

## REMEMBRANCE

*Nobody can say where man ends. That is the beauty of it.*

*Carl Jung*

*The Greeks do not rightly use the term "coming into being" and "perishing." For nothing comes into being nor yet does anything perish, but there is mixture and separation of things that are. So they would do right in calling the coming into being "mixture," and the perishing "separation."*

*Anaxagoras (a Greek philosopher and  
friend of Pericles circa 470 BC)*

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In his book, Life After Life, Dr. Raymond Moody wrote:

In 1965, when I was an undergraduate student studying philosophy at the University of Virginia, I met a man who was a clinical professor of psychiatry in the School of Medicine. I was struck from the beginning by his warmth, kindness, and humor. It came as a great surprise when I later learned a very interesting fact about him, namely, that he had been dead--not just once but on two occasions, about ten minutes apart--and that he had given a most fantastic account of what happened to him while he was "dead". I later heard him relate his story to a small group of students. At the time, I was impressed, but since I had little background from which to judge such experiences, I "filed it away," both in my mind and in the form of a tape recording of his talk.

That was Raymond Moody's first experience with what are now called *near death experiences*. His second came after he had received his Ph.D. in philosophy. He was

teaching a class on Plato at the University of North Carolina when a student approached him one day after class to talk about the idea of immortality.

It seems the student's grandmother had "died" for a short time during an operation, and upon recovery recounted an unusual series of events that she remembered happening during the operation--presumably during the period she was medically dead. The student related the specifics of his grandmother's story and, to Moody's surprise, they almost exactly correlated to the chain of events outlined years earlier by that professor of psychiatry.

Curiosity piqued, Moody began to delve more deeply into the possibility that man, as an integrated, aware Being, might continue to exist beyond the biological death of the body. He told no one about his two near-death stories, but he did begin to devote classroom time and student readings to the topic of immortality. He received an interesting response to his efforts. In nearly every class of twenty-five to thirty students, at least one student quietly came forth in private to recount a personal near-death experience (personal in the sense that it either happened to the student, to someone in his or her immediate family, or to a close friend).

In 1972, Moody entered medical school (he is now an MD specializing in Psychiatry). Although he was careful to closely guard the specifics of his informal research, he made contacts with other doctors through speaking engagements at medical conventions, etc., and made his interest in near-death situations known. As a consequence, near-death patients from all over the country were referred to him by their physicians. By the time he made his findings public through the publication of his book, he had collected approximately 150 cases.

Analyzing his interviews, Dr. Moody found that a number of different happenings seem to surface quite often as people recalled their particular experience. Weaving these most-often stated components into one composite picture, we find the following account:

- 1.) An individual, we will say it is a man, is in a life-threatening situation (he is drowning or in an automobile accident, or maybe he is having an operation and something has gone wrong). There is pain--he is in distress--and then he becomes very peaceful. He hears someone declare him dead.
- 2.) He hears a sound like a buzzing or a ringing.

- 3.) The man feels he is being quickly drawn into a void, a darkness (many describe this as being like entering head-first into a narrow, black tunnel).
- 4.) He finds himself out of his physical body, floating near it. He finds he has a body, but it is not like the physical one, it is more ethereal. (Some recall having people who are trying to revive the physical body walk right through this ethereal body).
- 5.) The man hovers above the physical body, watching resuscitation efforts and listening to the doctors (or whoever is trying to revive him) talk. (This ability to recount dialogue that has gone on while the individual was dead is fairly common; there have even been cases where the individual has left the immediate area of the physical body and observed happenings in areas nowhere close).
- 6.) The man feels the presence of spiritual Beings--Beings who have come to help him with the transition. They may or may not be physically obvious to him, but he feels them around him as they work.
- 7.) He finds himself in the presence of a *Being of Light*. (Some have associated this Being with Christ, but the majority, both Christians and non-Christians alike, have said only that it was a very loving, benevolent Being).
- 8.) In a very non-judgmental way, the Being poses a non-verbal question to the man which gently prods him into an analysis of his life. With the Being's help, the experiences of the man's life flash before him. It is not a threatening process--the Being and the man look impersonally at the man's actions and observe where the actions were benevolent and as-they-should-have-been, and where they were harmful. (Many say that the Being stressed two things during this period of introspection: the need to learn to love others and the need to acquire knowledge).
- 9.) He comes to a point where he feels a barrier through which he can not pass.
- 10.) There comes a time when the man feels himself being pulled back down toward his physical body. (Often the individual is so absorbed in the peacefulness of the experience that he does not want to be forced back into the body; in some cases, he fights to stay out, though he becomes content once revived and fully back in the physical form).

