

# Some New Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation

## III. The Case of Suleyman Andary<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

Cases of the reincarnation type occur abundantly among the Druses of Lebanon and its neighboring countries. They are possibly more numerous *per capita* in this group than in any other part of the world. Reincarnation is an important part of the Druse religion, one might almost say, *the* most important. Since most Druses (unlike many Hindus and Buddhists) do not believe it harmful to remember a previous life, parents rarely interfere in any way with a child's expression of memories. And, on the other hand, since children with such memories are so common, not much is made of the claim to remember a previous life. The combination of these factors provides a setting in which such claimed memories can usually emerge without either forcing or suppression. This leaves plenty of room for other important psychological elements to affect the subject and the development of the case, as the present one illustrates.

The case of Suleyman Andary<sup>3</sup> is not, compared to some other cases, particularly rich in statements or recognitions made by the subject. It does, however, include some important behavioral features. For reasons that I shall discuss later, the subject seems to have had few memories of the previous life until he was ten or eleven years old. And he did not tell other persons about his memories for another year or two after that. As a result of these delays he did not meet the previous family of which he claimed to be a member until he was thirteen, a much later age than that of most other subjects when they meet the previous families of their memories.

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<sup>1</sup> The case of Suleyman Andary, with additional explanatory and background material, will appear in Dr. Stevenson's forthcoming book entitled *Thirty Cases of the Reincarnation Type*.—Ed.

<sup>2</sup> I wish to thank Mr. Wadih Rabbath and Mr. Issam Abul-Hisn for assisting me as interpreters in this case and for checking on various details for me. Dr. Sami Makarem has also rendered invaluable aid to me in the study of this and other Lebanese cases, both as an interpreter and as an expert consultant on the Druse religion and customs.

<sup>3</sup> In representing Arabic names with the Latin alphabet for this case report I have adopted some spellings which may seem inconsistent with renditions of these same names by other writers. I have tried to consider the ease of the English-speaking reader in pronouncing the names.

In many cases in Lebanon, the two families concerned live in villages not far removed from each other. But in the present case they lived thirty kilometers apart. I am as confident as one can ever be in cases of this kind that the two families had had no acquaintance prior to the development of the case.

#### SUMMARY OF THE CASE AND ITS INVESTIGATION

Suleyman Andary was born on March 4, 1954,<sup>4</sup> in Falougha, Lebanon. He was the son of Yusuf Andary and his wife, Adell. In 1956, when Suleyman was two years old, his father died. Subsequently his mother remarried and she then asked her (first) mother-in-law, Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary, to raise Suleyman. Suleyman grew up in Falougha in the household of his grandmother, with whom two of his paternal aunts also lived.

As a small child, Suleyman remembered rather vaguely that he had lived before. He recalled having had children and knew the names of some of them. He remembered that he was from a village called Gharife and that he had an olive oil press there. These seem to be the only recollections he had when he was very young.

One night, when he was about five or six years old, his family heard him talking in his sleep and muttering the names of people. In the morning they told him about this and mentioned the names he had spoken. Suleyman did not remember dreaming, but he recognized the names as those of some of the children of the person whose life he was still only dimly remembering. At about this time there were other occasions when he talked in his sleep about the children of the previous life. But no other development occurred in the case then and apparently no further memories came to Suleyman for several more years.

When he was about eleven Suleyman's maternal grandmother came to the house and asked to borrow a religious book. Suleyman refused to give her the book and said, "Don't you have the book there?" (He meant at the home of the would-be borrower.) His paternal grandmother overheard this rather curt refusal and asked him why he had behaved in this way. Suddenly he remembered that

<sup>4</sup> Each citizen of Lebanon is required to have an identity card on which is recorded the essential data of major events in his life, e.g., date and place of birth, names of parents, etc. Suleyman's card gives his birth date as March 12, 1954. It also notes that the card was issued on March 12, 1954. Since it is very unusual for a card to be issued on the actual date of birth, I think that due to clerical error the date of registration was put down as the date of birth. I therefore believe March 4, 1954, to be Suleyman's correct birth date. This was the date given me by Suleyman himself, and also by his family.

he had had religious books in the previous life and that he had not allowed his books to leave his house.<sup>5</sup>

After the above episode and apparently stimulated by hearing about other people who remembered previous lives, Suleyman began to recall with more or less deliberate effort further details of the previous life. Among other items, he remembered that he had been the muktar, which is roughly equivalent to a mayor, of his village, and he recalled the name, Abdallah, that he thought was his in the previous life. Later he remembered the full name, Abdallah Abu Hamdan. He began to talk a little about the previous life with some other children, but never mentioned it to any adults until he was about thirteen. His paternal cousin (who was also his maternal great-uncle), Naef Andary, had not heard him talking about the previous life until the summer of 1967, when Suleyman was over thirteen. As further evidence of Suleyman's selectivity in telling others about his memories, I may mention that his brother, Shawki Andary (two years older than Suleyman), told me in 1969 that Suleyman had *never* told him about the memories. Both brothers agreed that they did not get along well together.

Suleyman preferred not to talk about the previous life, partly because he was afraid of being teased. When finally he did mention it to others, it was proposed that he go to Gharife for verifications of his statements and possible recognitions of people and places there. At about this time a relative of Suleyman's family (a cousin) met some residents of Gharife in Saudi Arabia and she told them about Suleyman's statements. They said that Suleyman was talking about the life of one Abdallah Abu Hamdan, who had owned olive trees and an oil press in Gharife, and who had been muktar of the village for about fifteen years before his death at the age of (approximately) sixty-five in 1942. (The date is only accurate to within a year.) These Gharife residents wanted Suleyman to come for a visit to their village. At first he refused, but then agreed, and made two visits to Gharife in the late summer and the late autumn of 1967. He went there accompanied by his cousin, Naef Andary, Naef Andary's wife, Khawla, and their daughter, Nabiha. Naef Andary's son-in-law, Faiz Halibi, who was then living in Gharife, was also a witness of Suleyman's visit to Gharife and Abdallah Abu Hamdan's family.

