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A COMPARISON/CONTRAST ANALYSIS OF PREBIRTH EXPERIENCES

Theresa M. Danna

"There was a brilliant white light. With that light came the feeling of pure, unconditional love pouring into me. I sensed that I was seeing eternity—the God force."

"I had the feeling that I was being watched from above, at the room ceiling level."

"Peace came over me and I knew that I'd be all right."

"Two little cherub-like beings hovered around my head. Only I could see them. I felt so much love for them and felt their love for me as well."

"Three men in white robes approached me."

"It was a nice place, but I wanted life."

If you assume that the above excerpts are descriptions of near-death experiences (NDEs), you would be mistaken. These are actually quotes from people describing the other end of the spectrum: prebirth experiences (PBEs)!

PBEs usually involve some type of contact or communication from a yet-to-be-born soul to its parent or some other person (often a family member). In some cases, a PBE is a person's own memory of life before birth.

Personally, my most stunning PBE happened three years before my son, AJ, was conceived. While I was in the hypnagogic state, his toddler face appeared in front of my closed eyes and he announced in his sweet voice, "Mommy, I'm coming." I was then able to see through and beyond his eyes, where there was the brilliant white light described in the first quote above.

In my pursuit of an explanation and validation of this experience, I went public in magazines, radio, television, and the Internet, requesting other similar stories. Over several years I heard more than 75 such accounts from people who were grateful for the

opportunity to finally reveal their "secret." I also found two books chronicling many more PBEs: *Soul Trek: Meeting Our Children on the Way to Birth* by Elisabeth Hallett (Hamilton, MT: Light Hearts Pub., 1995) and *Coming From the Light: Spiritual Accounts of Life Before Life* by Sarah Hinze (Pocket Books, 1997).

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¹The term PBE was coined by Sarah Hinze in *Coming From the Light: Spiritual Accounts of Life Before Life* (Pocket Books, 1997).

PBES COMPARED TO NDES

As you could see from the opening of this article, PBES resemble NDEs in that they often include the presence of a glowing light, a feeling of love and peace, disembodied spirits, and sometimes angelic guides. The aftereffects are also similar in that the person becomes aware of human life within a "bigger picture." The experiencer's previous beliefs are challenged and replaced. And both the PBE and NDE often serve as a sort of warning to the experiencer.

The difference between PBES and NDEs is obvious—or is it? One involves a soul about to enter the earth plane, and the other involves a soul that is about to leave earth. Some people might argue, however, that the difference lies only in perspective. Once you study both phenomena, you might decide that the line defining death and birth is blurred and that they are both simply transitions along the same continuum.

PBES COMPARED TO OTHER PBES

Most PBES convey a message, either directly or in mood, of hope and love. They occur before conception (sometimes years before) as often as they occur during pregnancy. When they happen in night dreams, the experiencer intuitively knows that it is not an ordinary dream. When a PBE takes the form of a voice or non-sleeping vision, the person contacted usually feels like she or he is "crazy" and thus is afraid to share the experience with anyone.

In some cases, the child's spirit is asking the parent-to-be to not give up on parenthood. In other cases the child's appearance speeds up the mother or father's preparedness for parenthood. When PBES occur during pregnancy, they sometimes are proof that certain physical odds have been overcome, such as infertility or even contraception.

In the instances where the children are adopted after birth, their spirits appear to the mother who will become the primary caretaker, not to the biological mother. And though not a rule, many times when the child's spirit appears to the father instead of the mother, something later upsets the family that either forces the father to no longer have contact with the child or forces the father to rear the child without the mother.

PBES happen all over the world to people of all races, ages, and social classes. I received letters from doctors, authors, housewives, prisoners, senior citizens, military personnel, farmers, and every other occupation in-between.

Below are samples of various stories, each an

individual flower in the same garden of prebirth communication experiences.

ACCOUNTS ILLUSTRATING TYPES OF PBES

Meetings on the Astral Plane

A pediatric surgeon in Brazil, who was scientifically oriented and "almost non-religious" before the PBE, had a dream in which he attended a conference led by Jesus. A pair of blondes in their twenties (a woman and man) approached him at the conference. The woman said that in a short time she would be staying with him on earth.