- 11.) Later, he tries to talk about his experience to others. He is usually met either with skepticism or with questions of his sanity. After a few of these encounters, he stops talking to people about it.
- 12.) If the man is typical, the experience will not make him more religious in the sense of wanting to go to church more often on Sunday. It will change his view of life, though, giving it a more precious, spiritual quality. He will remember the *Being of Light* and the one lesson that came through so clearly as he watched and analyzed his life--the need to become more loving.

In general, Dr. Moody was very careful to preserve the credibility and dignity of his report. During the research, he took pains to insure that loose talk did not inadvertently prejudice or corrupt the testimony of possible future contacts. He also made it clear that his findings were not a scientific proof of life after death (scientific research follows a very strict protocol in which experimental data must be duplicable in a controlled environment; such a possibility would obviously be impossible in near-death research). He pointed out that there are many people who find themselves in near-death situations, yet who have no remembrances of anything taking place that was out of the ordinary, and he plainly says that no two near-death experiences are exactly alike. He even includes a chapter in which he discusses alternative explanations of the phenomenon.

When all is said and done, though, Dr. Moody's book highlights one point that is very difficult to refute: it is incredibly unlikely that so many independent sources have had this kind of experience, and that their accounts could be so relatively consistent with one another. Unlikely, that is, unless the experiences have some foundation in an area that science knows next to nothing about: the possibility that humans do, indeed, exist as conscious entities after the death of the body.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moody's research does not stand alone. Of the many who have published additional works on the subject, two stand out as notable:

The first is Dr. George Richie who, in his book Return from Tomorrow, recounts his own near-death experience during World War II. Interestingly enough, Dr Richie was the previously unnamed professor of Psychiatry who first introduced Moody to the possibility of near-death experiences.

Dr. Michael Sabom is a cardiologist who began by being highly skeptical of Moody's work. His visceral reaction remained until he began questioning near-death patients of his own. To his surprise, many of the experiences Moody's patients reported were the same as those recounted by his own people. His book, Recollections of Death, A Medical Investigation, outlines his approach, his data, and his conclusions.

The fact that Moody's research paints a picture of blissful states awaiting a just-departed individual leaves un confronted one unsettling possibility. If the after-death states are so great, why don't people who are miserable just skip all the pain and suffering of life and go straight into the inner worlds? Why don't they commit suicide?

Prompted, I'm sure, by the realization that this might be a tempting alternative for some, Moody did additional research with *near death suicides*. In an addendum to his book, he writes:

These (suicide near-death) experiences were uniformly characterized as being unpleasant. As one woman said, "If you leave here a tormented soul, you will be a tormented soul over there, too." In short, they reported that the conflicts they had attempted suicide to escape were still present after they died, but with added complications. In their disembodied state they were unable to do anything about their problems, and they also had to view the unfortunate consequences which resulted from their acts.

A man who was despondent about the death of his wife shot himself, "died" as a result, and was resuscitated. He states:

I didn't go where (my wife) was. I went to an awful place . . . I immediately saw what a mistake I had made . . . I thought, "I wish I hadn't done it."

Others who experienced this unpleasant "limbo" state have remarked that they had the feeling they would be there for a long time. This was their penalty for "breaking the rules" by trying to release themselves prematurely from what was, in effect, an "assignment"--to fulfill a certain purpose in life.

There are some observations that can be made from Moody's work, aside from the obvious.

--Even though "stepping across the line" does seem to effect a release of everyday-life-pressures, the *surviving self* doesn't appear to change much mentally or emotionally with death. Beings don't just automatically erupt into a blissful, celestial glow, sprout wings, and take up the harp. Note that this is very similar to the Eastern beliefs we have already talked about.

--Although Moody's work seems to support the contention that personal Awareness does not cease to exist with the death of the body,<sup>2</sup> it says nothing about reincarnation. Of course, that isn't surprising. Each of the individuals Moody dealt with went only so far before being drawn back into the body. We will have to go elsewhere for proof (if proof exists) of rebirth.

Talk to almost anyone about the idea of reincarnation and you'll find that the single biggest objection to the possibility is the fact that people simply don't have personal recollections of their own past lives. Furthermore, people will say that if past lives aren't something one remembers, what good are they?

