

Some New Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation I. The Case of Rajul Shah¹

IAN STEVENSON²

SUMMARY OF THE CASE AND ITS INVESTIGATION

Rajul Shah was born in Vinchhiya (District Rajkot), Gujarat, India, on August 14, 1960. She is the second child and second daughter of Pravinchandra Shah and his wife, Prabha Ben. Rajul's parents were living at that time in Rajkot, another city of Gujarat, but Rajul was actually born at the home of her maternal grandfather. In December, 1960, Rajul's parents moved to another town, Keshod, where they were still living when I met them in 1969.

Rajul has spent a number of years with her paternal grandparents, V. J. Shah and his wife. This was explained to me as a kindness to the grandparents since they had no small children in their home and Pravinchandra Shah and his wife had four other children. V. J. Shah, who was an engineer by profession, lived in Wankaner (a town in central Gujarat north of Rajkot) from 1960 to 1969 when he moved to Songadh, another town near the city of Bhavnagar close to the eastern coast of Gujarat.

Rajul was staying with her paternal grandparents when, at the age of approximately two and a half, she began to speak of a previous life. (She had begun to talk at the age of twelve months.) Rajul came running into the house one day saying she was hungry. When asked by her great-aunt where she had been, she said she had been playing with "Junagadh Jyotsna." At about this time also, Rajul was observed walking around a model of Mt. Girnar³

¹ This case, and several others to be presented in forthcoming issues of the *Journal*, is taken from a new book of case reports by Dr. Stevenson tentatively entitled *Forty Cases of the Reincarnation Type*. The book will contain additional explanatory and background material not included in the reports as published in the *Journal*. For example, it will include a short account of the Jain religion intended to assist the reader in understanding some details of the present case. The book will also contain a detailed discussion of alternative interpretations of the cases.—*Ed.*

² I am grateful to Swami Krishnanand who acted as my interpreter during the investigation of this case. Dr. Jamuna Prasad and Dr. L. P. Mehrotra accompanied me and contributed helpful assistance. Mr. Champe Ransom read a draft of the paper and gave valuable suggestions for its improvement.

³ Mt. Girnar is a sacred mountain near Junagadh in Gujarat. Ten thousand stone steps lead to its top. It is a frequent site for pilgrims and religious exercises. Once a year, in the autumn, models of Mt. Girnar are made (usually of clay) and set up in houses and public places. These models then become the center for festivals called Girbhi in which the participants, usually women and children, walk or dance around the model and sing. Rajul was imitating this activity in her play.

and murmuring to herself. When questioned, she said she was doing "Junagadh Girbhi." Rajul's family knew of no playmate called Jyotsna and they conjectured that perhaps Rajul was talking of a previous life in Junagadh. When she was asked directly if she was "from Junagadh," she replied that she was and gave her name (of the previous life) as Gita. Soon after this, Rajul left her grandparents and returned to her parents' home, where she remained about two years. When with her parents she spoke of the previous life, but they seem to have paid little attention to her remarks. She told her mother, however, that she had a friend called Jyotsna with whom she sang songs and played at the Junagadh Girbhi. In May, 1965, when Rajul was about four and a half years old, she came to live once again with her grandparents in Wankaner. She remained with them for another year, returned again to her parents at the age of about five and a half, and then once more came to live with her grandparents at the age of about nine. She was living with her grandparents in Songadh when I met her in 1969.

During her second stay with her grandparents, when she was between four and a half and five and a half years old, Rajul talked much more about the previous life. Many of her remarks were stimulated by her seeming to notice some differences between the circumstances and customs of her family and what she remembered of those of the previous life. (The Tabulation on pp. 296-304 below lists a number of items illustrating these comparisons.) Rajul said much about the previous life spontaneously, but some information came out by questions put to her by members of her grandparents' household, especially by one of their then unmarried daughters, Sudah Ben.

Rajul described the house of the previous life in some detail. Unfortunately, she could not give the previous father's name, was a bit uncertain about the previous mother's name, and unable to give a family name.

Rajul's family are Jains (of the Digambara branch) and some of her remarks (see Items 26, 27, and 29 of the Tabulation) about religious customs led her family to think that the previous family were not Jains, but Hindus. According to the Jain belief, the soul cannot exist without a physical body until it has become purified and complete salvation achieved. Her family therefore decided that Gita, if she existed, must have died at the moment of Rajul's conception, and that this event must have occurred during the latter half of October or the first half of November, 1959, since Rajul was born on August 14, 1960. One of Rajul's paternal uncles, Prem Chand, occasionally went to Junagadh on business. In the late summer or autumn of 1965 he was in Junagadh and went to

the Municipal Register's office. (His visit there was remembered four years later by one of the clerks, Babu Lal, with whom I talked in 1969.) Prem Chand asked to see the register of deaths in Junagadh for the period October-November, 1959, and found that a child named Gita had died on October 28, 1959, which is exactly in the middle of the range of dates previously selected. The name of Gita's father was given as Gokaldas K. Thacker and his address for 1959 was also recorded.