"Why?" he asked.

"I have a lot to learn from you," she replied.

One month after this dream his wife became pregnant. Eight months later she gave birth to blonde twins, a girl and a boy. Since then he has felt a great sense of responsibility, knowing that he has to teach his daughter something, yet not knowing what that lesson is supposed to be.

On the other hand, a woman in Texas wrote about how her child is the teacher and she the student. "I am so glad you have created this opportunity to share these prebirth meetings of our children. Two weeks before my son was born I had a dream of coming to a meeting with a wise-elder woman who summoned us to listen to her." It was revealed to her that we have lessons to learn from our children, and as a result of this revelation, she knew she would have to loosen her need to control her son (who appeared as a teenager in a dream within this dream).

She concluded her letter to me: "This dream added a wonderful dimension of understanding my son before his birth and during his growing up years. The wise-woman's lesson was about the power which comes with understanding that life is a continuum of time-space events...that there are choices or agreements made prior to our present time line."

During Meditation

Several people were surprised by visions of their future when they were meditating. One woman spoke of seeing herself walking with a tall light man and a little blond boy. At the time, she was engaged to a dark man. Eventually, she broke off that engagement and married the man she saw in meditation and gave birth to that child as well.

Disembodied Voices

A grandmother from Idaho wrote: "My daughter had a miscarriage that would have been her seventh child. Shortly after, the family was getting ready to leave the house to go somewhere, and a little boy's voice said, 'Wait for me!' She had this little boy a year after the miscarried child's due date."

From New Jersey came the following letter: "In January of 1993 I began to hear a baby crying in my house. It was very soft and persistent, like the cry of a baby who wants to be comforted. Well, I had no neighbors at that time and my husband's children were two and three years old then. So I really had no logical explanation. By the month of May it seemed to be just another thing that I heard—until it stopped. As you may have guessed, it stopped just at the time I found out I was pregnant! The nine months had passed without anymore crying and I almost forgot about it until I had given birth. With my daughter's first cry, I suddenly realized that the crying in my house and my newborn's was one and the same!

"I often think, when I hear her cry, that she was telling me to get my life in order because she is on the way. At that time I was only engaged to my husband and we certainly were not expecting to have a baby any time soon."

Tales of the Physically "Impossible"

"In my late 30s, I was very worried that I would never have a child of my own, something I had 'felt' God intended for me," explained another mother. "One evening, I spent a good deal of time communicating to God my deep-seated and powerful need for a child. I told the Spirit of God that SURELY I was not meant to go through this life without a child, and literally begged God to not allow that to happen to me.

"Soon after this had occurred, I lay in bed watching television. I suddenly had a 'vision'—almost like daydreaming, but so instantaneous that it seemed more like a vivid memory. In this 'vision' I saw a little girl, about 10, with long blonde hair walking into my room. I actually think I spoke to her. Then I came back to reality....

"Immediately after this event I met a man who I considered a very solid, kind, and caring person. At the age of 40, I conceived my daughter. Throughout my pregnancy I was guided by the hand of God, and against all odds (I learned several years later that I had a very serious case of endometriosis, making it all but impossible for me to carry a child to term), my daughter April was born full term....

"She is now 10 years old, a beautiful young lady with

blue eyes and long blonde hair. God must have a special plan for her life, and this child has been, and is, the answer to my most fervent prayer."

An Australian woman related: "I was pregnant but didn't know it. In fact, I couldn't become pregnant as far as I knew, as my partner had had a vasectomy. Anyway, we were on his boat in a beautiful place just north of Sydney when a name came to me. 'Nirrimi - if I ever have a baby and it's a girl, her name will be Nirrimi.' (Pronounced 'nearer me') Nirrimi was born later on that year!

"Five months after I gave birth to Nirrimi, I had a dream that I gave birth to a son, at home and in water like Nirrimi's birth, and called him Zake. (I wasn't too keen on the name, but it grew on me!) I rang my midwife to tell her, and received a lecture on contraception! Four months later I fell pregnant (which, due to my partner's very low sperm count after the vasectomy, was unusual to happen in the first place let alone the second), and nine months later my son was born just as I had dreamed."

