

Chapter Eleven

Part 3

Conventional Meditation: Ending All Addictions

The Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Reincarnation

and

Thoughts from Dr. Ian Stevenson,

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The conventional method for ending all addictions: twelve-step programs

The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (AA) was published in 1939. Then, the *Twelve and Twelve* was published in 1953. These two books, more than anything else, have been responsible for the phenomenal AA membership growth. AA is now established in every country. The statistics are hard to compile, but it's estimated that there are over five million active, recovered, sober members in the fellowship of AA today. And at least another five-hundred thousand active and recovered members of other groups that have been founded on the AA recovery program outlined in these two books.

Based on all the facts, this is an amazing number of groups, and the number is still growing. Considering the fact that AA (as well as the other twelve-step programs) do no advertising, the membership is astonishing. It's practically all by word of mouth. The

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tradition is attraction rather than promotion.

Amazing also is the fact that there are no membership dues or fees. But they do pass the basket at every meeting to pay for the meeting place and the refreshments. And even more surprising is the fact that AA does not accept outside donations.

### Directory of twelve-step programs

- AA - Alcoholics Anonymous: Bill W. was the major co-founder, which is the forerunner of all the rest. Each of the offshoots of AA embraces the twelve-step recovery program of the parent organization.
- ACA - Adult Children of Alcoholics
- Al-Anon for friends and family members of alcoholics
- Alateen, for teenage family members of alcoholics
- CA - Cocaine Anonymous
- CLA - Clutterers Anonymous
- CMA - Crystal Meth Anonymous
- CoDA - Co-Dependents Anonymous, for people working to end patterns of dysfunctional relationships and develop functional and healthy relationships
- Co-Anon, for friends and family of addicts
- COSA - Codependents of Sex Addicts
- COSLAA - CoSex and Love Addicts Anonymous

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- DA - Debtors Anonymous
- EA - Emotions Anonymous, for recovery from mental and emotional illness
- EHA - Emotional Health Anonymous, for recovery from mental and emotional illness
- FA - Families Anonymous, for relatives and friends of addicts
- FARA - Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous
- FAA - Food Addicts Anonymous
- GA - Gamblers Anonymous (and Gam-Anon/Gam-A-Teen, for friends and family members of problem gamblers)
- MA - Marijuana Anonymous
- NA - Narcotics Anonymous
- NAIL - Neurotics Anonymous, , for recovery from mental and emotional illness
- Nar-Anon, for friends and family members of addicts
- NicA - Nicotine Anonymous
- PA - Pills Anonymous, for recovery from prescription pill addiction
- OA - Overeaters Anonymous
- OLGA - Online Gamers Anonymous
- SA - Sexaholics Anonymous
- SAA - Sex Addicts Anonymous
- SCA - Sexual Compulsives Anonymous
- SA - Smokers Anonymous
- SLAA - Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous

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- SIA - Survivors of Incest Anonymous
- WA - Workaholics Anonymous

### Other programs that use the twelve steps

- Celebrate Recovery, a Christian-focused twelve-step program for recovery from various behaviors
- GROW, a peer support and mutual aid organization for recovery from and prevention of serious mental illness
- LDS Family Services Addiction Recovery Program, a program affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that uses twelve-step principles
- PA - Parents Anonymous, for parents who have abused children
- PIR - Pagans In Recovery, for neopagans recovering from various compulsive/addictive behaviors
- SA - Schizophrenics Anonymous, for people who are affected by schizophrenia

The above groups are easy to find. They can be searched found in the phone book, of course. But the best place is on line. This is the easiest way to contact the central office of each organization and find a local group. If there is no local group, instructions on how to start one can easily be obtained.

If a person wants to give up any addiction, we suggest he or she attend the

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appropriate twelve-step group. This is the best way.

### *Avatar*

The ancient Sanskrit word *Avatar* is rather interesting. It represents an actual incarnation of God in human form. According to the ancient tradition, God makes Himself or Herself a body in every age to lead people to the right path. Accordingly, all world religions are founded by *Avatars*. This is because the message of each religion is too phantasmagorical to be accepted by some ordinary human being. An actual incarnation of God is necessary to provide the actual teaching.