The Shahs then decided to visit Gokaldas K. Thacker with a view to verifying, if they could, Rajul's statements about the previous life. Before going to Junagadh they made a written list of twenty-two statements made by Rajul about the previous life. Unfortunately, they later loaned this list to someone and it became lost.

In November, 1965, V. J. Shah and his wife, accompanied by his brother, Himatlal J. Shah, and Prem Chand, took Rajul to Junagadh. Since Gokaldas K. Thacker had moved after Gita's death to another house, they had some difficulty in tracing him. They eventually found him, however, and quickly verified some of Rajul's statements. They remained in Junagadh several days, during which time Rajul met and recognized some members of the Thacker family, and the Shahs continued their verifications of her statements. As can be seen in the Tabulation, Rajul's statements show considerable accuracy with reference to the life of Gita Thacker, who had died as a child of only about two and a half years. The Thacker family were Hindus of the Lohana caste and the Vaishnava sect. Gita's father was a retail grain merchant having his own shop.

Rajul has since paid several other visits to Junagadh. Unlike many children subjects of these cases, she never seemed under any pressure to go to Junagadh, although she was happy (for the most part) when there and was always received affectionately by the Thacker family.

A report of the case appeared in Indian newspapers in November and December, 1965, and in this way the case came to my attention. At that time, Dr. Jamuna Prasad wrote to V. J. Shah with a view to beginning an investigation of the case. He received in reply a long and informative letter dated December 22, 1965. This letter summarized the development of the case. It also gave some examples of the statements Rajul had made before the family learned that a girl named Gita had actually died in Junagadh at about the time they expected.

In November, 1969, I investigated the case during several days with the assistance of Swami Krishnanand, Dr. Jamuna Prasad, and Dr. L. P. Mehrotra. We interviewed Rajul's parents and

members of her grandfather's household as well as members of the Thacker family in Junagadh.

Since my visit to Rajul's family her paternal grandfather, V. J. Shah, has furnished information about a few additional details in correspondence with me.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED DURING THE INVESTIGATION

In Songadh, Gujarat, I interviewed:

Rajul
V. J. Shah, Rajul's paternal grandfather
H. J. Shah, V. J. Shah's brother and Rajul's paternal great-uncle
Sushila Ben, H. J. Shah's wife and Rajul's paternal great-aunt
Sudah Ben Desai, V. J. Shah's daughter and Rajul's paternal aunt
Prem Chand, V. J. Shah's son-in-law

In Junagadh I interviewed:

Gokaldas K. Thacker, Gita's father
Kanta Ben, Gita's mother
Jadao Ben, Gita's paternal grandmother
Nirmala, Gita's sister
Suresh Bhai Thacker, Gokaldas K. Thacker's son by his first wife and Gita's half-brother
Kanti Bhai Thacker, Gokaldas K. Thacker's younger brother and Gita's paternal uncle
Babu Lal, clerk in the Municipal Registry of Junagadh
Kanji Karsan, merchant of Junagadh

In Keshod I interviewed:

Pravinchandra Shah, V. J. Shah's son and Rajul's father
Prabha Ben, Rajul's mother

In Uttumnagar, near Ahmedabad, I interviewed:

Kasturba, Gita's maternal grandmother

RELEVANT FACTS OF GEOGRAPHY AND POSSIBILITIES FOR NORMAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES

As already mentioned, Rajul was born in the village of Vinchhiya, but at that time her parents lived in Rajkot from which they moved in December, 1960, to Keshod. Rajkot is approximately ninety-five kilometers north and slightly east of Junagadh, where Gita had lived and died. Keshod is a smaller city about thirty-two kilometers southwest of Junagadh. At the time of Rajul's conception, which presumably occurred in late October or early November, 1959,

her parents were living in Rajkot. V. J. Shah and his family lived in Wankaner, which is forty kilometers north of Rajkot. The two families concerned in the case stated very firmly that they had no acquaintance whatever with each other before the visit of the Shahs to Junagadh in November, 1965.

Pravinchandra Shah, Rajul's father, said they had not visited Junagadh before the end of 1962 and his wife, Prabha Ben, said she had not visited it before 1966. They both had, however, passed through Junagadh in moving from Rajkot to Keshod in December, 1960, and therefore soon after Gita's death.

Rajul's paternal grandfather, V. J. Shah, and his family had no connections with Junagadh, except for those of Prem Chand, a businessman who occasionally went there. Since the Shahs were well-to-do Jains it is most unlikely that they would have had any social contacts with a minor Hindu merchant like Gokaldas K. Thacker even if they had lived in Junagadh or had visited it often. Junagadh is a moderately large city with a population of at least 200,000.

Gokaldas K. Thacker said that in Junagadh the Jains lived in a different part of the town from the one where he resided. He had known some Jains casually, but had no social relations with them and no customers of his shop among them. Since Pravinchandra Shah was a clerk in a rather large bank of the area, I thought that perhaps he and Gokaldas K. Thacker had encountered each other in the bank. But Gokaldas K. Thacker said that he, like many small merchants in India, had no bank account.