But why should it be strange or unusual that you can't remember past lives. After all, can you remember what you were doing when you were six months old? Not likely. So why would it be perplexing that we don't have remembrances of lives that might have taken place hundreds of years ago?

More to the point, there are a number of reasons why it *would* be surprising to find that one could remember past lives.

Think about all the things you've screwed up in your life so far. Think about all the people you've hurt. Think about all the situations you've played badly, all the things you wish you could do over, all the regrets (for those of you who are young and can't list many things in this category, give it time . . . most older people are buried in guilt and

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<sup>2</sup> There are skeptics who would disagree with this. Just because the heart and breath have stopped, they would argue, doesn't mean the near-death victim is brain dead.

Indeed, this fact could explain how people might remember conversations held by their rescuers. That is, information might continue to be impressed on the brain during the short period after death and before the brain has completely turned off. And as for the phenomenon of hovering over the body: that could simple be a hallucination.

Of course, these arguments don't explain how victims remember *visually seeing* the resuscitation process as it goes on, later describing minute details not available simply through the sense of hearing. Neither does it explain how a victim having an operation might "hallucinate" going to, say, the hospital *waiting room* only to accurately recall the conversation between loved ones that occurred during that time-- a time when the discussion is wholly out of earshot of the body.

What is important to realize from this is that there are other explanations that have been presented by skeptics. What also needs to be recognized, though, is that simply because alternatives can be presented, it doesn't mean they truly reflect what is really going on in the phenomena. It all comes down to the following: Whether or not Moody's work is convincing to you *is up to you*. In a way, looking to so-called experts (skeptical or otherwise) for the solution is not useful. In most cases, they don't have the answers any more than you or I do.

uncomfortable remembrance of actions ill taken). If forgetfulness wasn't a part of the evolutionary system, imagine what it would be like to come into any life with complete remembrance of all the negative things you've done *over all your past lives*. It would be devastating. The weight of remorse would psychologically crush you before you ever had a chance to experience anything in the current life.

Forgetfulness is a very benevolent, useful accouterment within the system we are examining. Along with allowing a Being to heal after difficult teaching experiences, it allows karma to bring the same kinds of teaching experiences to an individual over and over again. How so? For most of us, the child is quite set in its ways of action. It often takes a long time and a lot of karmic nudging to make it (us) see that its attitudes (our attitudes) are not as they should be. If the child had unlimited memory, it could easily learn to short-circuit specific kinds of experience, limiting their usefulness as a teaching tool.

Example: Assume you are a middle age man who, for various reasons, has deep, hidden insecurities. As is the case with most people, you are so involved in your own little world that you don't even realize this. Nevertheless, you unconsciously try to make yourself appear secure by constantly having relationships with, say, beautiful women (not that there is anything wrong with this; it is just that you won't even *consider* a woman who doesn't *look spectacular*). You have a great job, money, friends and decent looks, so your life becomes a quest for that beautiful companion to bring it all together. You regularly become infatuated, fall in love, have good times, have differences, then have everything fall apart. You are lucky if your relationships last more than a half-year. Nevertheless, within a few months of each break-up you are champing at the bit to try once again.

Why, with all the pain generated by each break-up, do you continue replaying this scenario over and over again?

The easy answer is that you are lonely and, hence, simply keep trying. But sooner or later, you are going to begin to realize that there are things you are doing that are counterproductive . . . like ignoring that nice, pleasant looking woman down the hall because she isn't 22 years old and probably wouldn't be asked to be a Playboy centerfold. Why do you ignore her? Because there are things in you that are driving you to repeat patterns of experience that are doomed to failure.

Still, your own blindness is drawing you toward a major enlightenment. As the experiences mount up, sooner or later it is going to dawn on you that beauty really *is* only skin deep; that what makes a woman worth while is not how structurally attractive she is

but what is inside her--what her attitudes are about life. And once that becomes evident, who knows? Maybe you will begin to see that what makes YOU worthwhile is not who is on your arm but how you *treat* people and life in everyday terms. Are you kind when you don't need to be? Are you considerate when it requires an extra effort? Is it always the child-self first with you, or can you take the child in hand, unclench its grip on what it wants, and allow life to flow around you without all the demands and controls? In other words, repeated experience along this line has at least the potential of cracking the *shell of self* wide open, allowing you to begin to see beyond your small world.

Most people have a central theme in their lives, a theme that generates similar experiences that happen over and over again as their lives progress. If it were not for forgetfulness, the possibility of using a common experience in a recursive way would not exist and karma's duty to teach would be considerably more difficult.

