

I will be reincarnated says Dalai Lama

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Future thinking: At 90, the Dalai Lama is planning for his death — but he says it will not happen until he is 130 years old.

Is there life after death? The leader of the Tibetan Buddhist people has promised to return. It raises questions about what happens when we die.

What's happening?

This weekend, a special birthday took place. The **Dalai Lama**, spiritual leader of the **Tibetan** people, turned 90. But in his homeland, celebrations were banned.

In 1940, aged five, Tenzin Gyatso was named the 14th Dalai Lama. Then **China** took over Tibet. Some years later, the Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India. Ever since, the Dalai Lama has been living away from home and campaigning against China's rule.

Find out more

When one Dalai Lama dies, leaders begin looking for his replacement. They are looking for a toddler who responds to the previous Dalai Lama's belongings with the words, "It's mine, it's mine."

Now, the Dalai Lama has said he will be born again. It is good news for Tibetan Buddhists, who fear China may try to choose the next leader.

According to Tibetan **Buddhism**, everyone has "past and future lives". Other groups who believe in **reincarnation** include **Hindus**, **Jains** and **Sikhs**.

But others point out that there is no scientific **proof** that we can be born again after death.

And one former **monk**, Stephen Batchelor, says the **Buddha** himself never talked about whether the mind survives the body's death.

Is there life after death?

Some say

Yes! Millions of people worldwide believe in some form of life after death. Good or bad luck is the result of a former life, meaning our actions have **consequences** that last forever.

Others think

No! There is no scientific proof that we can live again. Besides, if human beings are always reincarnated, one single life cannot matter very much.

Six steps to discovery

Some people say

1. Connect

"I don't really understand that process called reincarnation but if there is such a thing I'd like to come back as my daughter's dog."

Leonard Cohen (1934 – 2016), Canadian poet and songwriter

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What do you think?

How do you feel about this story? - Do you like the idea of reincarnation?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Are people always reincarnated as humans or can their souls enter different animals?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine that the Dalai Lama was visiting your school. Write a list of the questions you would ask him.

5. Express

What do others believe? - Do you think you have had any past lives? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write a story about yourself in a past or future life.

Glossary

Dalai Lama - The spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

Tibetan - From Tibet. China conquered the country in 1950. It has been accused of trying to erase its culture, which is highly respected in the West.

China - A country in East Asia, home to 1.4 billion people.

Buddhism - A religion of eastern and central Asia. It began with the teaching of Siddhartha Gautama on suffering.

Reincarnation - The idea that, after we have died, our soul or essence is reborn into another being.

Hindus - Followers of Hinduism, an Indian religion with more than one billion followers.

Jains - Followers of Jainism, an ancient Indian religion whose followers live a life of non-violence and non-attachment to worldly possessions.

Sikhs - Followers of Sikhism, an Indian religion and philosophy.

Proof - Something that shows something else is true.

Monk - Monks are groups of religious men who live together and withdraw from the rest of the world.

Buddha - The founder of Buddhism. Born Gauthama Siddhartha in Nepal in around 563BC, he left his princely family to seek wisdom.

Consequences - The result of an action.