If the two families had had any contact prior to verification of Rajul's statements it must have been of the most casual kind and not sufficient for either group to remember. If the Shahs had known where to find the family Rajul was referring to in her statements they would certainly not have gone first to the Municipal Registry in Junagadh to learn if a girl called Gita had died there at the time they expected. However, I cannot exclude the possibility that they had had some contact which neither group could later remember.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF GITA THACKER

Gita was born in 1957, most probably in May, in Uttumnagar, a suburb of the large Gujarat city of Ahmedabad. She was born in the home of her maternal grandmother, Kasturba. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain a copy or statement of the registration of her birth with its exact date. Possibly her birth was not registered in the Municipal Registry at Ahmedabad. Kasturba said Gita's birth had not been registered. She gave the month of Gita's birth

as July, but as she was elderly in 1969 and seemed a less reliable informant than her daughter, I favor the month of May, 1957 given by Gita's mother, Kanta Ben.

Gita's death is recorded in the Municipal Registry at Junagadh as having taken place on October 28, 1959. The cause of death was given as measles. (I verified the entry in the Register at Junagadh myself.) A neighbor of the Thackers who worked in the Municipal Office was delegated to convey the information of Gita's death and, according to Gita's father, he did so two days after Gita's death. This neighbor, or possibly a clerk in the Municipal Office, wrongly recorded Gita's age at death as being only one and a half years, whereas she was (almost certainly) two and a half years old.

Gita died of measles after four or five days of illness. She died in the Thacker home at about 4:00 A.M. The Jain informants attached some importance to this last detail since they believe the soul goes instantly to another body at the very second of that body's conception.

Gita's body was buried, not cremated.⁴ In 1969 we asked Rajul what happened after Gita's death and she replied: "Gita was reduced to ashes. Her soul has come here." When we asked if Gita's body was buried or cremated she said she did not know.

THE BIRTHDATE OF RAJUL

I do not have an official statement of the recording of Rajul's birth, but her father, Pravinchandra Shah, said he remembered very well receiving a letter written by his father-in-law on the day of birth, August 14, 1960, informing him of the news. (He had not kept the letter.) Rajul was born in the village of Vinchhiya, whereas her father worked and lived then in Rajkot. Rajul's birthdate was also given as August 14, 1960, in the letter to Dr. Jamuna Prasad from V. J. Shah dated December 22, 1965. The Shahs are well educated people and I see no reason to question their memories of this date. Their success in working backwards by deducting the probable time of gestation and thus tracing Gita also provides verification of a kind for Rajul's birthdate.

STATEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS MADE BY RAJUL

In the Tabulation I have listed all the statements and recognitions made by Rajul. So far as I know, she made all these state-

⁴ It is usual to bury, not cremate, the bodies of small children in India.

ments before her family attempted to verify any of them. Since, however, I do not know the chronological order in which most of them were made, I have grouped them together according to topics to make them easier to understand. I have listed the recognitions in approximately the order in which they occurred. I have also indicated two statements (Items 6 and 20) which Rajul made during my talk with her in 1969. She had already made similar statements to members of her family.

Rajul's statements seem to me to follow closely what one might expect the interests of a small child to include. They show an emphasis on features of the house, members of the family, food, play, and religious worship. Rajul said rather little about events in Gita's life, which could not have been particularly rich in unusual events anyway. The main events Rajul referred to were the Girbhi ceremony to which Gita was taken about a month before her death, the giving of a name to Gita after her vaccination, and the cause of Gita's death. These events, it should be noted, occurred over a period of two years, because Gita was vaccinated and named when six or seven months old and attended the Girbhi ceremony about a month before her death at the age of two and a half.

In the few incorrect statements made by Rajul one can rather often see connections between what she said and the correct facts. The mistakes were those that would likely occur in the mind of a small child through failure to discriminate along adult lines of thinking. Thus she said she had a "younger brother" (Item 19). Gita had no younger brother but often played with a younger boy of the neighborhood.⁶ Rajul said she had lived downstairs. This was in a sense true for Gita, who played downstairs although her family actually inhabited the second story of a house. Rajul said her house was green, which was incorrect. But an adjoining house with a courtyard where Gita played was green.

Rajul also told her mother that she used to sing songs and play the Junagadh Girbhi with her friend Jyotsna. The Thacker family had never heard of Jyotsna, the playmate mentioned by Rajul. Even Gita's older sister said she had never recalled Gita referring to Jyotsna. Nor could I find any trace of her in the neighborhood of Junagadh where the Thackers had lived and where I may have made something of a nuisance of myself with my own efforts to trace her in 1969. However, there were in that neighborhood many families with small children and some certainly had moved away since the time of Gita's death in 1959; moreover, there were no less than eight tenant families in the house where the Thackers lived,

⁶ In India the word "brother" is used much more loosely than in the West. Indians often refer to cousins and even good friends as "brothers."

each with one or more daughters. Therefore Jyotsna may actually have been a friend of Gita's even though the Thackers had never heard of her and I was unable to trace her.

As already mentioned, one of Rajul's memories related to the occasion of Gita receiving her name after vaccination.⁶ Since this event occurred when Gita was between six and seven months old it seems to be the event earliest in the life of Gita included in Rajul's memories.