In short, forgetfulness is a useful commodity within the spiritual evolution of the self. What's more, when the necessity for forgetfulness no longer exists, it will no longer be. When a Being has evolved to a point where it can treat life as an accepted and precious learning experience, when there is no longer the need to fight the child every step of the way, forgetfulness will lift and the Self will have the opportunity to look back and learn from all its lifetimes of experience. The Jataka Tales recounts some of the lives of the Buddha; the East believes remembrance of previous lives will come when it is appropriate within a Being's spiritual evolution.

As for the belief that unremembered past lives have no affect on one's thinking, think again. The whole idea behind psychological analysis is that bringing to the surface (i.e., remembering), confronting and dealing with buried, traumatic, early-life experiences will allow an individual to heal mental and related physical health problems in the here and now. Simply because one doesn't actively remember an abusive parent, for instance, doesn't mean the mental scars aren't there. Simply because you don't remember past lives (assuming they exist) doesn't mean they haven't played a role in making you what you are today.

But many people still want proof of reincarnation in ways that are obvious. They think if reincarnation is true, then a child should know from prior life that if it puts its fingers into a flame, it will be burned. If this isn't the case, they assume there are no



proofs. Yet the evidence of rebirth may be all around us, unseen because we don't really know what to look for.

Do you carry any unexplainable, irrational fears? Have you ever visited some place, possibly in a foreign country, and had the overwhelmingly comfortable feeling you were at home?<sup>3</sup> Or have you ever met a new acquaintance, only to find an immediate rapport, almost as though you were being reunited with an old, beloved friend you had not seen for ages?

There are probably a thousand ways one could explain these situations. One of the many possibilities is that you are experiencing the remembrance of a previous life.

What's more, why are you the way you are? Scientists believe there are two factors at work in forming a human persona: genetics and environment. The genetics is relatively straightforward. The absence or existence of certain gene combinations determines physical characteristics as well as propensities and abilities that seem to come with the body. But as sensible as this may seem to biologists, it stretches credibility to the max when used as an explanation for someone like Mozart writing a symphony at the ripe old age of eight.

The environmental factor certainly affects how we react to life, but how far back can one go to determine why an individual is the way he or she is? Conventional psychologists are willing to consider effect all the way back to an individual's natal state. *Transpersonal psychologists* are willing to go even further. Working on the basis of evidence gathered during hypnotic regressions (they use a regression technique that must be done *very carefully*), they believe that if the roots of an individual's problems cannot be linked to experiences in this life, they may reside in decisions and actions taken in *previous* lives.

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<sup>3</sup> My mom visited England a number of years ago on a bus tour. One day while driving through the countryside, she was struck by a view of a large house on the top of a small hill in eyeshot of the highway. When they arrived at their destination, she had the opportunity to visit the house. Upon entering the place, she was shocked by how familiar everything seemed. It wasn't the kind of familiarity one has by having seen pictures of the home; it was the kind of familiarity someone has when they know every nook and cranny of a place. She had never been to England before and, as best she could tell, had never seen the estate before, but she knew it well (she even knew where the guest bathroom was on the first floor long before it was pointed out to her by the guide).

At the time she had no way of explaining her strong, rather unusual feelings about the place. One obvious possibility is a past life connection.

Still, people want to know if anyone has ever had a *full blown* remembrance of a past life. The answer to that is . . . maybe.

Dr. Ian Stevenson is the Carlson Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Division of Parapsychology, Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. Dr. Stevenson has written a number books, notably *Twenty Case Suggestive of Reincarnation* (University Press of Virginia), in which he presents the meticulous research and analysis he and his co-workers have done in the area of *past life remembrance*. As of 1974, his group had collected over 1300 such cases, four-fifths of which had been investigated by his team. The cases have come from all over the world--from Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North and South America--and including a large number, over 300, from Alaska and the continental United States.