So far as I know, Suleyman made all the recognitions that I shall give below in the Tabulation during his first visit to Gharife in the summer of 1967. As already mentioned, he made a second visit later in the autumn of the same year, but this was largely a social

<sup>5</sup> Druses have a great deal of respect for their religious books and this conduct would be typical of a devout Druse. In the present case both families concerned were Druses.

occasion. However, according to Suleyman, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's family asked him during this second visit if he could find some money which they were sure Abdallah Abu Hamdan's son, Ahmed, had sent his father from his earnings as an emigrant in America. Ahmed did send back to his father some of his income made in America. But Suleyman denied ever having (as Abdallah Abu Hamdan) hidden this or any other money and also denied ever having (as Suleyman) made a remark to the effect that he had done so (see Item 9 of the Tabulation).

Up to 1972 Suleyman had not again returned to Gharife and apparently neither of the immediate families had made any effort to continue or develop the relationship. A distant relative of the Abu Hamdan family who lived in Hammama (a town near Falougha) had visited Suleyman for a few years after 1967, but then he stopped; no member of the Gharife family of Abu Hamdan had ever come to see him in Falougha.

I first studied this case in March, 1968. Suleyman was then fourteen and he had only met the identified previous family eight months earlier.

In March, 1969, I returned to the investigation of the case. I had a further talk with Suleyman and other informants I had seen the year before and I also interviewed some new witnesses. In March, 1970, I was able to meet Suleyman again and learn further about his development. In March, 1972, I talked again with Suleyman, rechecked some details with previous informants, and interviewed one new informant, another older brother of Suleyman, Najeeb Andary.

#### PERSONS INTERVIEWED DURING THE INVESTIGATION

In Falougha I interviewed:

Suleyman Andary

Naef Andary, Suleyman's paternal cousin and also his maternal great-uncle

Khawla Andary, Naef Andary's wife

Ajaj Andary, Suleyman's cousin

Nabiha Andary, Naef Andary's daughter and Suleyman's cousin

Hamed Andary Elawar, Suleyman's cousin

Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary, Suleyman's paternal grandmother

Najeeb Andary, Suleyman's older brother

Shawki Andary, Suleyman's older brother

Faiz Halibi, Naef Andary's son-in-law and Suleyman's cousin by marriage

Ratibeh Andary, Suleyman's paternal aunt

Najla Andary, Suleyman's paternal aunt

Faris Andary, Naef Andary's brother and Suleyman's cousin

In Gharife I interviewed:

Kemel Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's son

Samihah Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's daughter-in-law  
and Kemel Abu Hamdan's wife

Nejah Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's granddaughter  
and the daughter of Kemel and Samihah Abu Hamdan

Fuad Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's grandson and the  
son of Kemel and Samihah Abu Hamdan

Zehna Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's widow

Najeeb Zain Eldeen, villager of Gharife

Zahiyya Zain Eldeen, villager of Gharife

#### RELEVANT FACTS OF GEOGRAPHY AND POSSIBLE NORMAL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE FAMILIES CONCERNED

Falougha and Gharife are about thirty kilometers apart as the bird flies. They lie in quite different parts of Lebanon. Falougha is in the mountains almost directly west of Beirut, whereas Gharife is southwest of Beirut in the Shouf District.

The two families concerned denied that they had any prior acquaintance with each other before the development of the case. It appears that no member of the Abu Hamdan family had ever even visited Falougha. Abdallah Abu Hamdan's son, Kemel, said he had only passed through Falougha on the way to Kornayel, which is a little farther north.

One member of Suleyman's family, his cousin-by-marriage, Faiz Halibi, had worked in Gharife from October, 1966, to January, 1968, as a government topographer. Prior to that he had been in Gharife only once, Kemel Abu Hamdan recalled that he had a slight acquaintance with Faiz Halibi during the months when he lived and worked in Gharife. He remembered seeing Faiz Halibi in the streets of Gharife. He could not say he (Faiz) had never been in his house, but he denied that they had any social relations.<sup>6</sup> Faiz Halibi gave concordant testimony concerning his acquaintance with Kemel Abu Hamdan prior to the development of the case. He remembered that Kemel Abu Hamdan had visited his office to sign documents connected with land surveys, but denied that they had

<sup>6</sup> To a Western person it may seem odd that a person can come into another man's house and yet the two remain strangers or mere acquaintances. And yet this can and does happen rather often in Asia where, much more than in the West, people enter each other's houses without being friends, or even acquaintances, in the sense of having formal social relationships.

had any social intercourse. Faiz Halibi's sojourn in Gharife occurred about the time Suleyman opened up his memories to his family, but according to Suleyman, he had remembered a few details long before that and I have independent testimony to the fact that he was mentioning the names of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children in his sleep when he was five or six years old. Furthermore, Faiz Halibi told me that when, on a visit to Falougha, Suleyman's family had asked him if he could verify Suleyman's statements, he was unable to do so from his own knowledge at that time. He had to return to Gharife and make inquiries before he could confirm the accuracy of what Suleyman was saying. He was positive he had never known of Abdallah Abu Hamdan before hearing what Suleyman had been saying about the previous life. Some time before the verifications made by Faiz Halibi, his wife's sister, as already mentioned, had met some inhabitants of Gharife in Saudi Arabia and they had confirmed the accuracy of Suleyman's statements.