Several of Rajul's recognitions⁷ seem quite impressive to me as evidence of paranormal knowledge on her part, although others are much weaker. Her recognitions of Gita's mother (Item 36) and of the house with a temple in a room that could not be seen from the courtyard (Item 40) seem the strongest. Her recognition of Gita's father (Item 38) and uncle (Item 41) are somewhat weaker. She only partially recognized Gita's sister, Nirmala, getting Gita's relationship to her wrong (Item 37), and she failed to recognize Gita's half-brother, Suresh. She was unable to find the correct street leading to Gokaldas K. Thacker's shop when taken near it. Her recognition of Gita's grandmother, Jadao Ben (Item 42), was spoiled, in my opinion, by the indication given to Rajul that Gita's grandmother might be in the group of assembled women.

RAJUL'S BEHAVIOR RELATED TO THE PREVIOUS LIFE

The Circumstances Stimulating Rajul's Statements

Many of Rajul's remarks about the previous life, perhaps most of them, were made when she noticed some object or custom of her family that reminded her of a related but different one of the previous life. For example, on seeing sweets in a shop that she thought were rather poorly displayed, she remarked: "In our shop we had the peras well arranged." The Tabulation contains numerous illustrations of such stimulation of her remarks. Apart from such occasions, there was no particular circumstance associated with her talking of the previous life. Most of her remarks were made, as would be expected from the foregoing, during the daytime.

⁶ Indian children are often not named until some months or even longer after birth. In the interim they are called by some pet name, e.g., "Guddi" (Eng: "doll").

⁷ The Tabulation lists unverified and incorrect statements, e.g., Rajul's unverified statement about Gita's playmate, Jyotsna. It does not, however, include instances where Rajul failed to recognize persons or objects presented to her for recognition when she was in Junagadh. There were obviously many places and some persons available to her that she did not recognize and it does not seem appropriate to try to list all of these. On the other hand, it is important to note that Rajul did not recognize everyone or every place known to Gita.

Tabulation
SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS MADE BY RAJUL

Item	Informants ¹	Verification ¹	Comments
1. Her name was Gita.	Sudah Ben, Rajul's paternal aunt Sushila Ben, Rajul's paternal great-aunt Prabha Ben, Rajul's mother	G. K. Thacker, Gita's father	
2. She lived in Junagadh.	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker	I visited this house in Junagadh. The Thacker family moved to another house after Gita's death.
3. The house had two rooms and a kitchen.	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker (Verified by me in 1969)	The verandah had been removed at the time of my visit.
4. The house had a verandah.	H. J. Shah, Rajul's paternal great-uncle	G. K. Thacker	
5. The house was smaller than the house here [i.e., the house of Rajul's paternal grandfather in Wankaner].	H. J. Shah	V. J. Shah, Rajul's paternal grandfather	Rajul said: "We have a big house here. At Junagadh we had a small house." V. J. Shah's house in Wankaner had about twelve rooms.
6. The house was green.	Sudah Ben Rajul (1969)	Incorrect	G. K. Thacker's house (in which Gita lived) was small, with only two rooms and a kitchen. I visited it myself in 1969.
7. The house was painted red at Diwali time.	Sushila Ben	Unverified	G. K. Thacker said the house Gita lived in was not green at any time. It was yellow on the outside. A house adjoining theirs, where Gita often played, was green.

¹ The *Informants* column lists the witnesses of what Rajul said or did relating to the previous life, while the *Verification* column names the persons who vouch for the accuracy of what she said or did in regard to the previous personality.

8. She lived downstairs.	H. J. Shah	Incorrect	The Thackers lived on the second floor of the house. The error is a natural one for a small girl who played much of the time in the downstairs area, returning to the family apartment mainly to eat and sleep.
9. The house had a bhandikiya.	H. J. Shah	G. K. Thacker (Verified by me in 1969)	A "bhandikiya" is a small cupboard or place for storage. The one in the house of Gita's family was below the steps. It was shown to me.
10. They kept an oven there.	H. J. Shah	G. K. Thacker	This "oven" was more exactly a small stove used for boiling milk.
11. Her family were Lohanas.	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker	H. J. Shah denied that Rajul had made such a remark. Lohanas are a subcaste or clan group of merchants. The Thackers are Lohanas.
12. Her mother was Shanta or Kanta.	Sushila Ben	Kanta Ben, Gita's mother	Rajul sometimes said "Shanta" and sometimes "Kanta." She may have become confused because her paternal grandmother (V. J. Shah's wife) was called Shanta and Rajul lived much of the time with her.
13. Her mother looked like my [i.e., Rajul's] mother.	H. J. Shah	Incorrect	Both Rajul's mother and Gita's mother, as I observed when I met them, are tall and slender.
14. My father is as old as her father.	Sudah Ben	Incorrect	Pravinchandra Shah was born in 1932 and G. K. Thacker in 1927. Thus Rajul's father is five years younger than Gita's father.
15. My father wears pajamas; her father wore dhotis.	Sudah Ben Prabha Ben		Pajamas in India are light cotton trousers often worn by office workers. Dhotis, a kind of long, loose loincloth, are worn by farmers and small businessmen.