If ordinary human beings preach the words, no one will listen to them. Thus, it would be impossible for an ordinary human being—even a famous movie star—to found a religion. Who will listen to them? But if an actual incarnation of God is born and then masquerades as an ordinary human, people will listen.

According to the ancient Aryan tradition, Jesus, Father Abram, Buddha, Krishna, and Mohamed were all incarnations of God. Yes, we know, Mohamed called himself a Prophet—not actually Allah. And Buddha told everyone, too, he wasn't God—only a teacher of both men and gods. Jesus only called himself the Son of God. And Father Abram never claimed anything special for himself at all.

But these were all the founders of today's major religions. An ordinary person has trouble convincing his neighbor and even his or her best friend to come to church. As the old saying goes, don't argue religion or politics. This is because the message of all

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religion is too far-fetched.

And to gather the people under the teaching of the *Avatar*, a special kind of person is required, too. Otherwise who will listen?

Bill W. had to be one of these special kinds of people. Yes, we know he called himself, “Just another drunk.” Many sober AAs in the early days of AA tried to bestow the title of “Saint” upon Bill. But he refused and says in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, “We are not saints.”

AA is not a religious movement but it does incorporate spiritual principles. Any person can belong to AA. The program does not interfere with the dogma of any religion. And even the atheist is more than welcome. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. And naturally, there are no membership rosters or group mailings or anything like that. A person becomes a member simply by saying he or she is a member. There are no rules! No regulations!

In fact, the message of AA is so far-fetched that most newcomers don't really believe it. But they seem to be drawn back to the meetings by some mysterious force: that is, the meetings are somehow uplifting.

In the early days of the Christian religion, for example, how many members were there in the first 100 years? There were probably far less than five (5) million. And even after the first three hundred years of Christianity, there were probably less than that.

So, in a thousand years, how many will belong to AA and the other twelve-step groups? Only time will tell.

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Was Bill W. an actual Avatar? Was he an incarnation of God in human form? And is the twelve-step recovery program an actual message from the horse's mouth—actually from God? Based on the phenomenal growth, it's certainly possible that membership in all programs will approach the vast numbers of the world's great religions. Only time will tell.

Twelve-step programs are probably the best way—regardless of religious belief—to beat addiction. But they're not the only way.



Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

We ask the atheist to please forgive us for using a religious approach. In Chapter Fourteen, we will return once again to addictions. And we will be using another approach to addictions that can be used by all—the religious and atheistic alike.

Since most of our readers are Christian, we trust others, too, will not be offended.

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But this basic approach does not differ from that of any religion. So it can be used for any religion.

We trust also that Christians will forgive us for interjecting the aspect of reincarnation. Since our view is scientifically based, we only wish to offer another approach to the aspect of hell which many, including Christians, find hard to believe.

With regard to a God of Love, Justice, Kindness, and Mercy, many Christians have a hard time believing God will ever send them or anyone else to hell. And so reincarnation is an alternative to belief in a God, who seeks retribution—suing for a debt we never contracted. That is, we simply get what we crave and deserve according to natural law.

Reincarnation is offered briefly as a point of interest only. Again, there is no attempt to convert anyone from his or her belief system.

We are presenting only a brief outline of the first chapter only of Saint Ignatius's Exercises. All are strongly encouraged to buy the book, *Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, and study all of the actual instructions—not just the first chapter. Saint Ignatius offers a great way to break addictions.

There are two goals according to Saint Ignatius. First (1), to free the soul from Inordinate Attachment. And secondly (2), to find God's will. He writes:

“Acting on our part we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one, etc. *Rather we should desire and choose those things that will help us attain the end for which we were created.*”

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### Five Points to an examination of conscience

1. The first point is to render thanks to God for the favors we have received.
  2. The second point is to ask for the grace to know our shortcomings and to free ourselves from them.
  3. The third point is to demand an account of our soul from the moment of rising to the present examination; either hour by hour or from one period to another. We shall first make an examination of our thoughts, then words, and then actions.
  4. The fourth point is to ask pardon of God, our Lord, for our failings—and that these impediments be removed.
  5. The fifth point is to resolve to amend our life with the help of God's grace.
- Close with the “Our Father” prayer.

