

The Secrets of Life and Death: Answers For Your Journey Through This Life and Beyond

Richard G. Shear

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In “Auguries of Innocence,” William Blake wrote: “Every night and every morn / Some to misery are born.” These words express what some might consider to be their destiny. However, while certain people may experience greater misfortune than others, absolutely no one goes through life without encountering a certain measure of woe.

Richard G. Shear offers his thoughts about why humans suffer and how they can think differently about that inevitability in *The Secrets of Life and Death: Answers For Your Journey Through This Life and Beyond*. The death of Shear’s infant son led him to reconsider his skepticism about incidents that have been reported by mediums, psychics, and survivors of near-death experiences. Once persuaded that life exists on a spiritual level before birth and after death, Shear began thinking about how this knowledge could help people enjoy more satisfying—and less fearful—lives on this earth. The book’s narrative consists of accounts of both his own experiences and those of acquaintances. Shear also includes references to the research and writings of Edgar Cayce, Raymond Moody, Rhonda Byrne, and other students of metaphysical phenomena.

Some religions holds that people face a judgment day after death, a reckoning that determines their eternal future in heaven or hell. Those who believe in reincarnation describe a more promising scenario. The author writes, “what we encounter upon passing over to the other side is a life review, a reflexive look at our life in which we go over the choices we made on Earth ... and review what it tells God about the maturation of our soul.”

A reference to Neale Donald Walsh’s *Conversations with God* notes that humans base their decisions and actions on either fear or love, and that fears generally cause them to regress in their life’s education. “Governments, schools, and bureaucracies in general come from a place of fear,” Shear says. In contrast, love generates healthy relationships between individuals and the agencies where they work.

The author believes that government leaders make poor decisions because they no longer prioritize the qualities associated with wisdom. He states, “Wisdom is the kind of understanding that is gained through experience...combined with intelligence, instinct, and spiritual connection.”

Shear’s thirty-year career as an award-winning public school administrator has provided him with ample opportunity to witness the vicissitudes of human nature. Written in a serviceable style, his book succeeds in providing readers with common-sense guidelines toward achieving greater, more satisfying lives. Based on his belief in an all-loving God, Shear makes a convincing case for more positive collaboration among human beings; some readers, however, may find his descriptions of paranormal manifestations less credible. In addition, the editing process failed to correct typographical errors.

For those people wishing to delve into the mysteries of the spiritual realm in hopes of gaining understanding about how to better live their lives, this book offers a perspective they should consider.

MARGARET CULLISON (November 9, 2011)

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