Item	Informants	Verification	Comments
16. Her father ate from a steel plate, but others [in the family] ate from brass plates.	Sudah Ben Prabha Ben	G. K. Thacker	G. K. Thacker had a steel plate that had been given to him. It was the only such plate in the house. The other family members ate from brass plates, but he sometimes used his steel plate. The Shah family has many steel plates.
17. Her father was a confectioner.	Sudah Ben	Incorrect	But Gita's paternal uncle, Kanti Bhai Thacker, had a milkshop and made confections. (See also Items 22 and 24.)
18. My father scolds me but her father did not [scold her].	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker Kanta Ben Nirmala, Gita's sister Pravinchandra Shah Prabha Ben	Gita's mother and sister stated that Gita's father never scolded her, but he himself said it might have happened. Pravinchandra Shah and his wife both said that he definitely scolded Rajul at times.
19. She had a younger brother.	Sudah Ben	Incorrect	But Gita had a friend, a younger boy called Hasamukh, with whom she played a lot. She might have considered him a "younger brother."
20. Jyotsna was a friend who lived nearby.	H. J. Shah Rajul (1969)	Unverified	Rajul said in 1969 that Jyotsna lived 100 yards from "our house." No girl playmate of Gita called Jyotsna was known to the Thacker family and I could find no trace of a Jyotsna in the neighborhood where the Thackers had lived during Gita's lifetime.
21. She had a grandmother.	Sudah Ben	Jadao Ben, Gita's paternal grandmother	Rajul said, "I had a grandmother as I have one here." The point of this remark was that in each home only one grandmother lived with the family, the other living elsewhere.
22. They had lots of milk in big vessels, whereas we buy so little in small pots.	Prabha Ben	G. K. Thacker	Rajul's family did not buy much milk. In contrast, Gita's grandmother, Jadao Ben, used to buy milk in rather large quantities. (See also Items 17 and 23.)

23. Her grandmother always sent milk to the shop.	Sushila Ben	Jadao Ben Kanti Bai Thacker, Gita's paternal uncle	Jadao Ben kept some of the milk she bought for the family and sent the rest to the shop of her second son, Kanti Bhai Thacker. (See also preceding item.)
24. They had a sweet shop in Junagadh.	Sudah Ben	Kanti Bhai Thacker	Rajul's remarks about sweet shops were stimulated by visits to the market where she would see a sweet shop and comment that Gita's family had a similar one in Junagadh. She also added the rather critical remark that in Junagadh the peras were well displayed. (Pera is a candy, made with sugar and milk, which comes in many varieties.) Gita's father was a grain merchant, but her uncle, Kanti Bhai Thacker, had a milk shop where he also sometimes sold peras.
25. Her mother prepared white peras.	Sudah Ben	Kanti Bhai Thacker	This remark was stimulated by Rajul seeing her grandmother prepare yellow peras. Kanti Bhai Thacker had his milk shop during Gita's lifetime. Two or three times a month he made peras, usually white ones. I did not learn whether Gita's mother ever prepared white peras, as stated by Rajul.
26. Her family used to take dinner after dark, but we take dinner before sunset.	Sudah Ben V. J. Shah	G. K. Thacker Jadao Ben	Jains customarily eat their evening meal before sunset. Hindus usually eat later, often after dark. Gita's family regularly took their evening meal between 8:00 and 8:30 P.M.
27. While her grandmother performed evening puja, she [Gita] was eating.	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker	This item is related to the preceding item. Since Rajul's family, being Jains, ate dinner before sunset, the evening worship, or puja, took place after the meal was over; in Gita's Hindu family the puja was performed before dinner. However, a child as young as Gita would start eating before the puja had concluded. Jadao Ben denied that she herself had performed the evening puja during Gita's lifetime, although her son, Gita's father, said she had. Jadao Ben said she was nearby while Gita's aunt performed the ceremony.

Item	Informants	Verification	Comments
28. They used to go to a temple.	H. J. Shah	Kanta Ben	
29. The god of my family has no clothes; her god was clothed.	Sudah Ben	Sudah Ben G. K. Thacker	In this remark, Rajul compared the statues of gods and saints in the Jain temples (of the Digambara sect) which are naked, with those in the Hindu temples which are clothed. The Thackers belong to the Vaishnava sect of Hindus emphasizing the worship of Vishnu. They also worship Lord Krishna. The idols of their gods are all clothed.
30. In the temple where she used to worship they gave peras [after the puja].	Sudah Ben	Unverified	This remark was made as a mild complaint on the occasion of being taken to a Jain temple. In fact, at the Hindu temples frequented by Gita's family fruits were usually offered, not sweets like peras. Sometimes on the way home Gita's mother would stop at the house of Gita's uncle, where she would be given biscuits, but not peras. This item therefore remains unverified. But Gita may well have seen other people receiving peras during or after worshipping at the temples.
31. She watched the people going around the Girnar.	H. J. Shah Sudah Ben	Nirmala	Girnar is a holy mountain near Junagadh. Every year in the autumn models of it are made, usually of clay. These then form the center for a ceremony of dancing and singing in which the participants, usually children and female adults, move around the model. This is called the Girbhi ceremony. Rajul told Sudah Ben that Gita went around the model of Girnar. It is very unlikely that Gita did so. But her older sister, Nirmala, did take Gita to the Girbhi ceremony just about a month before she died. A child of her age would have been allowed to watch the ceremony, but not to take an active part in it.

