then, God has not created evil, because ultimately everything works for good.

"Well, fine," you say, "but if this is all so logical and meaningful, why is it that it seems so contrary to everything I have always been taught? Why don't more people know about this, and why doesn't it say something about all this in my traditional Christian or Jewish scriptures?"

Of all the people living today, there are probably just as many who believe in reincarnation as those who do not. And obviously all those people are not stupid or foolish; let's give them the benefit of the doubt and suppose that quite a few of them are intelligent and loving people. And what is more, it is not just in the East that the theory of reincarnation has been accepted. Most of us are not aware of it, but many people in the West have also held a belief in this theory at one time or another. In a book called *Reincarnation in World Thought*, a list of Western thinkers who believed in reincarnation

includes names like Pithagoras, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Plotinus, Giordano Bruno, Swedenborg, Benjamin Franklin, Kant, Goethe, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Hugo, Emerson, Wagner, Whitman, Tolstoy, Joyce, etc. This book also points out that the concept of reincarnation is part of the esoteric teachings of the Rosicrucians, of Theosophy and the Masons. Although individual masons may not be aware of it, teachings at the highest orders of masonry also include the idea of reincarnation.

And what about Western religion? In the *Cabbala*, the sacred teachings of Jewish mysticism, there are frequent references to reincarnation. A modern example of this belief is found in a book entitled *The Thirteen Petaled Rose* by the Jewish scholar Adin Steinsaltz. Some historians also are of the opinion that the early Christians, including Christ himself, may have had a belief in multiple lifetimes. This idea is discussed in the aforementioned *Reincarnation in World Thought*. The Gnostics, who claimed that they possessed the teachings given by Jesus to his inner circle of disciples, held the idea of reincarnation among their beliefs. And Origen, one of the original fathers of the Christian Church who lived in the third century also preached the idea of reincarnation.

I will not go further here into the history of religion, but it is interesting to make note of several things which still appear in the Christian Bible, particularly in the New Testament, which are very difficult to understand if one does not think in terms of reincarnation. For example, in the book of Mathew, Chapter 17, verses 10-13, the disciples ask Jesus about the coming of Elijah. I would like to point out that when they speak of the “coming” of Elijah, they must be referring to his rebirth, since the Old Testament prophet has been dead for several centuries. Then, in what follows, Jesus answers “Elijah has already come and they did not know him.” And the passage concludes: “Then the disciples understood that he was speaking of John the Baptist.” Also, in Matthew, Chapter 11, verse 14, again referring to John the Baptist, Jesus says to his followers: “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.” Then we read in Luke, Chapter 9, verses 19-20: “One day when he [Jesus] was praying alone in the presence of his disciples, he asked them, ‘Who do the people say I am?’ They answered, ‘Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, others that one of the old prophets has come back to life.’” These passages from the New Testament certainly appear to be saying that John the Baptist is the reincarnation of Elijah and that some people felt that Jesus himself was the reincarnation of one of the prophets. There may have been those who doubted since, in the second passage Jesus qualified his statement with the words, “if you are willing to accept it.” But Jesus himself seems to have no doubt when he says, on two different occasions, that John the Baptist is Elijah. And the disciples also seem to be thinking of reincarnation when they refer to the “coming,” that is, the rebirth of Elijah.

In John 9, verses 1-4, the disciples question Jesus about a man who was blind from birth: “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, ‘Master who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?’” The idea of reincarnation is not mentioned here, but it is certainly implied. If the man was born blind and if this was the result of his sins, he must have committed them before he was born, that is, in a previous life. Jesus goes on to talk about something else, but he does not tell his disciples that their reasoning was faulty in this respect.

Finally, in the book of Revelations we read in Chapter 3, verse 12: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” This certainly sounds as if the author is saying that the person who is successful in cleansing the imperfections of his soul will remain in the “Temple”—the Kingdom of Heaven—and will not have to “go out,” that is, to be born again.

So it is possible that the early Christian church may in fact have accepted the doctrine of reincarnation. Why was it declared a heresy in the second Council of Constantinople in 553? Perhaps because the church fathers felt that Christians who believed they had many lifetimes in which to achieve salvation would not try hard enough in this one. It could be argued, however, that the prohibition of this belief had the opposite effect of that desired by the Church, since many people have not used this “one life” to seek God, but rather to eat, drink and be merry, while there is still time.

At any rate, perhaps we should not hastily reject the idea of reincarnation as entirely foreign to our way of thinking. If we understand it properly, it is no more illogical than other attempts to explain our existence, and it has had an important place in some aspects of Western culture. But now let us examine the evidence to see whether there is anything to support the reality of this theory. Let’s look at the theory of reincarnation from the point of view of modern science.

Certainly, most scientific thinkers have not thought seriously about the possibility of living more than once, but there are some significant exceptions. You may have heard about the experiments in age regression that some psychologists have tried with patients under hypnosis. It has been found that people can be made to relive incidents from their past in order to remove the negative associations related to these events. On some occasions, the people who were regressed have not stopped with the experiences of their infancy, but have actually returned to what seems to be a previous life. In most of these cases it has been difficult, if not impossible, to verify whether the circumstances brought out under hypnosis are actually true. But there have been documented cases where a person who claimed to remember a former life also spoke a foreign language of which they had no knowledge in this life.