Colin Wilson, in his book *Afterlife*, recounted a compressed version of one of Dr. Stevenson's cases from India. He writes:

Swarnlata, the daughter of a civil servant, was born in 1948. At the age of three she began to tell her brothers and sisters about a previous life in the city of Katni, where she had been called Biya, and had been married to a man called Chintamini Pandey. At three and a half, her father took her with him on a school inspection trip, and as they passed Katni--about a hundred miles from their home--she asked the driver to turn down a road to "my house." Her father then learned that she had been telling her family about her "previous life" for some time. She performed for her parents songs and dances that she claimed she had learned in her previous life, and which she had certainly no opportunity to learn in the present one. When she was ten, her family moved to Chatarpur, and she there met a lady named Srimati Agnihotri, whom she claimed to recognize as someone who had known her in her previous life. Her father was impressed when this lady confirmed many of his daughter's statements about Katni and her life there--for the first time he began to take her claims seriously. He began writing down her statement to compare with those of her "previous" family in Katni. He had made a list of nine points about the family house; all proved to be accurate; so did Swarnlata's description of her life as Biya, the deceased wife. Soon after this, Swarnlata and her family went to Katni; what followed was very similar to what happened to Shanti Devi.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Shanti Devi was a four year old girl born in 1926 who was able to recount a description of people, places, and events that took place during a time that was previous to her birth in an area of India she had no prior access to or knowledge of. When she was taken to the place of her previous life, she was able to guide the carriage from the train station to her "previous" home, give a guided tour of the house, and greet by name friends and obscure relatives that were there.

Swarnlata's family took care to offer her no clues, but even tried to mislead her on various points--such as telling her that the family cowherd was dead, then bringing him into her presence. She recognized him immediately. Stevenson's table of all the places, people, and events described accurately by Swarnlata goes on for eight pages, and makes impressive reading.

As was the case with Raymond Moody, Dr. Stevenson is a very respectable psychiatrist and researcher. Like Moody, his book includes an analysis of the problems and possible sources of error inherent in the kind of research he does, and an even-handed presentation of other possible explanations for his findings. In short, he does not present his work as a *proof* of reincarnation . . . but it does strongly support the possibility.

For the sake of completion, I think I should say more about the topic of hypnosis.

Contrary to popular opinion, hypnosis is not a plaything. If exercised irresponsibly, it can uncork anxieties and unpleasant memories and generally debilitate an unsuspecting subject. Nevertheless, when normal analysis has failed, psychologists have used therapeutic hypnosis as a port of entry into the subconscious for decades. What is weird is that in doing so, many have run into unexpected results: patients who have recounted what appear to be past lives.

Case studies normally follow a typical pattern: While under hypnosis, the subject gives his or her name in the previous life, the date, the name of the country in which the life took place, the name of the individual's town or village, names of family and friends, and bits and pieces about the lifestyle of the times and the individual's personal situation.

Once convinced the patient isn't faking, and if the case is noteworthy, the psychologist then sends a researcher to the *country in question* with instructions to use every resource available to verify or deny the claim. Church and land records are scoured to find references to the alleged personality; relatives are interviewed if they exist; scholars familiar with the time period are interviewed. The researchers tend to be fanatically thorough . . . nobody wants to play the incredulous fool and substantiate a bad case.

Of course, there is always the possibility that someone will go to another country, look up a lot of obscure but historically documented information, and use it to present a fraudulent case in a faked hypnosis session. Researchers, trying to verify the

information, would follow the hoaxer's footsteps to the same place the villain got his or her information, and nobody would be the wiser.

That kind of thing could certainly happen once, or ten times, or even a hundred times. But the odds of that being the case for the thousands of case studies that have been done all over the world in the last forty years are not good. Even so, there are really only two kinds of evidence most self-respecting skeptics are willing to accept: a regression that produces information that no one in the world knows about at the time, but that is somehow verified at a later date; and a situation in which the regressee is so completely changed during the regression that he or she actually manifests physical differences that are discernible but impossible to fake.

I have already mentioned Colin Wilson's book, Afterlife. In it he gives us an example of the first kind of "acceptable" evidence. It reads:

. . . Iverson's most convincing case (Iverson was a T.V. producer who became interested in past life regressions after doing a T.V. special on the subject) is of a woman who prefers to be known as Jane Evans, and who recalled several past lives; a Roman housewife living in Britain, a Jewess murdered in a pogrom in York, a French courtesan, a maidservant to a lady-in-waiting to the Spanish Infanta, and an American nun from Des Moines, Iowa.

. . . the most impressive "incarnation" was as a Jewess, Rebecca, in twelfth-century York. Shortly before Richard the Lion Hearted rode off to the Third Crusade, in 1189, there were anti-Jewish riots in London; the English had worked themselves into a frenzy about "infidels," and the Jews seemed to qualify as much as the Muslims. In 1190, there were riots in York; Jews took refuge in the castle, and most of them killed their families, then themselves, to avoid the vengeance of the mob. Rebecca and her family escaped the massacre, and took refuge in the crypt of a Christian church, "just outside the big gate." But the mob found and killed them.

