

'Soul Searching'

by Musafir

Carl Sagan, "Your Holiness, what if we were to prove, scientifically, that there is no such thing as reincarnation?"

The Dalai Lama, "How would one disprove reincarnation?"

Call me an agnostic or call me confused, but I have always beheld the concept of reincarnation with cynicism. According to Hinduism, the soul is indestructible and it may return in a new body after death based on one's karma in the past life. The cycle of rebirth continues until the soul is liberated (moksha).

The problem with reincarnation is twofold: 1) we have, as of yet, no way to verify it prospectively in an objective manner, 2) we have no mechanism to explain how reincarnation might occur. I have had discussion on this topic with several local scholars. They couldn't satisfy me with their answers. Suddenly, I came across a story last week that made me sublimate to a different rationale. What if the concept of reincarnation were true? After all, we don't know everything!

The story goes as follows: Once there was a set of twins in a mother's womb. One of them was agnostic and the other was a theist. The agnostic didn't believe in the concept of Divine Mother. He thought that delivery was the end of life. After that there was nothing but darkness and void.

The other twin believed in the benevolent Mother whom he would meet after delivery and she would take care of him. He thought that the world outside the womb would be brighter and there was certainly something out there that would release them from the constraints of the umbilical cord.

This story got me thinking. Yes we are infinitely lesser than miniscule in big schemes of things. Our universe is miniscule compared to multiverse and I don't want to go beyond that. According to the German mathematician, Philipp Cantor, no matter how large a set you have (infinity), it is always possible to produce a set bigger than that. I don't want to go there either. That shows the limit of my comprehension.



A theologian who was also a scientist explained the concept to me this way: According to the Newton's law of motion and quantum theory of fields, all matters interact with each other via the fundamental forces of nature, and are constantly moving and changing following the field equations. All matters are, therefore, impermanent but indestructible. Similarly, when we die we become

building blocks of another life.

He even went further in explaining that the information of an object is encoded in its wave-function, and it evolves in such a way that the total information is never lost. This implies that when we die, all the information about "self" is permanently preserved. It merely gets scrambled up with other information and transferred elsewhere. It could likely become contained inside the consciousness of another living.

One scholar explained to me the concept this way. Death is similar to the malfunctioning of a television set or radio. The fact that a TV or radio is broken does not mean television and radio stations have ceased to broadcast. In other words, energy that runs TV and radio is similar to soul that lives in human body. It doesn't cease to exist. It only gets transferred to another device (body).

There is one difference though. Energy that we use for devices is continual whereas a soul gets liberated. The Hindus call this Moksha. The Buddhists call it Nirvana. Moksha, from a salvation perspective, means liberation, emancipation, and release from the death-rebirth cycle of reincarnation. I take the liberty to look at Moksha from a philosophical point of view. To me, it means reaching self-realization, or fullness of life.

That's all I understand with my limited intellect. All the above may be true but it's too profound for me. "There will be an answer, let it be, let it be, let it be. Whisper words of wisdom, let it be." –The Beatles