Suleyman's paternal grandmother, Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary, who had raised him since his father died when he (Suleyman) was two years old, said she had never been to Gharife, had no knowledge whatever of the other family, and had never heard of Abdallah Abu Hamdan before Suleyman started mentioning his name. Her two daughters (Suleyman's aunts) who lived with her (and Suleyman) concurred in this testimony as applying to the whole family.

Ajaj Andary, another cousin of Suleyman, and a person well acquainted with the case and with the village of Falougha and its inhabitants, said he did not know of a single marriage joining persons from Falougha and Gharife. Suleyman's older brother, Najeeb, however, did know of three such marriages. In one of these a girl from Gharife had married in Falougha, but only in 1972, thus long after Suleyman had first gone to Gharife. The second marriage between a girl of Gharife and a man in Falougha had occurred some time between 1952 and 1957. Neither of these women were related to Abdallah Abu Hamdan and neither of their husbands were related to Suleyman's family. Another marriage between a girl of Gharife and a man of Falougha had occurred around 1932.<sup>7</sup> Najeeb Andary supported the testimony of other informants in saying that there had been no acquaintance between the members of Suleyman's family and that of Abdallah Abu Hamdan prior to the development of the case.

As I have already mentioned, I feel an unusual confidence

<sup>7</sup> Ordinarily there would be no social relations between villages in Lebanon that are as far apart as Falougha and Gharife except through the visits of persons connected by marriage. From this fact derives the importance of marriages of members of the two villages in considering normal means of communication between them.

bordering on certainty that Suleyman could not have acquired by normal means the information he had about Gharife and Abdallah Abu Hamdan before he went to Gharife.

#### THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ABDALLAH ABU HAMDAN

Abdallah Abu Hamdan was born, lived all his life, and died in Gharife. He was a proprietor of considerable land, including an olive orchard, and he also owned an olive oil press. He was much respected in his community, and for about fifteen years he was the muktar of the village where he lived.

He had a large family of whom one son, Kemel, and some grandchildren were still living in Gharife when I went there several times between 1969 and 1972. Unfortunately, his oldest son, Najeeb, was somewhat retarded mentally. One of his daughters (Najla) and one of his younger sons (Naseeb) had congenital diseases which made them blind and dumb. Another son (Ahmed) emigrated to America sometime in the late 1920s. Ahmed sent money back from America to his father. I inferred from the way in which the informants spoke, rather than from any explicit statements, that Abdallah Abu Hamdan did not have cordial relations with his youngest son, Kemel. All in all, therefore, he could not have had much companionship with his sons.

Abdallah Abu Hamdan was a religious person and became a sheik of the Druse religion. This requires conformity to certain rules of conduct such as strict truth-telling and abstinence from intoxicating beverages. He owned five of the sacred books of the Druses which he read at home. He thought he could interpret their wisdom just as well as a sheik at the Druse meeting houses and so he did not attend these.

Toward the end of his life he experienced two misfortunes which may have hastened his death. After being muktar of Gharife for about fifteen years he falsified an official document for the son of a friend. The young man had been arrested and sentenced for a crime and the muktar, in order to help him gain employment, certified that the convicted man had had a spotless police record. When this was discovered the central government of Lebanon removed the muktar from office.<sup>8</sup> This occurred about three years before his death.

<sup>8</sup> Western readers should understand that the muktar's dishonesty would be considered less discreditable in Lebanon (and most other countries of Asia) than it would in the West. He would have received approval and sympathy in many quarters for his effort to help the son of a friend. Loyalty to family and friends is often valued more highly in Asia than in the West and could mitigate the offense of falsifying a record.

Then at about the same time, or perhaps a little later, Abdallah Abu Hamdan purchased an oil press on credit. The payments proved rather more than he could afford comfortably and he worried much about raising the money for the press. His widow, Zehna Abu Hamdan, told me that anxiety over meeting the payments for the oil press had made him ill. His daughter-in-law, Samiha Abu Hamdan, said he had much concern about the payments for the oil press, but she did not think he had become ill because of them.

Abdallah Abu Hamdan died a natural death. Kemel Abu Hamdan, his son, described how his father, during his terminal illness, spent some time in a hospital and was then discharged home to the care of a physician. The latter came about once a week and took fluid from his father's abdomen. From this information I think we can safely conclude that Abdallah Abu Hamdan had ascites and died either of chronic heart failure or cirrhosis of the liver. The latter is an improbable diagnosis since he was a sheik and drank no alcohol.

I have not been able to obtain any written documentation that could provide reliable information about the exact date of his death. From the calculations and estimates of several informants, the date of February, 1942, emerges as an average, but it may be wrong by more than six months in either direction.

#### STATEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS MADE BY SULEYMAN

I have listed the statements and recognitions attributed by the informants to Suleyman in the Tabulation. These include statements made before he went to Gharife and recognitions made on the occasion of the first of his two visits there in the summer of 1967. In addition, I have listed a few statements made by Suleyman himself to me in 1968 and later, but after he had visited Gharife and met the previous family. During my first interview with Suleyman, he talked earnestly at considerable length about the previous life and it was evident that he still remembered many things clearly. He told me many details, including names of members of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's family, for which I have listed other persons as informants because they said they had heard him make these statements before the first visit to Gharife.