From California came this story: "In 1979 I was single, pregnant, and opted for an abortion. Within 48 hours I became seriously ill and was hospitalized with a massive uterine infection for two weeks. Subsequently, my physician told me that it would be highly unlikely that I could ever again conceive a child. Of course I was devastated and consumed with guilt and self-loathing.

"In 1980 I met and married a wonderful man. I was taking birth control pills at that time, not for their intended purpose, but because the infection had messed up my cycles so severely that they needed to be artificially induced. In June of that year I had a strange dream. My husband and I had just made love and I was drifting off into a sleep that was very vivid in its imagery. It was like I was still awake and aware that I was in my bed, yet I was an active participant in my subconscious 'movie.'

"In the dream movie, my husband and I had just made love outdoors on the beautiful green, grassy, rolling hillside. He lay beside me dozing, and I was on my back looking into a beautiful crystal blue sky, feeling the warm sun, smelling summer on the breeze, listening to the birds and bugs. Suddenly, a small, blonde child leaned over from behind me and kissed me on the forehead. It was so startling and the physical sensation so intense that I jerked wide awake instantly.

"A few days later I was similarly jerked from a deep, seemingly dreamless sleep, by an external voice that was quite loud. It said, 'This time you won't get rid of me.' I did not take my pill that morning, and went to the doctor that afternoon. The following March, my

beautiful blonde daughter was born...Seven years later we were blessed with another miracle...our son."

And then there is my own story. (I described the full account of my experience in *EHE News*, September 1998.) I was 39 years old when I decided to give my son's spirit the opportunity to come into the physical realm. After running a battery of fertility tests on me, the medical doctor told me that I was "menopausal," with "old eggs" and that I had "borderline" chances of becoming pregnant. Six weeks later I conceived on the first try!

Absence of Visions or Voices: Just a "Feeling" or Thoughts

The mother of a son and daughter who are now 10 and 8 years old wrote: "Just about a year before my son was born, I felt both of them telling me that it was time for them to be born. I never experienced this as a dream or anything like that - they just simply seemed to be 'in my thoughts' all the time. Before they were born, I believed they were supposed to be twins - they told me exactly what their personalities would be like and what they would look like.

"However, my son was born a singleton and I believe they decided at the last moment to come one at a time in order not to stress out their father! And yes, their personalities are exactly as they described and people often mistake them for twins!"

A pregnant woman reported: "Last year I was sensing my child's presence roaming around my room when I was lying down resting or was about to fall asleep. I communicate with him now through this inner voice."

Felt the Soul Enter at the Moment of Conception

From Virginia a mother wrote: "We got pregnant twice on the first time and our children are exactly three days short of two years apart. When I conceived the first, I could have sworn I felt the soul enter through my toes. It tingled. Ever since her birth, she has always struck me as an old soul...It'll be interesting to get to know her."

A sports fan tells this amusing tale: "My oldest son, Greg, is almost eight. I had no pre-conception contact with him but I felt his soul 'enter' my body at the moment of conception. My husband and I were at a baseball game when out of nowhere I began to feel shaky, nervous and quite frankly — electrified. My face flushed and I sensed a trembling sensation throughout my body. It was something akin to the feelings you

have when you first fall in love but much stronger.

"At first I thought I must be having a heart attack. It took about 15 seconds for my mind to realize what my body already knew—I was pregnant. I'm convinced that this is the moment the sperm 'found' the egg!"

And a woman who called into a live radio program that I was on recalled that when her daughter was conceived, just as she and her husband were making love, she heard a voice say, "I'm coming in!"

Pictures Worth a Thousand Words

In one case a mother had drawn a picture of her daughter-to-be while she was pregnant. In the picture, the daughter was about 10 years old. When that child did turn 10 years old, she did look like the picture.

In another story, a man had taken a snapshot of his wife. When the photo came back from the lab, there was an image of a little boy on the woman's stomach. She later had a son who grew to look like that child.

Little Matchmakers

Finally, here are two of my personal favorites. A local woman told me that one night when she went to a bar, as she looked at the backs of everyone sitting there, she saw on either side of one man two boys who were about 8 and 11 years old. She instantly knew that they were her sons and that she would marry the man sitting between them. Both of those boys have been born. When I asked her husband what he thought when she told him that she had just seen a vision of their children, he said, "Oh, I thought she was just drunk!"