32. She ate peras seated on the clay steps of the Girnar.	Sushila Ben	Incorrect	Rajul was here referring to the clay steps of a model of Mt. Girnar. On the actual mountain, steps of stone lead to the top. Gita might have sat near the steps of the model, but as a small child she would not have been permitted to sit on the model itself. Nirmala does not remember what Gita had eaten, if anything, while at the Girbhi ceremony.
33. When young she was called "baby"; after vaccination she was called Gita.	Prabha Ben	Kanta Ben	In Asia, names are not always given to babies at birth. Gita was called "Tikudi" (small baby) until she was six or seven months old. Then her mother took her to the municipal dispensary for vaccination against smallpox. A name was required to record the vaccination and Kanta Ben gave the name Gita.
34. She was small when she died.	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker	Gita was between two and a half and three years old when she died. According to her mother, Gita was born in May and as she died at the end of October, she could have been just over two and a half. The municipal records in Junagadh gave her age at death as a year and a half, an error due to the fact that incorrect information was given by a neighbor who worked in the municipal office and was asked to notify the Registrar about the death.
35. She died of "serious fever."	Sudah Ben	G. K. Thacker (I verified this in the Municipal Register at Junagadh in 1969)	Gita died of measles after five days of illness with fever.
36. Recognition of Kanta Ben, Gita's mother. ¹	H. J. Shah Kanta Ben		As Rajul and members of her family approached the Thacker house, they encountered Kanta Ben on the street buying milk. V. J. Shah asked Rajul:

¹ In the case of recognitions, the *Verification* column is blank because the informant for the recognition either knew that it was correct when it occurred or later verified its accuracy.

Item	Informants	Verification	Comments
37. Recognition of Nirmala, Gita's older sister.	H. J. Shah Nirmala		As Rajul and members of her family entered the courtyard of the Thacker house, they saw Gita's sister, Nirmala, standing there. Someone asked Rajul: "Do you recognize this lady?" and she replied, "Father's sister," which was of course incorrect. There was, however, some resemblance between G. K. Thacker's sister and Nirmala, who was, at the time of this visit, about two years younger than Gita's aunt had been at the time of Gita's death. Nirmala's account of this recognition accorded with that of H. J. Shah.
38. Recognition of G. K. Thacker, Gita's father.	H. J. Shah G. K. Thacker		G. K. Thacker returned to his home after Rajul and members of her family were already there. Someone asked Rajul: "Who is this?" She replied "Gokaldas." However, Rajul had heard her family talking about Gokaldas. Therefore, although she could not (according to H. J. Shah) have heard anyone say who he was (at the time he entered the house), she might well have inferred that the man returning to the house was Gita's father. G. K. Thacker himself gave a somewhat different account of the recognition. He said V. J. Shah asked Rajul who Gokaldas was (that is, which person present was Gokaldas), and Rajul replied: "He is Gokaldas and he looks like my father."

39. Recognition of house Gita lived in.	V. J. Shah Suresh Bhai Thacker, G. K. Thacker's son by his first wife and Gita's half-brother		Rajul and members of her family stood in the main street at the entrance to the side street where the Thackers had lived during Gita's lifetime. Rajul pointed to the correct house, indicating it as the one where a bicycle was standing.
40. Recognition of temple Gita's family visited.	H. J. Shah		Rajul and members of her family were taken to the courtyard of a house where Rajul was asked to indicate the temple where her family had worshipped. In the courtyard there was a small temple easily recognizable. Rajul, however, also indicated a house in the courtyard as having a temple in it. From the courtyard this building looked just like an ordinary house and gave no sign of having any religious significance. Inside, however, as I saw myself when I went in, there was one room set aside as a temple. The temple idol was hidden behind a curtain. Inside the house, Rajul correctly indicated the temple room; however, although the curtain concealed the idol, it might have suggested that it covered something of religious significance. Therefore this recognition seems much less important than Rajul's identification of the house from the courtyard outside. Although located in a private house, this temple was open to the public and was frequented by the Thackers.
41. Recognition of Kanti Bhai Thacker, Gita's uncle	H. J. Shah Kanti Bhai Thacker		Rajul was taken to the shop of Gita's uncle where he was pointed out and she was asked if she could recognize him. At that moment she could not (or did not) say, but five minutes later she said: "He is Gita's uncle." Kanti Bhai Thacker confirmed the details of this recognition, but said Rajul took ten minutes to say who he was.
42. Recognition of Jadao Ben, Gita's paternal grandmother.	Jadao Ben		A number of women were gathered together in the home of Gita's uncle. Rajul's grandfather then asked her if she recognized Gita's grandmother or