A few of these cases have been at least partially verified. There is the famous, or perhaps infamous, Bridey Murphy case where the subject seemed to remember a previous existence in 19th century Ireland. Some critics have claimed that this case was a fraud, but other writers have claimed that some of the facts have been verified. Another interesting case is described in a book called *The Reincarnation of John Wilkes Booth* by a psychologist named Dell Leonardi. Here a 20 year old from Kansas was regressed under hypnosis and claimed to have memories of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln. This young farm boy who had never been east of the Mississippi had, under hypnosis, a remarkably detailed knowledge of 19th century Baltimore where Booth had lived. And although some of the things he described could not be verified, at least a few of the things he supposedly remembered were found to be true by the author.

There are other studies of this type, some of which may be questionable, but that cannot be said about the writings of Dr. Ian Stevenson who was the head of the Department of Parapsychology at the University of Virginia. He has published several books, the first of which is *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, which appeared in

1966. Following this, he published a series of books entitled *Cases of the Reincarnation Type*. In these books Stevenson studied situations where people claimed to have memories of a previous existence. In his investigations he does his best to rule any cases of questionable validity, and then he tries to verify whether these memories are true by traveling to the place where the remembered events took place. Some cases were frustrating for their lack of proof, but there are numerous other cases where the memories correspond to actual events in a very convincing fashion. Stevenson who is trying to preserve his credibility as a scientist does not claim to have actually proved that reincarnation is a reality, but anyone who has read his books cannot help but be impressed with the strong probability that there is something genuine behind the many cases he has studied.

Recapitulating, then, we have not necessarily proved that human beings have a soul which is independent of matter and which survives physical death, but we have seen that there is some significant circumstantial evidence which points to the probability that this is true. Finally, then, I would like to conclude with a few remarks about another type of scientific thought which has a direct bearing on the things I have said.

In 1888 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, one of the original founders of the Theosophical movement, published a book called *The Secret Doctrine*. In this gigantic work of over 1,300 pages, madam Blavatsky compares the scriptures of Buddhism and Hinduism to those of Judaism and Christianity. She tries to demonstrate, and I have to say that her arguments are quite convincing, that when one correctly understands the symbolism of these sacred scriptures, one possesses the key to the one body of Truth which was known in ancient times and is still preserved in a more or less distorted fashion in our present-day religions. Blavatsky prophesied, furthermore, that in the 20th century modern science would verify the truth of many of the things she had uncovered in these ancient documents.

Madam Blavatsky wrote at a time when rational materialism was at its high point of popular acceptance, and she was of course ridiculed and vilified by many people during her lifetime. Almost a hundred years later, however, just as she had predicted, modern science, especially the so-called “New Physics” which has grown out of theories of Einstein and others, has come to accept many of the same concepts which Blavatsky found in the ancient esoteric or occult teachings.

I want to mention only a few aspects of this material, but first let me list some of the books in which I have found these ideas. The first is called *Space-Time and Beyond*, by Bob Toben in collaboration with two physicists, Fred Wolff and Jack Sarfatti. The second is *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, by physicist Fritjof Capra. Then there are other books like biologist Lyall Watson’s *Gifts of Unknown Things*, Gary Zukov’s *Dancing Wu Li Masters* and, especially, physicists Paul Davies’ *God and the New Physics*, and David Bohm’s *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. The most entertaining is undoubtedly Toben’s *Space-time and Beyond* because of its comic-book format using cartoons to illustrate the ideas, but Capra’s *The Tao of Physics* is also quite accessible, since it is written in non-technical language. These books all say essentially the same thing, that modern science and, especially, modern physics have now begun to include some of the

same concepts as well as the same view of reality that mystics and religious philosophers have been discussing for thousands of years.

To summarize these ideas I would like to quote from, and then comment on, the “Foreword” of Bob Toben’s *Space-Time and Beyond*. Toben begins by discussing the relationship between consciousness and what he refers to as “space-time,” that is, physical existence as we know it:

The Interpenetration of the Universes has begun. Paths are opening that will allow us to break out of our circle of limited awareness.

Consciousness is the totality beyond space-time—what may in essence be the real “I.” We have come to know that consciousness and energy are one; that all space-time is constructed by consciousness; that our normal perception of reality is a composite of an indefinite number of universes in which we coexist; and that what we perceive as ourselves is only the localized projection of the totality of our true selves.

Therefore, our full energies are devoted to the study of consciousness. There is no other task. Working toward a transformation of consciousness is the only game in town.

The scientific community is exploding with incredible new theories of other space-time possibilities, fundamental energies, self-organizing bio-gravitational fields, the relation of consciousness to gravity, and consciousness as the missing, hidden variable in the structuring of matter. Conventional psychological, scientific, religious and sociological structures are crumbling at an accelerating rate.

All over the world phenomena are occurring that cannot be explained within existing belief systems. They are being dismissed and their observers are being called lunatics.