Iverson decided to consult an expert on the massacre, Professor Barrie Dobson, of the University of York. Dobson was impressed by her reconstruction of the massacre, particularly because 'Jane Evans' claimed to be totally ignorant of any such thing (the woman had evidently had no historical training beyond the usual elementary courses in school--and the completeness of her account was too meticulous to be the consequence of

cryptomnesia<sup>5</sup> ). He decided that the church that answered her description was St. Mary's, Castlegate. There was only one problem--Castlegate had no crypt. But six months later, workmen renovating the church discovered the remains of 'something that seems to have been a 'crypt'-- room with round stone arches and vaults, under the chancel.

It isn't often that rooms or passageways unknown to history pop up in the transcripts of regression cases, but it has happened. When it does, skeptics have little recourse but to nod and acknowledge there could be something to the evidence.

The second kind of evidence--physical or mental changes in the individual that come out under hypnosis--also occurs in rare instances of xenoglossy. Xenoglossy is the ability to spontaneously speak a language that one "does not know". Head and Cranston's Reincarnation, The Phoenix Fire Mystery, yields one such example:

Lydia Johnson was not looking for a previous life when she agreed to help her husband with his experiments in hypnotism. She proved an excellent subject, capable of slipping easily into a deep trance. Dr. Harold Johnson (not their real names) was a respected Philadelphia physician. He had taken up hypnotism two years earlier, thinking it might help in treating some of his patients. Now, as his experiments with his wife progressed, he decided to try hypnotic regression, taking her back in time.

Suddenly, she flinched, as if struck, and screamed. She grabbed her head. He ended the session immediately, but his wife had a headache that could not be explained. Twice Johnson repeated the session. The result was the same. On awakening from the trance, Lydia each time said she had visualized a scene with water, and with old people seemingly being forced into it to drown. She had felt herself being pulled down, and then the blow--the scream--and the headache.

Johnson called in another hypnotist, a Dr. John Murray (also a pseudonym). Murray repeated the regression . . . but before the pain could strike, he instructed her: 'You are 10 years younger than that.' Then it happened. She began to talk. Not sentences, just words, an occasional phrase. Part was in broken English, part in a foreign language unfamiliar to anyone present. But her voice. It was deep, masculine, earthy. Then from the mouth of the pretty, 37-year-old housewife, the chilling words: 'I am a man.' The name? 'Jensen Jacoby.' She pronounced it YEN-sen YAH-ko-bee.

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<sup>5</sup> The mind has the ability to take in enormous amounts of information, most of which is "lost" in the subconscious. Cryptomnesia is a situation in which an individual brings up from the subconscious memories of things he or she has unconsciously observed at some earlier time.

She began, in halting English punctuated by foreign words, to describe a past life. In this, and sessions that followed, she told in that low, guttural voice, of living in a tiny village in Sweden some three centuries ago. The sessions were tape recorded, and careful notes were kept. Swedish linguist were called in to translate Jensen's statements. In the later sessions he spoke almost exclusively in Swedish, a language totally alien to Lydia.

'What do you do for a living?' he was asked.

'En Bonde (a farmer),' he answered.

'Where do you live?'

'I huset (in a house).'

'Var ligger huset? (Where is the house located)?'

'I Hansen (in Hansen).'

Jensen showed a simple personality harmonious with the peasant life he described. He showed little knowledge of anything beyond his own village and a trading center he visited . . . He raised cows, horses, goats, chickens, ate goats milk cheese, bread, milk, salmon, and poppy seed cakes made by his wife, Latvia . . . He had built his own stone house, and he and Latvia had no children. He was one of three sons; his mother was Norwegian and had run away from home.

Objects were brought in, and Lydia was asked to open her eyes and identify them. As Jensen, she did--a model of a 17th Century Swedish ship, which she correctly called "skuta," a wooden container used for measuring grain, a bow and arrow, and poppy seeds. She did not recognize or know how to use modern tools, such as pliers . . .

Although the above section came from Head and Cranston's book, it was actually one of Ian Stevenson's cases. Stevenson's comment? He said he has used hypnosis in a few cases but much prefers cases in which small children who are *not* under hypnosis spontaneously speak "unknown" foreign languages--in some cases, even extant ancient languages. Those, he maintains, are more reliable examples of xenoglossy and of much greater value if one is trying to build a case for reincarnation. They do not happen often (or at least they aren't reported often), but according to him, they do occur.

Bottom line: Reincarnation . . . does it exist?

It's your call!