### Our shortcomings—overeating

*The First Prelude* is to imagine God transcendentally situated. And then to imagine our soul imprisoned in **its** corruptible body and our entire being in this veil of tears as an exile among brute beasts.

*The Second Prelude* is to ask God for what we want and desire. Accomplishing this goal, we understand the advantages and ask for shame—for we understand the

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concept of being exiled—begging to be free of the shortcoming.

We think diligently of the suffering in hell. If a person is unable to do this, reading *Dante's Inferno*, one of the greatest spiritual classics, is an excellent way to visualize the horror.

We shall be using the actual addiction of overeating for our example. But this is only done as an example. Any addiction should fit the format. Simply change the circumstances to fit your addiction. Thus ends the information on the first chapter.

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, etc.

*First Exercise*

*Shortcoming - Overeating*

First Prelude:

Imagine God glowing with peace, joy and bliss—obstructed by nothing. The complete opposite of our overeater self.

Overeating is the lowest level of existence—wasting human life—abandoning our human nature. It is the worst of sins. The Bible says that even that little bit one has will be taken away. To make a long story short: the more we overeat, the more we have to overeat.

Overeating is disrespect to God. We have a duty to maintain our body

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properly—not stuffing it with food so that it becomes fat and unhealthy.

By allowing the overeater to ruin our life, we allow the lower animal self inside to surface. This is not intelligent.

Gluttony is a sin according to the Bible. Some believe it sends one to hell! And since many Christians don't believe that God would send anyone to hell for simply overeating, there is another aspect. But worst of all, the Eastern religions say it causes total disintegration of our human nature. It actually develops our lower animal traits.

If we exercise our animal nature, like a field mouse eating its own weight every day, by going around and gluttonously over-eating everything in sight, we are reborn as a field mouse in our next life. We get what we want. And the best way to overeat is not as a human. A field mouse can do it so much better.

Or if we act like a cow, satisfying our urge to graze all day, we will be born as a cow in our next life.

The dog is born as a dog because of its gluttonous and uncontrolled eating nature. Whatever nature we acquire in this life, we get a body to match that nature in the next life. Eat like a field mouse, be born as a field mouse. Eat like a cow, be born as a cow. Eat like a dog, be born as a dog. Etc.

The platform to liberation only comes when we control the urge to exercise this animal nature. The same is true about getting to the Christian heaven.

Saint Thomas says in *Suma Theologica* that there is no food in heaven, so we have no use for the sense of taste there. One might also conclude from this that the only way to get into heaven is to control our eating perfectly. Otherwise, we would not be happy

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there, since we would still crave the pleasures of the world.

### Second Prelude:

Please remove my overeating! Heap on me the shame of having wasted my life as an overeating animal! Heap on me the shame of developing an animal nature. Heap on me shame for eating even one tiny bite over and above my written food plan. Heap on me shame for disrespecting you, Lord. Please give me the knowledge of your will and the power to carry it out—especially the power.

I blame my overeating on you, God. Otherwise, give me the power to act like a human—not some gluttonous animal. I loathe my gluttonous animal nature. Heap on me shame for even the slightest amount of overeating.

In this way, please bring me into your will and presence. Amen.

### Reincarnation

*The French philosopher Hume says,*

*“It’s easy to believe in reincarnation.*

*But first you must fully contemplate and understand*

*that it’s totally impossible to be born once.”*

Reincarnation was a popular belief in the early Christian Church. However, at the Second Council Of Constantinople, 553AD, the writings of Origen, who founded the Church at Alexandria were condemned as a whole—not reincarnation, specifically. So

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officially, reincarnation is not a heresy. Origin's books were condemned specifically because there was no correlation with the Bible.

However, there are many Bible references to reincarnation, so this subject is still open for debate. Origin was a convert to Christianity. He was strongly influenced by the Greek philosophers, like Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and others who believed in reincarnation.