Informants in Falougha remembered the names of three of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children mentioned by Suleyman before he went to Gharife. He mentioned these three and four other names to Samiha Abu Hamdan when he visited Gharife in 1967. Then, in 1968, he mentioned to me all the foregoing names of Abdallah Abu



Tabulation  
SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS MADE BY SULEYMAN ANDARY

*Informants*<sup>1</sup>      *Verification*      *Comments*

1. He was called Abdallah Abu Hamdan.	Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary, Kernel Abu Hamdan, Suleyman's paternal grandmother Najia Andary, Suleyman's paternal aunt Faiz Halibi, Suleyman's cousin by marriage	Kernel Abu Hamdan	The muktar of a village in Lebanon is the headman with roughly the powers and responsibilities of a mayor in a European or American community.
2. He was from Gharife.	Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary	Kernel Abu Hamdan	
3. He was the muktar of Gharife.	Naef Andary, Suleyman's cousin and great-uncle Ratibeh Andary, Suleyman's paternal aunt Faiz Halibi	Nejah Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's granddaughter	
4. He had sons in Gharife.	Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary Naef Andary	Kernel Abu Hamdan	
5. One son was called Najeeb.	Ratibeh Andary Samiha Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's daughter-in-law	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Najeeb, the oldest son, was somewhat retarded mentally.
6. Another son was called Naseeb.	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Samiha Abu Hamdan said that Suleyman gave the names of Abdallah's children in their correct order of birth. She had taken him aside during his first visit to Gharife and asked him for the names of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children. See following items for other names he gave correctly. Naseeb was born dumb, and later became blind.

<sup>1</sup> The *Informants* column lists the witnesses of what Suleyman said or did relating to the previous life, while the *Verification* column names the persons who vouch for the accuracy of what he said or did in regard to the previous personality.

# The Case of Suleyman Andary

Suleyman had mentioned the names of at least three of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children before he went to Gharife. These were Najeeb, Ahmed, and Kemal.

Suleyman told me in 1968 that he had not remembered that Ahmed had emigrated before he went to Gharife. Najeeb Zain Eldeen was a secondhand witness of this item.

Najeeb Zain Eldeen was a secondhand witness for this item also. The money in question was presumably partly or all funds sent home from America by Ahmed. Samiha Abu Hamdan told me she knew nothing of any sealed box left (perhaps hidden) by Abdallah Abu Hamdan. However, Suleyman told me that members of the Abu Hamdan family had asked him to find a treasure based on the remittance of Ahmed from America and allegedly hidden by Abdallah Abu Hamdan before his death. It may have been something of which the women of the family had no knowledge. In any case, Suleyman himself denied (in 1972) that he had ever made any remark about Abdallah Abu Hamdan putting aside money for Ahmed, or that he had ever concealed any money. See text for further details.

Salim was a brother of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. He was not blind, but Naseeb, one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's sons, did become blind. (See Item 6 above.)

Samihah Abu Hamdan

Naef Andary  
Ratibeh Andary  
Samihah Abu Hamdan

Samihah Abu Hamdan

Najeeb Zain Eldeen,  
resident of  
Gharife

Unverified

Najeeb Zain Eldeen

Kemal Abu Hamdan

Ratibeh Andary  
Samihah Abu Hamdan  
Suleyman (1968)<sup>a</sup>

Incorrect

Samihah Abu Hamdan

Samihah Abu Hamdan

7. Another son was called Ahmed.

8. Ahmed had emigrated to America.

9. He had put aside a sealed box for Ahmed to have on his return from America. He had put Ahmed's inheritance in the box.

10. Another son was called Kemal.

11. Another son, Salim, was blind.

12. A daughter was called Fadua.

<sup>a</sup> I have included certain statements made by Suleyman to me or other informants after his visits to Gharife.

Item	Informants	Verification	Comments
13. Another daughter was called Julia.	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Samiha Abu Hamdan	
14. Another daughter was called Leila.	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Samiha Abu Hamdan	
15. Another daughter was called Najla.	Suleyman (1968)	Samiha Abu Hamdan	Najla was blind and dumb.
16. Another daughter was called Jamara.	Suleyman (1968)	Partly incorrect	The correct name was Jamal.
17. His wife was called Zeinab.	Suleyman (1968)	I met Zehna Abu Hamdan, widow of Abdallah Abu Hamdan, in 1969	Suleyman got her name slightly wrong.
18. He had a lot of olive trees and oil.	Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary Ratibeh Andary	I saw the substantial orchard of olive trees owned by the Abu Hamdan family in 1969 and 1972 during my visits to Gharife.	
19. He had owned an oil press in Gharife.	Hamed Andary Elawar, Suleyman's cousin	Zehna Abu Hamdan	Abdallah Abu Hamdan had purchased the oil press on credit and his widow said worry over making the payments brought on his (final) illness.
20. His oil press was near a water fountain.	Samiha Abu Hamdan	The water fountain (more accurately an outlet for a spring) was just across the road from the building where the press was. I saw them both in 1969.	Samiha Abu Hamdan was a secondhand witness for this item.
21. He had copies of five sacred books of the Druses in his house.	Najeeb Andary Suleyman (1968) Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary	Zehna Abu Hamdan	Suleyman did not remember in 1968 (or did not state) that he had earlier specified the number of sacred books Abdallah Abu Hamdan had owned. According to Zehna Abu Hamdan, the number was

correct. Zahiyya E[ Savigh Andary was a witness also for Suleyman's remark about the sacred books, but she did not mention the number of books he said Abdallah Abu Hamdan had had. Suleyman's remark was stimulated by the request of his maternal grandmother (who lived in another house) to borrow a religious book. Suleyman, apparently in a flash, remembered that he (in the previous life) had had some religious books and that it was improper to let them go out of the house where they were kept.

After being three months in the hospital, Abdallah Abu Hamdan was discharged to the care of a doctor who treated him at his home where he died. Bader was a nurse who cared for Abdallah Abu Hamdan during his terminal illness, but she was not present in the room at the moment of his death. He was certainly "in the arms of Bader" on various occasions during the last stages of his illness, but he did not literally die in her arms. (See also Item 30.)

