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Thesis statement: “Reincarnation” changed by perspective

Text:Essay

Audience: High school students

Lives after Lives

The small park in front of my house was my favourite place when I was a child. That place was not technically a park, it’s more like an open garden that neighbors used to grow vegetables, to raise flowers, and some times, to keep pets. Because of the diversity of plants you can find in this small area, different species of insects took this place as their home. I was a huge insects lover, so that garden was so overwhelmingly attractive to me that I ignored grandma’s warning about the snakes. Sometimes I would stay in the garden and stare at a group of ants for the entire afternoon until the sun set, which reminded me to go home. When I was observing the ants, one idea lingers in my mind, “ someone must be a douchebag to end up as ‘ants’ for afterlife” . I can’t recall since when I learnt the concept of afterlife, but I remember my grandma used to told me that people “transform” into something else when they die, maybe into a tree, a rabbit, or a dog. How the afterlife of a person will be solely depends on how good a person behaves in present life, so my grandma always told me to be nice and generous to others, and I did, as a child, hoping that turns me into something cool when I die. The idea of reincarnation influenced my entire childhood: when I was in the garden, I think about what it’s like being a plant for afterlife; when I walk down the street, I always gave money to the beggars; when I was at the dinner table, I appreciate how nice my previous life was since I have such a wonderful present life.

When I turned six or seven, I have to gave up my precious insects-observing afternoon to go to school. In school, my perspective about life and death totally changed. The place filled with nothing but knowledge showed me how childish and immature my thoughts were. The “death” I’ve learnt in school is nothing like my perception of it. Biologically, our body simply stop functioning after death and the body is either burnt to ash or buried six feets underground, and our brain, where thoughts are generated and memory is stored, is burnt or decomposed with the body. The central claim of “afterlife” is that life goes on after death without the confine of physical body, and the life will transform into something else. How can life goes on when our brain, the place that gives human lives, is gone? Shame and sorrow took over me when I realize something that I believed so firmly in was completely wrong and is a nonsense. But I quickly accept that there’s no lives after lives, and death means death.

Strangely, however, every now and then I walked by the garden in front of my house, the idea of reincarnation takes over my brain again, and I can’t help myself to stay and observe insects and the life of different plants; everytime I walk by a beggar, I still gives them money; every night at the dinner table, I think about my life and how lucky I am. I realize that although “afterlife” is entirely a pseudoscience, this idea have continuous subconscious beneficial impact on my life. I became interested in biology and how life in animal and plants works; I’ve learned to be thankful for what I have; and most importantly, I’ve learned to become a kind, giving (sometimes) person. My grandma’s words, specifically, words about reincarnation, inspires me, teaches me not only to cast doubts on existing knowledge, but to be a better person as a whole.