Item	Informants	Verification	Comments
43. Recognition of sweetshop frequented by Gita.	Kanji Karsan, owner of the sweet shop Suresh Bhai Thacker		<p>Rajul looked the women over and then touched Jadaso Ben, saying, "This is Gita's grandmother." She failed to recognize the wife of Gita's uncle who, in fact, had not been married during Gita's lifetime. The recognition of Gita's grandmother was unfortunately much weakened as evidence by the suggestion given that she was in the group.</p> <p>Rajul passed several other sweet shops and when she came to this particular one she said that the display of peras was as she remembered them. This shop had a reputation for the elegance of its displays of peras. It is almost opposite the grain shop of G. K. Thacker. When Gita was taken to visit her father at his shop, the owner of the sweet shop often held her in his arms and gave her some peras. Kanji Karsan said that at his shop Rajul indicated the cabinet where the peras were displayed and said: "I ate peras from this cabinet."</p>

Rajul, rather more than most children subjects of these cases, was able to answer questions put to her by her family and others about the previous life. After her first visit to Junagadh she became reluctant to answer questions, probably because so many had been put to her at that time. But in 1969 she answered our questions very effectively.

Rajul's Behavior When Talking about the Previous Life

Rajul's family said she began to talk at about twelve months and that she spoke with unusual clarity for a child of that age. She seems to have had well developed speech by the time she began to talk much about the previous life at the age of two and a half years. Her family recalled that she pronounced the name "Jyotsna" quite distinctly. It was a name unfamiliar to them. The only gesture Rajul had to make to explain what she was trying to communicate occurred when she was asked how old she had been at the time of death in the previous life. Rajul then put her hand up to the right height to show that she had been small.

Rajul showed no particular emotion when talking of the previous life. She never asked to go to Junagadh and after going there never asked to return. At Junagadh she seemed happy most of the time except for a brief period just after entering the house of Gokaldas K. Thacker. Then she cried for a while, but no one understood just why she did this. The house was not the one Gita had lived in. Perhaps Rajul was overcome with emotion on meeting members of Gita's family.

As I have already mentioned, Rajul made many comparisons of the circumstances and people of her life with those of the previous life. A few of these, e.g., "You have very little milk around here," and "My present father scolds me more than my previous father," had a slightly pejorative tone, but she was never heard to voice any general complaint about her family or express a preference for the previous family. Indeed, Kanta Ben told me that V. J. Shah told her Rajul required some persuasion to visit their home and expressed a fear she might be left in Junagadh. V. J. Shah did not mention this to me, but I did not ask him about it specifically.

On the other hand, Rajul lodged no complaint against the previous family either. She seems to have thought of them with affection. When the visit to Junagadh was proposed, Rajul said the family could stay at the house of Gita's father and she added: "He is a good man. He will give you tea and food."

Rajul played at the Girbhi ceremony. When she saw a model of Mt. Girnar that had been made for the annual festival, she

began walking around it and murmuring to herself. The murmuring was thought by her family to represent the singing accompanying the perambulating of the participants who circle around the Mt. Girnar model. When asked what she was doing, Rajul said: "Junagadh Girbhi." Rajul at other times also walked around in circles (without a model of Mt. Girnar) and when asked what she was doing said "Junagadh Girbhi."

I questioned my informants about whether Rajul might have seen other children circling around the model of Mt. Girnar and then later simply imitated them. Sudah Ben thought this most unlikely. At the age when Rajul showed this play activity, she was indoors most of the time and the chances that she had seen other children perform the Girbhi ceremony were very slight indeed. The adults in her family did not perform the Girbhi ceremony so she could not have been copying them. Rajul's playing at the Girbhi ceremony seems to have been the only play activity relating to the previous life that was actually observed by her family. However, on at least one occasion Rajul said that she had been playing with "Junagadh Jyotsna." This play was not observed. Since on another occasion Rajul said that she and Jyotsna played at the Girbhi ceremony, it is possible that Rajul's unobserved play with the "Junagadh Jyotsna" was another re-enactment of the Girbhi songs and dances.

Rajul was noted to be cautious in answering questions about the previous life. If she did not know, or did not think she knew, the answers she would say nothing. She sometimes answered a question after a considerable delay. At least two of her recognitions in Junagadh were only made (or communicated) at least five minutes after she had seen the person she was asked to identify. Rajul's aunt, Sudah Ben, said that when she asked Rajul what her name had been in the previous life, Rajul could not give it to her just then. She then asked Rajul to make an effort to recall it, and a few days later Rajul said it was Gita. But Sushila Ben, Rajul's great-aunt, said that when she had asked Rajul for this name, Rajul had given it immediately. Perhaps, since the memories seemed to be just coming to the surface of Rajul's mind at that time, they were unstable in her consciousness.

Rajul's great-uncle sometimes tried to test her by asking the same question in different ways at different times. But her replies were always the same. Finally, on one occasion she said: "I have told you once. You are asking the same question again and again."

In 1969, when Rajul (at age nine) talked with us, she answered questions very pleasantly and assuredly, although freely acknowledging that she did not know the answers to some.

Rajul's Sense of the Passage of Time

Rajul seems to have had in general a remarkably accurate differentiation of her own life from that of Gita. It is true that on at least one occasion she engaged in play with Jyotsna as if Jyotsna was still living with her. But otherwise Rajul nearly always used the past tense in her remarks about the previous life. When asked if she could locate the house in Junagadh, Rajul said: "Maybe the house has fallen down." On another occasion Rajul was asked whether, if she were taken to Junagadh, she could show them Gita's father and mother. She replied: "Yes, by all means." Then she was asked if she could show them Gita, and she replied at once: "How can I show you Gita? Gita is dead, She has become Rajul." Her manner expressed a degree of impatience with the obtuseness of such a question.