Abdallah Abu Hamdan died (almost certainly) in 1942. Someone at Gharife asked Suleyman (in 1967) when Abdallah Abu Hamdan had died. He said: "More than 20 years ago."

Since Abdallah Abu Hamdan died within a year, at most, of 1942 and Suleyman was not born until March, 1954, about twelve years elapsed between the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan and Suleyman's birth.

Suleyman, outside the house of Kemal Abu Hamdan, said: "The oil press is inside there." This was correct since the press was in a building attached to the house. Nejah Abu Hamdan said Suleyman had not recognized the oil press. But Khawla Andary said he had recognized it. According to her the press could be seen from the road and

Suleyman (1968)                      Kemal Abu Hamdan

Suleyman (1972)                      Incorrect

Suleyman (1968)                      Kemal Abu Hamdan

Suleyman (1968)                      Kemal Abu Hamdan  
Suleyman's identity  
card

22. He died at his home.

Suleyman (1968)

23. He died in the arms of Bader.

Suleyman (1972)

24. He died before 1947.

Suleyman (1968)

25. He was not reborn (as Suleyman) immediately after his death.

Suleyman (1968)

26. Recognition of building where the oil press was located.

Najeeb Zain Eldeen Khawla Andary, Naef Andary's wife

## Comments

Suleyman had said: "That is our oil press." In 1968 Najeeb Zain Eldeen, in reply to a direct question, asserted that he was an eyewitness of Suleyman's recognition of the location of the oil press. But in 1972 he said that *all* his testimony of 1968 had been secondhand. Samiha Abu Hamdan thought Suleyman had not recognized the oil press, but I think she referred to the press itself inside the house, rather than to the house in which it was located, which is the present item.

Suleyman went from the house of Kemel Abu Hamdan (on the highway) directly through an orchard in a valley to the former house of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. Formerly the road had run along this way, but at the time of Suleyman's visit in 1967 (and when I inspected the terrain in 1969) there was no road to be seen there, but only a rather faint path. A new and longer road through the village had been built since the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. Najeeb Zain Eldeen, who was not, it seems, a firsthand witness, said Suleyman remarked to others with him: "You can all go to the other house in the automobile. I am going by the path." Faiz Halibi observed Suleyman select the path leading across the valley to the house of Abdallah Abu Hamdan, but did not accompany him there.

The sheik was called Said. Suleyman had not been able to give his name, but said (correctly) that he came from Baakline. He said the sheik had changed much which was probably true because 25 years had elapsed since the death of Abdallah.

Khawla Andary did not give details of how Suleyman had recognized Kemel. Kemel himself denied that Suleyman had recognized him and as no other witness asserted that he had, I consider this item quite doubtful.

## Verification

## Informants

## Items

Nejah Abu Hamdan  
Faiz Halibi

27. Recognition of  
the old road to  
the house of  
Abdallah Abu Hamdan.

Naef Andary

28. Recognition of  
a sheik from  
Baakline.

Khawla Andary

29. Recognition of  
Kemel Abu Hamdan,  
Abdallah Abu Hamdan's  
son.

Naef Andary asked Suleyman: "Do you know this woman?" Suleyman replied: "Yes. She is Bader." Khawla Andary said that Suleyman recognized Bader quite spontaneously and gave her name as she entered a room where he was. Possibly she did not hear her husband ask Suleyman who the woman who had entered the room was.  
(See also Item 23.)

Faiz Halibi wanted to test how detailed Suleyman's knowledge of Gharife was. He asked him during Suleyman's first visit to Gharife to name a place (any place, it seems) near Gharife. Suleyman then pointed in the direction of Jal imm Hassan and gave its name. This place is about two kilometers from Gharife. Apparently Jal imm Hassan is not well known even to inhabitants of Gharife, so Suleyman's knowledge earned him credit as someone thoroughly familiar with the area. Faiz Halibi himself did not know the name of the region indicated and had to verify Suleyman's statement from residents of Gharife. In recounting this episode during an interview in 1972, Faiz Halibi changed the details somewhat and said that he himself had indicated the direction and asked Suleyman what the region he pointed to was called. Suleyman, he said, gave the correct name of Jal imm Hassan.

Faiz Halibi pointed out to Suleyman an old woman (unknown to Faiz Halibi) who was passing along the street in Gharife and, judging that she would be of the generation of Abdallah Abu Hamdan, he asked Suleyman who she was. Suleyman said "Zein El Said" and Faiz Halibi then inquired and confirmed that he was correct. My notes do not say whether Faiz Halibi asked the old woman herself who she was or verified her identity from someone else.

Naef Andary  
Khawla Andary

Faiz Halibi

Faiz Halibi

30. Recognition of  
the nurse, Bader.

31. Recognition of  
the location of  
Jal imm Hassan.

32. Recognition of an  
old woman, Zein El  
Said.

Hamdan's children plus two more and also the name of his wife. These last have no value as evidence of paranormal memories, but the fact that he could so easily retain ten names of a completely strange family in another village whom he had met only twice is minimally evidence of an unusual interest in that family.

Suleyman, however, did not retain everything clearly. He said (in 1968) that he was disturbed because Salim (one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's sons) was blind. Abdallah Abu Hamdan, in fact, did have a blind son, but he was called Naseeb. Salim was a member of the family (a brother, not a son, of Abdallah Abu Hamdan), but he was not blind.