In addition, Saint Jerome taught reincarnation as a tenet of faith.

### Biblical references to reincarnation

The Old Testament of the Bible says Elijah must reincarnate before the Messiah: "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day the LORD comes" (Malachi 4:5 New International Version).

JESUS SAYS, John the Baptist is the reincarnated Elijah: Please note He begins by quoting Malachi 4-5. "This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you... And if you are willing to accept it, he (John the Baptist) is Elijah who was to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:10-15 New International Version).

JESUS SAYS A SECOND TIME, "But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him... Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist" (Matthew 17:12-13 New International Version).

JESUS DECLARES A THIRD TIME, "But what did you go out to see? A

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prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet." This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger (Elijah) ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you" (Luke 7:26-27 New International Version).

Most Christians, however, cling to a Bible verse that says we are only born once. And the joke is, "Born again, and again, and again, etc."

## Reincarnation Among the Jews

Jewish teachings on reincarnation are not explained in the Bible, but can be found in a collection of mystical writings called *kabbalah*. Not all Jews believe in *kabbalah*. The ones that do are the Hasidic Jews.

The leadership of a Hasidic sect is passed from father to son, because those who practice Hasidim believe that the soul of a previous rebbe (rabbi) often comes back as his own great-grandchild, in order to continue guiding the community—like Elijah.

In addition, it's believed that ordinary Jews, who have not yet become enlightened, will continue to return many times in order to atone for sins in previous lives.

## Some Common-Sense Reasoning Might Explain Child Prodigy

Cicero (Ancient Rome, 106 - 43 B.C.) writes, "It's again a strong proof of men knowing most things before birth, that when mere children they grasp innumerable facts

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with such speed as to show that they are not then taking them in for the first time, but remembering and recalling them.”

Evidently there were child prodigies in ancient times, too. They continue to amaze us.

The concept of reincarnation explains how we acquired all talents and abilities. They are acquired with great labor and effort. When we learn something brand new, much effort is required. But once learned, this knowledge stays with us from lifetime to lifetime.

This points to a system of perfect justice in the world—despite all the evidence to the contrary. We are born into this life because of our past sins. And we continually reincarnate until we become perfect, or until we’re saved.

Reincarnation ultimately explains how God can be a God of Love—who pulls us from the muck the and mire of our own self-created misery to heaven. Then we’re never born again. Most Christians look to Jesus as this kind of a savior.

### Scientific Evidence, by Ian Stevenson, MD of Psychiatry

In 1957, at the young age of 38, Dr. Stevenson was appointed Professor and Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia. Then, in 1967, he founded and was appointed head of The Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS), formerly the Division of Personality Studies. This is a unit of the Department of Psychiatry & Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, VA. Utilizing

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scientific methods, they investigate apparent paranormal phenomena.

Dr. Stevenson did countless thousands of case studies of children around the world who claimed to remember their previous birth. He was able to authenticate over 3,000 of these stories. Basically, he traveled for the last 35 years of his life.

He was able to locate the homes and relatives of the children and even find some hidden wealth. These studies were complete with names, dates, and places. But even more amazing was the connection with the past life—to present-life birthmarks.

Dr. Stevenson presented these findings at the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Society for Scientific Exploration held at Princeton University, June 11-13, 1992.

The study provides amazing, graphic evidence that physical traits somehow can carry over from a past life to the present life. Many believe it's one of the strongest, scientific proofs supporting reincarnation. It shows a correlation between birthmarks and birth defects in this life that relate to wounds on their previous body.

There was a most amazing story of a boy who claimed to have remembered his previous birth. He remembered his name, the town he lived in, and that he was murdered by a shotgun blast to the chest. So they went to that town. They found that a man by that name once lived there. And sure enough, he was murdered by a shotgun blast to the chest. Not only that, but they found an autopsy report with photos. And the actual pattern on the photos of the shotgun blast actually appeared as a birthmark on the boy's chest.

Stevenson's actual studies are very hard reading, but some of the stories are unbelievable. So the time is well spent if the person has an interest in reincarnation. More information can be found by searching "Dr. Ian Stevenson, UVA" on the internet.