However, if we properly interpret some of the existing accepted scientific theory, we find that explanations do exist. A new overview, already developing, is replacing those that are dissolving...

Belief systems are now being defined in the language of physics and other sciences. But science is not saying anything new. It is simply restating those views that were understood in different words and symbols thousands of years ago...

Consciousness has solidified itself in space-time. It has become rigid, inflexible and brittle, and it must necessarily begin to unstructure... We experience this process as expanding awareness...

Until the beginning of the 20th century, our Western thought had been based on the idea that spirit and matter, or consciousness and physical existence, are two separate entities. Soon after the beginning of the 20th century, however, this dualistic picture of reality began to fall apart and now, for modern physics, has completely collapsed. Let’s examine this process briefly.

As you know it has always been assumed that material existence was solid, and it was quite a shock when we learned that matter, far from being solid and impenetrable, is composed of atoms which are in themselves a network of electrons, protons, neutrons and other particles that move around each other with tremendous speed and energy. Although the materialists were shocked, they were at first comforted by the idea that, if objects are not solid, they could still at least be divided into these particles which provide the solid foundation of physical reality. So for several decades now physicists have been searching to find which particle is the building block of all material existence, and they still have not found it.

On the contrary. Einstein's well-known formula $E=mc^2$ has demonstrated that these subatomic particles are not solid, but rather a form of condensed energy which only appears to be solid because we have "trapped" or "stopped" it by the act of observing it. In other words, physicists now accept the idea that matter and energy are completely interchangeable. Matter is energy which appears to be solid because our physical senses, and our scientific instruments, can only perceive it in this form.

Since this energy behaves in an orderly fashion and is also the basis of all human existence, it follows that it must be intelligent. And intelligent energy is synonymous with consciousness. Therefore, as Toben stated in his "Foreword," consciousness is now seen by some physicists as the basis of physical reality. In other words, physical reality is now seen as energy which is vibrating at many different frequencies, or as consciousness which is operating on many different levels. Furthermore, all this energy, or consciousness, as David Bohm has demonstrated in his book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, is part of one infinite and interrelated Whole. Reality can now be seen as a cosmic or universal pool of interrelated conscious energy, which is a concept that is parallel or similar to the mystical conception of God.

And so we are back where we started with the idea of Pantheism, according to which God is the sum total of all that exists. Or, as it is stated in the first verses of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." Modern physics now has given us a scientific basis with which to understand how this can be a reality. It has offered us the concept of universal, conscious energy which is the basis of all existence, and which is identical to the way in which many religions have conceived of God.

Several of the other ideas we touched on earlier now also become easier to understand. If matter is composed of conscious energy, it is not difficult to see how it could be affected by our thoughts and emotions, since these types of consciousness are just different manifestations of the same Whole. The idea of prayer and meditation also takes on new significance. Since all consciousness is interrelated, it is through our own inner consciousness that we can find our real connection to the ultimate reality or, if you prefer, to God.

And finally, since consciousness is obviously not controlled by matter but the other way around, the idea of life after death can indeed be a reality. In fact, although I have not discussed the full implications of what modern physics has to say about time, it is possible to say here that, if everything is interrelated, if all consciousness is one, then all times are also interrelated. All aspects of reality are part of one Whole, so that in one sense there *is* no time; past, present and future are part of the same Whole which can be seen as an Eternal Now. This is obviously impossible to understand within the limits of our rational mind which can only conceive of reality as part of a linear sequence of events. But as mystics and other esoteric sources have been telling us for centuries, the New Physics also tells us: although reality changes constantly, since everything is one there is no beginning and no end. Birth and death are not really a beginning and an end, but rather a change from one level of consciousness to another. As Bob Toben puts it, "There is no death, only a change of awareness, a change of cosmic address."

In saying all this, I do not want to destroy anyone's personal religious or philosophical beliefs. On the contrary, what I would hope to accomplish is to expand these beliefs and to strengthen them. Because if there is any one, central thread running through all these remarks it is this: that although the mystic and the materialist, the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Muslim or the Christian all seem to differ on the surface of things, if each looks far enough or deep enough into his or her own awareness they will end up in essentially the same place, face to face with the Universal Consciousness that is the divine ground of all being.

I firmly believe that there is hope and meaning and purpose in life and that each one of us can find it if we are willing to search for it with an open mind. In conclusion, I would like to quote the final lines of Toben's "Foreword" to *Space-time and Beyond*: "Since everything is constructed from consciousness, if enough people are aware of the harmonies of peace in the universe layers, conflict and fear can diminish. It has been the significance of Jesus, Buddha, and a handful of others throughout history to show us the interpenetration of the universes, to reunite us with ourselves. So as I turn inward, realizing I am intimately connected with all the universes, I take direct responsibility for my thoughts. It's all here and now, within. Don't wait for the guru, the messiah, the teacher, the second coming. Wake up and smell the coffee! Realize that every event in all the universes is influenced by you. Understand that there is life and consciousness in everything. There is nothing you can do to stop expanding awareness, but you can help it come. You are participating in the unstructuring of space-time. The process has begun."