

An offer of hope and understanding

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It is sad that at a time when so many people around the world are grasping to understand the events that changed America's view of the world, that religious leaders are at a loss to supply a holistic answer to the age-old question; "How could God let this happen?"

I would like to offer a possible view of the world that both allows those who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001 to move forward with confidence in God's Love and, at the same time, allow those contemplating retaliation for this horrible act see that only God's Justice is perfect.

Let us assume for a moment that God has given everyone more than one chance on Earth to achieve the level of perfection demanded by Jesus. With this assumption in hand, let us examine the previously stated question from the viewpoint of the 19 hijackers.

Having (falsely) thought they were doing their dreadful act of terrorism in honor of Allah, they died thinking that they had done the most holy deed. But did they really get away with it? Under the stated assumption, what might their next life on Earth look like? Being born into a family with an abusive, alcoholic father, who terrorizes their entire life; or being born crippled, destined to live on the streets at the mercy of humanity might be two ways that God discharges His "Eye for an Eye" Justice. This type of personal retribution could be what Jesus referred to as "paying back all of your debts to the last farthing". On the other hand, being born into a loving family could be how God shows His infinite Love to even the lowliest of His children.

This theory seems to strengthen the concepts of God's Eternal Love and Justice versus what is currently taught. It also makes intellectual sense. So what evidence of reincarnation exists in the world today?

The Bible does not explain reincarnation in great detail, but there are a number of clear references to it. Looking at the many passages surrounding the second coming of Elijah (Malachi 4:5, Matthew 16:13-14 and 17:10-13, Mark 9:11-13, Mark 6:14-16, John 1:19-21), one gets the impression that reincarnation was a common belief at the time the Bible was written. This would explain why there is not much detail on it, since you do not have to elaborate on concepts that are common knowledge.

Nicodemus was concerned about his ability to change at such a late stage in his life when he asked Jesus: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus' answer was: "Most assuredly." In John 3:1-21, Jesus is telling an old man, who had just heard the teachings of Jesus, that clearly he did not have enough years left to change his ways, but that through God's Love he would have at least another life in which he could live according to these new teachings.

Modern genetic research confirms that it was impossible for any human to live to the ages quoted in the Old Testament, but are these really ages given in many passages of Genesis? Genesis 5:5 says: "So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died." This is not the same as saying Adam lived to be 930 years old. Saying that his total years on Earth were 930 would reconcile modern scientific knowledge with the Bible. It also helps to properly place biblical events into both geological and archeological history since Adam's 930 years could have been scattered over a 10 to 20 thousand-year time span.

The eruption of the volcano Santorini (on the island of Thera, north of Crete) in 1646 BC, has helped historians to accurately date Joseph's life. The volcanic ash fallout from this eruption most likely

caused the 7 years of famine foreseen by the Pharaoh, and which forced Jacob and his family to travel south to Egypt. Based on this, Jacob-Israel died around 1627 BC.

At the same time, archeologists have placed Abram's life in the 22nd century BC. It does not take super-human life spans to explain the missing 400 years in this family history when you consider the possibility of multiple lives. Intuitively, it is hard to believe that it was the same Jacob who so easily stole his older brother's first-born right, but later, so patiently put up with many years of abuse in order to win the daughter of Laban. It is also hard to believe that the great hunter Esau let his brother get away with such a dirty trick. It is more likely that he tracked down Jacob and killed him for what he did shortly after he discovered what Jacob had done. This could mean that the Jacob-Israel who woke up in Genesis 28:18 did so 400 years later, in a new life on Earth, and with a stronger belief in God. This logically explains Jacob's 147 years on Earth, after dying in his 80's in Egypt. It also helps to explain how Esau's family got so big in what was earlier thought to have been a short period of time.

Although reincarnation has widely been discussed in esoteric circles, the modern medical community has never considered it as a serious possibility. They have never had proof of multiple lives. But what if this is just one of God's Laws? Life would no longer be a test if everyone knew they could keep trying until they finally get it right. Where would the need for belief go? Doesn't it require infinite love to allow such a terrorist to enter a new life with a chance to right those atrocious wrongs and not be plagued with the conscious memory of them? And couldn't subconscious traces of the past help to explain the broad range of psychosis diagnosed, even in the youngest of children?

A recent re-analysis of behavioral data collected on identical twins throughout the years can shed light onto this subject. The current two-factor behavior model does not explain the data collected in identical twin studies. It includes only genetic and environmental factors as determinants of behavior. In other words, all behavior is determined solely by what you physically inherit from your parents and how you were raised. In the special case of identical twins, one of the two factors is thrown out since the physical inheritance is truly identical. Thus the current model says that the differences in behavior between two identical twins are solely due to how they were raised. Ask any mother of identical twins and you will find that she cannot explain the behavioral differences of the two because she has painstakingly made sure that neither is favored. The statistical patterns seen in twin studies on alcoholism, smoking, criminal behavior, Schizophrenia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Bipolar Disorder confirms her feeling, and they show that there are other factors at play than currently recognized by the medical profession. One of these factors could be that each of us carries a certain amount of spiritual baggage into our lives.

It will not be known in this lifetime whether this multiple life theory is true, although there is enough evidence to take it seriously. The concept of multiple lives should soothe the mind of any believer. It is especially comforting for anyone who lost a loved one prematurely, because they can believe that their loved one will have the chance again to live a full life. It should not be interpreted that every handicapped person or mean little boy was a terrorist in an earlier life, but it should be a reminder for everyone that each of us is here to repay our own debts. And maybe this unpleasant person is in my life because of something that I need to learn or that I need to repay.

(First published in the Bermuda Sun on September 28, 2001.)