And then there is the story of Gabe, who appeared to his father in weekly visions. During one of those prebirth visits, Gabe told his father to "go get pizza." He followed his son's instructions, and on that very night, at the pizza parlor, he met the woman who later became his wife and Gabe's mother.

CONCLUSION

Now that NDEs have worked their way into mainstream modern Western society, PBEs are not far behind. As a matter of fact, Academy Award winning actor Richard Dreyfuss has discussed his PBE on national television shows with high profile interviewers such as Barbara Walters and Bob Costas. (At a time in his life when he was struggling with alcohol and drug addiction, his daughter appeared at the foot of his hospital bed and pleaded, "Daddy, straighten out so I can come.") Similarly, singer Amy Grant talks about

her experience in one of her videos, and the late John Denver included his PBE in his autobiography.

The concept is even showing up in fictional works. For example, several years ago the popular, offbeat television show *Northern Exposure* broadcast an episode in which a character's daughter appeared to her as a teenager in the laundromat.

Laundromats, bars, pizza parlors...You never know where, or when, your kids will show up!

* * *

Theresa Danna was a winner in the Twelfth Alexander Imich Contest. It was the lead article in EHE News, 5(2), September 1998. She has a master's degree in professional writing from University of Southern California and works as the proofreader and editor (officially) and as the company mystic (unofficially) at an advertising agency. Her son will celebrate his first birthday this summer.

E-mail: prewombpsi@earthlink.net

Website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~prewombpsi>

Summary of Brent Hinze's PBE Survey

Rhea A. White

As Danna (preceding article) mentioned, Sarah Hinze had a prebirth experience (Hinze's term) and this affected her so profoundly that she collected the experiences of others and published them in her book, *Coming From the Light* (Pocket Books, 1994/1997). Her husband, Brent Hinze, Ph.D., wrote an afterword entitled "A Comparison of the NDE and the PBE" in which he surveyed the cases presented in the book. This is a brief summary of his survey of PBEs.

There were 57 PBEs described in 30 of 33 original accounts received. 53% occurred before conception and 47% after conception but prior to birth

Although 63% of the PBEs were experienced by mothers, 13% were fathers. The remaining 24% were experienced by "siblings, grandparent, self in flashbacks, other relatives, close friends, and midwives" (p. 174). The geographic location of the PBEs was primarily the U.S. (44 of the 57). Also received were accounts from Australia, England, Canada, and the Blackfoot and Navajo Indian Nations. One occurred in a plane flying over India.

Just as the cases Danna collected occurred in several

forms, so did Hinze's. Here is the list, followed by the number of accounts: Visions: 29, Dreams: 16, Hearing: 20, Telepathy (direct communication): 13, Escort who brought the newborn to earth: 29, Adopting-parent-to-be had a PBE in 3 cases, Déjà vu/memories/flashbacks to life before earth life: 8, Former language: 2 recalled speaking a different language in an earlier life, and Brilliant light: 10.

Brent Hinze also singles out 10 typical characteristics of a PBE experience: (1) radiation of love, (2) celestial light, (3) the preborn is grateful for the opportunity to be born and excited about coming to Earth, (4) preborn is leaving a heavenly sanctuary, (5) the time of birth is given, (6) description of preborn's unique mission or missions, (7) preborn provides protection or warning usually associated with something (e.g., birth control, rape, abortion) that would block his or her conception and birth, (8) messages from preborn "about something the future parents or others must do as part of their earth mission or to help the preborn" (pp. 177-178), (9) escort to earth, and (10) déjà vu or recollections of pre-earth life.

The Fire and the Rapture

[EHE Account 31]

Rosemary Ellen Guiley

In 1997, I traveled to Montreal to speak at a conference. An unexpected excursion to an oratory and the tomb of a humble man led to a powerful mystical experience about the nature of love.

St. Joseph's Oratory is a magnificent structure built on Mount Royal, a small mountain within the Montreal environs. It is a healing shrine, the world's largest pilgrimage center dedicated to St. Joseph. Some two