Rajul's Behavior with the Previous Family

Although, as already mentioned, Rajul showed no desire to go to Junagadh, and perhaps some reluctance, she was at ease and affectionate with the Thacker family. She sat readily on the laps of both Gokaldas K. Thacker and Kanta Ben, Gita's parents, and behaved familiarly with them. The Thackers in turn were friendly and affectionate with Rajul. Nirmala, Gita's sister, was especially delighted with Rajul and wanted her mother to invite the Shahs to stay longer. She wept when Rajul left. Rajul did not ask to remain in Junagadh or to return, but she had been taken back for several visits between the first one in November, 1965, and my visit to her family in November, 1969.

Other Behavior of Rajul Related to the Previous Life

Rajul referred to her mother as "Bhabhi," which means sister-in-law in Gujarati, instead of calling her "mother." Gita's paternal aunt (the sister of Gokaldas K. Thacker) had lived in their family and as she had called Gita's mother (her sister-in-law) "Bhabhi," Gita picked up this form of address and also called her mother "Bhabhi." This habit of calling the mother "Bhabhi" then became expressed by Rajul.

Rajul's family had not noticed any unusual features of her behavior, such as dietary cravings, habits of dress, or mannerisms, that might have derived from the previous life. Peras figured prominently in her memories and her mother said Rajul was specially fond of them. But according to Kanta Ben, not pera, but another sweet, pakwan, was Gita's favorite sweet.

Rajul's mother thought Rajul was more religious than her other children, but Himatlal J. Shah, Rajul's great-uncle, did not agree and thought her not unusual in this respect. Rajul's mother said she had expressed reluctance to visit temples other than the Jain ones. (I infer, but was not told specifically, that since Rajul had referred to Hindu temples, her family had thought of taking her to some.)

Himatlal J. Shah told me Rajul had never shown any evidence of extrasensory perception apart from her statements and behavior related to the previous life.

RAJUL'S LATER DEVELOPMENT

At the time of my visit to her family, Rajul was nine years old. She was an intelligent, polite, and poised girl with excellent manners. She was then in the fifth class at school. Rajul's family considered her of more than average intelligence and my much shorter observation of her leads me to agree with this judgment.

In 1969 Rajul conserved some memories of the previous life in Junagadh and she told us that she sometimes thought about Junagadh. It did not, however, seem to be much on her mind and her family said that she no longer spoke spontaneously about the previous life. This did not mean, however, that Rajul had forgotten the memories of the previous life. In a letter to me dated September 8, 1970, Rajul's grandfather, V. J. Shah, wrote that Rajul no longer spoke spontaneously about the previous life because she had nothing new to say and her family had stopped asking her about it. But when he asked her, at my request, if she still remembered the previous life she replied: "Yes, by all means."

COMMENTS ON THE EVIDENCE OF PARANORMAL PROCESSES IN THE CASE

I have already reviewed the evidence which supports my belief that the two families did not have even casual contacts or any mutual friends prior to the development of the case. And there is an additional factor which makes it even less likely than in many other cases that information about the previous personality could have reached Rajul or her family by normal means. I refer to the fact that Gita was a small child in an obscure family whose life and death were hardly noticed outside her own immediate circle. There were no stirring events, not to mention crimes, which have figured in many reincarnation cases and which may provide reasons for the diffusing of information about the previous personality.

The case is comparatively weak in behaviorial features. Rajul, apart from her references to the previous life and her play activity in regard to the Girbhi ceremony, showed no unusually deviant behavior marking her off from other members of her family and which might have had its origin in the previous life. But this fact accords very well with the fact that Gita died before she was three years old. Her personality did not have time to develop the differentiated and fixed habits which persons almost always acquire as they grow older and which have figured in the behavior of subjects in many other cases of the reincarnation type.

*Division of Parapsychology
Department of Psychiatry
School of Medicine
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22901*

Postscript: At the time of correcting proofs of this article I received letters from Swami Krishnanand (who had acted as my interpreter) and V. J. Shah, Rajul's paternal grandfather, to whom I had sent copies of the typescript. They recommended some changes in the transliteration of certain proper names from Gujarati into English, e.g., that "Prabha Ben" should be printed "Prabhoben." It has not been feasible to make all the corrections recommended, although some have been made.

V. J. Shah questioned Item 33 of the Tabulation according to which Rajul remembered how she had been named Gita (in the previous life) at the time of vaccination. V. J. Shah had never heard Rajul make such a remark, or that she had made it to anyone else. However, Rajul's mother, Prabha Ben, reported this remark to me spontaneously and stated that Rajul made the remark before she had gone to Junagadh. I have therefore retained Item 33 pending further checking with Rajul's mother.

In all other substantive matters Swami Krishnanand and V. J. Shah approved the typescript as accurate.

I.S.

April 6, 1972