Informants at Gharife said that when Suleyman came there he seemed extremely shy, timid, and even afraid. He said very little. He was not able to recognize any member of the Abu Hamdan family clearly by name, including Abdallah Abu Hamdan's widow and two of the children. Nor did he do any better when asked to recognize members of the family in photographs. The living people had naturally changed considerably in the twenty-five years since the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. Suleyman himself commented that he had failed to recognize one man who had, since the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan, become a sheik and grown a beard. It might have been expected that he would recognize persons in old photographs more easily, but he did not do so. When Suleyman saw Naseeb Abu Hamdan, one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's sons who was dumb, blind, and disabled, he was moved to tears. This was the nearest he came to a recognition of a member of the family. But he did list, and in order of birth, many of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children. The latter's daughter-in-law, Samiha Abu Hamdan, mentioned to me seven of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children named by Suleyman (in correct order of birth) when he came to Gharife for the first time. He also recognized, at least by his village of residence, a sheik, Said, from Baakline.

According to Nejah Abu Hamdan, Suleyman had said that the oil press was near the fountain (which it was) before he visited Gharife. But the informants disagreed as to whether he had recognized the house at Gharife (then occupied by Abdallah Abu Hamdan's son, Kemel Abu Hamdan, and his family) in which the oil press was located. This house, however, had been altered since the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan, a fact which could have impeded recognition (see Item 26 of the Tabulation).

One of Suleyman's most notable accomplishments at Gharife was leading the way to Abdallah Abu Hamdan's house in Gharife over an abandoned and barely visible path. At the house of Kemel Abu Hamdan, Suleyman was asked to find the way to Abdallah Abu Hamdan's house. Anyone looking over the terrain at Gharife, as I

did in 1969, would surely have gone along the paved road which runs through the village and then winds back toward the house occupied by Abdallah Abu Hamdan before his death and which was still occupied by his widow. Instead of doing this, however, Suleyman went back up the main road a short distance and then over the embankment and down a rather steep hill through a plantation of olive trees. Examining this area, I could see a barely visible path leading in the general direction of the Abu Hamdan house across a narrow valley. This, I was told, had formerly been a road which must have been rather steep since it went almost directly across the little valley. But certainly there were few traces left of it to guide anyone across the valley for about a quarter of a mile from the house of Kemel Abu Hamdan. Nejah Abu Hamdan, Abdallah Abu Hamdan's granddaughter, was with Suleyman and others when he selected and followed this route. She was certain that no one guided him and that he was always in advance of the group. She was powerfully impressed by his choice of the old route instead of the obvious paved road.

Suleyman apparently had no imaged memories of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's forced resignation from office as mukhtar. If he had had such memories earlier they had faded by 1972 when he told me that, so far as he could remember, Abdallah Abu Hamdan had died in office as mukhtar.

#### OBSERVATIONS OF SULEYMAN'S BEHAVIOR RELATED TO THE PREVIOUS LIFE

When I met Suleyman in 1968 (he was then fourteen) I was impressed by his seriousness and his adult manner. He was much quieter and more composed than the average teenager of Lebanon or elsewhere. He seemed rather depressed in 1968, but less so in 1969, 1970, and 1972. He acknowledged frankly that he preferred the company of adults to that of children. His cousin and great-uncle, Naef Andary, said that Suleyman objected to being talked to like a child and one of his cousins, Ajaj Andary, said that he had a tendency to sit in the center of a group as would a person of importance such as a mukhtar. Suleyman's aunt, Ratibeh Andary, who, with her sister and mother, had raised him, said that Suleyman protested if one scolded him or otherwise treated him like a child. He would say something like: "One doesn't scold me. I am an adult." He also would not submit to scolding at school by teachers there. Actually, his family and even his teachers had given up reprimanding him in response to this reaction. Not that he needed much discipline since he was a well-behaved child. In groups he



comported himself more like an adult than a child, sitting in a dignified way and making little noise. He would also make remarks such as: "I am an adult," or "I am already big." He did not, it seems, feel that he had a large body. These remarks implied awareness of an adult attitude or maturity, not that of large physical size.

Suleyman's adoption of adult postures and, at that, those of a rather important senior person, had earned him the nickname of "Muktar." The family had given him this nickname after he had gone to Gharife and, in their eyes, vindicated his claims to having been a muktar. In a group of friends and relatives I noticed that some adults tended to call him "Muktar" somewhat teasingly. His aunts and grandmother, however, also used this title in addressing him, although they did so rather affectionately, it seemed to me. They certainly showed no trace of derision toward him. One of his aunts and also an uncle said that Suleyman liked to be called "Muktar."

In addition to behaving generally in the manner of an important adult, Suleyman was noted to have strong religious interests. In a family rather lax in their attitude toward religion he was the only male member to visit the meeting house. And he was unique in the family in his observance of religious fasts. I have already mentioned his strong reaction to the suggestion that the family allow one of their religious books to go out of the house. He himself told me that he was concerned about religion, wished to avoid alcohol and tobacco, and had thought he might like to become a sheik. These indications of religiousness correspond to traits shown by Abdallah Abu Hamdan according to his widow, Zehna. She said that her husband possessed and read five religious books and preferred to read them by himself at home, saying that he could interpret the scriptures as well as a sheik at the meeting house.

Suleyman's grandmother said that when he would see an oil merchant pass in the street, he would boast that he had much more oil (and better) than the merchant had. As I have already mentioned, Suleyman's memories included owning an oil press in Gharife (see item 19 of the Tabulation). According to Zehna Abu Hamdan, her husband had strained himself financially to buy the oil press and she said he had made himself ill by worrying over the payments due for the press.

On at least two occasions, Suleyman wept when he became aware of illness in the children of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. According to his cousin and great-uncle, Naef Andary, he wept when someone told him that one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's sons (Naseeb) had become blind. (This blindness, however, had occurred *before* the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan.) And Zehna Abu Hamdan said

that when Suleyman (visiting Gharife) saw this same son of Abdallah Abu Hamdan (who had also been dumb from birth) he began to weep.

#### ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE OF EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION ON THE PART OF SULEYMAN

Suleyman's paternal aunt, Najla Andary, who had been a member of the household in which he grew up, told me that he had not shown any evidence of such paranormal powers as telepathy or precognition.

#### CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING SULEYMAN'S MEMORIES OF THE PREVIOUS LIFE AND THEIR EXPRESSION

As I mentioned earlier, Suleyman's first memories of the previous life occurred when he was a small child, both in the waking state and in dreams. But up to the age of eleven (approximately) he had very few clear, imaged memories in the waking state.

An eruption of additional memories occurred at the time of his outburst when his maternal grandmother wanted to borrow a religious book from his home (with his paternal grandmother). Thereafter he more or less consciously tried to recover additional memories, but hesitated to tell them to other persons and seems to have done so with some reluctance. However, during these years of later childhood he would occasionally mention having oil and when an oil merchant would pass the house, he would boast that he had more oil.

Later, when Suleyman realized that other people were inclined to tease him for remembering that he had been a muktar and for his airs of still being a muktar, he wished to forget the previous life. When I first met him in 1968 he said that he then remembered the previous life chiefly when persons talked about reincarnation or when they asked him about his own memories and focused his attention on them.

Suleyman's (paternal) grandmother, Zahiyya El Sayigh Andary, said that Suleyman himself, when he first began to talk about the previous life with others, remarked that he felt shame, but he did not explain why. And Kemel Abu Hamdan spontaneously remarked that when Suleyman came to Gharife, he seemed "ashamed." Such an ill-defined feeling of shame might have derived from Abdallah Abu Hamdan's humiliation over being removed from office as muktar, even though Suleyman had no imaged memories of this presumably painful event.

## THE INTERVAL BETWEEN ABDALLAH ABU HAMDAN'S DEATH AND SULEYMAN'S BIRTH

As already mentioned, Abdallah Abu Hamdan died in (approximately) 1942 and Suleyman was born in 1954. There was thus a gap of twelve years between the death of Abdallah and the birth of Suleyman. Suleyman claimed to have had an intermediate terrestrial life which filled this interval. He had no memories of it, and it remains conjectural, but the absence of such memories is not regarded by Druses as disproving that such a life occurred. On any occasion when a gap, however short, occurs between the birth of a subject and the death of the person for whose life the subject has memories, it is assumed that the subject had, in this interval, another "intermediate life." And if anyone asks why the subject has no memories of this intermediate life, the answer is given that it contained nothing memorable such as a violent death.<sup>9</sup>

## SULEYMAN'S LATER DEVELOPMENT

When I first met Suleyman in 1968, his memories of the previous life had already begun to fade. He was partly wrong about the name of one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's daughters and slightly mixed up his widow's name. And he thought that one of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's sons was called Salim, when in fact Salim was his brother. (See Items 11, 16, and 17 of the Tabulation.)

At that time (1968), as I have mentioned earlier, Suleyman seemed somewhat depressed, although he talked quite freely with me about what he then remembered of the previous life. When I saw him again in later years (1969-72) he seemed more cheerful than he had been in 1968. But in 1969 he told me he was trying to forget the memories of the previous life. We can only conjecture without certain knowledge as to why Suleyman wished to forget the previous life. For one thing, however, many of the events of the last years of that life, which included heavy indebtedness, demotion from being mukhtar, and unpleasurable relations with the children, cannot have provided the ingredients for happy memories that

<sup>9</sup> The idea that one might remember more clearly a life before the one immediately preceding one's present existence is not intrinsically absurd. I have a small number of cases in which the subject remembered more than one life and seemed to remember the one that immediately preceded his birth less well than one farther removed in time. I have already published one example of this in the case of Swarnlata Mishra (1, pp. 63-79). In another (unpublished) Lebanese case, the subject said he remembered much more clearly the first in succession of two lives preceding his present one. In the first of these lives, the man the subject remembered being was a notable person; and in the second one (that just preceding his birth) the person he remembered being was a man of humble circumstances living an ordinary life.

anyone would want to dwell on. Suleyman may also have found unpleasant his awareness of the contrast between the situation of Abdallah Abu Hamdan as muktar of his village and his own position as a small boy counting for little in another far removed village.

In 1970 I learned that Suleyman had left school that year. (He was then sixteen years old.) He and his older brother, who was with him during the interview, did not explain why he left school other than saying that he did not wish to study any longer. He had begun to work as an apprentice to a blacksmith. He still thought a little about Gharife, but it did not seem prominent in his mind.

In 1972 (at age eighteen) Suleyman was still working as a blacksmith. He again explained that he had simply stopped school (at the sixth class in 1970) because he did not like studying. He said that he had retained the memories of the previous life in Gharife, but had not recalled any additional details about it. This claim does not mean that no fading of memories had in fact occurred. I have already cited evidence that in 1968 Suleyman was beginning to get some names related to the life of Abdallah Abu Hamdan somewhat mixed up.

#### DISCUSSION OF SULEYMAN'S BEHAVIOR RELATED TO THE PREVIOUS LIFE

Suleyman's behavior did not demonstrate a large range of individual traits related to the previous life such as some of the subjects of these cases have shown. But he did manifest prominently two traits which made him stand out from other children of his age. These were his concern about religion, including his close attention to religious practice, and his assumption of the behavior of a rather important adult. Neither of these kinds of behavior would earn him much affection among children of his own age. And although some adults respected his precocious interest in religion, most were inclined to tease him about his adoption of the self-important attitudes of a muktar. Certainly Suleyman could have gained nothing in the circle of his family or friends by assuming the muktar role. He was quite well aware of this himself and the knowledge provided a motive for him to keep his memories of the previous life to himself as long as he did.

I have already remarked that Suleyman, in contrast to most of the subjects of these cases, did not wish to go to the village where he claimed to have lived. And when he did go there, he performed rather poorly as regards recognizing people and places that were known to Abdallah Abu Hamdan. There are several possible explanations for this failure. The first is that Suleyman's memories

were simply rather faint, at least with regard to details of the previous life. And yet that probably cannot be the entire explanation, for he had an excellent retention of some details. As I have mentioned, during my first interview with him he quickly ran off a list of nine of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's children and threw in the name of his wife; this was *after* he had been to Gharife and he could perhaps have learned some of these names there, but we have independent evidence that he knew at least seven of them before his first visit to Gharife.

The long time that had passed since the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan provides a second possible explanation for Suleyman's failure to recognize more people and places in Gharife than he did. Between the death of Abdallah Abu Hamdan (1942) and Suleyman's first visit in 1967, an interval of approximately twenty-five years had elapsed. Many persons would have difficulty recognizing people and places after twenty-five years with the memories of one lifetime! In 1968 Suleyman told me that when first asked to go to Gharife he refused on the grounds that, since he was not reborn immediately after the death (of Abdallah Abu Hamdan), he did not remember everything. He seemed afraid of failing when offered tests of recognition of people and places at Gharife.

I think, however, that a third factor may have contributed even more than any of the preceding ones. I referred earlier to Suleyman's noted shyness and embarrassment in Gharife. I have conjectured that a sense of shame related to subliminal memories of Abdallah Abu Hamdan's forced resignation as mukhtar may have tended to inhibit his memories and (even more probably) his interest in going to Gharife and his conduct when actually there.

Some further inhibition perhaps arose from a fourth factor. I refer to Suleyman's awareness of having once been (according to his memories) a person of importance and moderate financial means, who was now a mere boy, a nobody, in a village remote in time and space from the scene of his former position of power and prestige.

#### COMMENTS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF THE MEMORIES ON SULEYMAN'S DEVELOPMENT

I believe that the strong behavioral memories related to the mukhtar role of Abdallah Abu Hamdan had an important influence in restraining Suleyman from wishing to remember more about the previous life and from going to Gharife. As a child he at first dimly and then more clearly remembered having been a person of importance in a previous life. His situation of being a child and, at that, one without a father and brought up by women, contrasted pain-

fully with the previous status as a respected adult male and a community leader that he remembered. He could not feel natural as a child when he remembered so vividly being such a prominent adult. Yet he knew that the presumption of being an adult and a muktar would bring derision on him. And, in fact, this happened after he began to talk about his memories openly since he was then given the nickname "Muktar." Members of his own immediate family, i.e., his grandmother and aunts, used the nickname affectionately, but others did so derisively. Thus his earlier fears became justified. I believe the continuation of the conflict between the child and adult roles contributed to the depression from which he was suffering in 1968. After he left school at the age of sixteen and became a blacksmith's apprentice, he achieved a degree of independent adult status in Falougha. Possibly this accounted for his better mood and air of self-confidence in the later years of 1969-72. But perhaps he felt better as he grew older because the unpleasant memories of the life in Gharife faded from his consciousness.

There is clear evidence in this case, both from the subject himself and other informants, that he did not talk openly about memories of a previous life until he was about twelve to thirteen years of age. I think this reluctance to let the memories develop adds to the strength of the case. On the other hand, Suleyman's older age when he first expressed his memories, as compared to most children subjects of these cases, left him more time for learning the facts of the previous life by normal means. But if we believe that he did not acquire his information by normal means and was remembering paranormally a previous life, then the unpleasantness of the memories could have contributed to his reluctance to speak about them and also for the moderate depression from which he suffered in childhood and early adolescence. His experience lends a certain support to the idea many Asian parents have that children should not be encouraged to remember previous lives. They fear that such memories may involve the child (and them) in painful conflicts. Although this does not often occur, it clearly did in the present case.

#### COMMENTS ON THE EVIDENCE OF PARANORMAL PROCESSES IN THE CASE

In the study of this case I eventually interviewed twenty informants. Among these, the only person I could find who had connections with both Falougha and Gharife was Faiz Halibi. As I have described, he lived in Gharife for a little over a year between 1966 and 1968. This was before (and during) the periods of Suleyman's visits to Gharife, and also during the time when Suleyman told other persons about his memories. But it was *after* the first

early period when Suleyman had had some of the memories. These had come to him in fragments since his early childhood, although the bulk of them only came into his consciousness in the years 1966-67 and, therefore, at about the time Faiz Halibi was in Gharife.

It seems unlikely, however, that Faiz Halibi could have easily or accidentally picked up much, if any, information about Abdallah Abu Hamdan in Gharife. Abdallah Abu Hamdan had died twenty-four years before Faiz Halibi went to work in Gharife, although his widow and two of his sons still lived there. (There were almost certainly some other relatives in Gharife whom I did not meet.) Faiz Halibi assured me that he did not learn enough in Gharife to make a connection between Suleyman's statements and Abdallah Abu Hamdan until he made specific inquiries to verify them. He said that before he knew about Suleyman's statements he had never even heard of Abdallah Abu Hamdan. He was not responsible for the first identification of Abdallah Abu Hamdan as the person Suleyman was referring to. In addition, Faiz Halibi could not himself verify two of Suleyman's recognitions without first consulting other persons of Gharife (see Items 31 and 32 of the Tabulation). This further indicates that he was not a conduit for information about Gharife passing to Suleyman.

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