

THE DOCTRINE OF AFTERLIFE IN ANCIENT RELIGIONS VIS-À-VIS THE IGBO NOTION OF REINCARNATION

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Abstract

From the dawn of history man has grappled with the question of death and afterlife. While many religions and cultures hold on to a belief in afterlife, their views vary from culture to culture. The ancient Egypt belief in the afterlife was expressed in the practice of mummification of corpses of the dead; this was aimed at preserving them for the next life. The Hindus believe that there is a cycle of births and death before one finally arrives his destiny. The soul of the dead was believed to be reborn in another body and to experience another earthly existence. This view also reflects in the Greek teaching on Metempsychosis. The Zoroastrians and the Jews have another expression of the belief in afterlife. Both religions taught that the dead will experience a resurrection at the last day. Judaism bases this hope on God who has power over life and death. The God, who calls into existence what was not, also has the power to restore life even if it is lost in corporeal death. The Igbo share much of the views on afterlife expressed in these ancient religions. This is expressed in the belief in *Ịlọ ụwa* (reincarnation).

Keywords: Afterlife, Reincarnation, *Ịlọ Uwa*, Living-dead, *Samsara*, Metempsychosis, Resurrection.

Introduction

From the ancient times, humans have grappled with the question of survival after death. A basic wish of man is for long life. Yet he is confronted with the undeniable fact of death. What happens after death? Is there such a thing as afterlife? The belief in afterlife is found in several religions. Ancient Egypt expressed a hope of life after death. This hope is expressed in the practice of mummification of corpses of the dead in order to preserve them. This practice is based on the belief that the dead was reborn after death and therefore, needed physical bodies for the next life. The Hindus believe that people do not live and die just once, rather they are reborn a number of times before reaching their final destiny. This process is called “samsara” (reincarnation). *Samsara*, however, condemns man to an indefinite series of rebirths and ties him to the material world. The Greeks hold that the soul is man’s spiritual essence, incapable of dying. Death is conceived of as the liberation of the immortal soul from the body in which it is held prisoner. Greek philosophy also teaches the soul can transmigrate to another body after corporeal death. This is known as metempsychosis. The Greek theory of metempsychosis shares much of the outlook of the Hindu concept of *Samsara*. From the Persian era, a new view on afterlife developed. The idea of resurrection of the dead appeared for the first time in ancient Persian religion, Zoroastrianism. This idea passed on to

Judaism ca. 400 B.C., and developed during the Hellenistic era. These religions agree that death is not the end of life; some form of life lies beyond the grave. When the foregoing views are placed side by side with the Igbo concept of reincarnation (*Ilọ uwa*), we notice some relationship between the two. The Igbo believe that life continues in another form after corporeal death; death is a gateway to the life beyond. While these views do not exhaust the answers to the question of death and afterlife, they boldly say that there is life beyond the grave. This article seeks to study closely the ancient teachings on afterlife and examine their interface with the Igbo belief in reincarnation.

Doctrine of Afterlife in Ancient Religions

Many religions and culture express the belief that life continues in some form after the end of this earthly life. This belief finds expression in different forms among the ancient religions. The teaching on afterlife ranges from reincarnation (Hinduism and African Religions), immortality and transmigration of the soul (Egypt, Greek), resurrection (Persian, Judeo-Christian).

The idea of Afterlife in Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt, the dead are believed to live on after corporeal death. The ancient Egyptians hoped for immortality and a prosperous life in the next world (Croatto, 1970). The belief in immortality is expressed in the act of mummification of the corpse of the dead. Mummification is a practice in ancient Egypt of the embalmment of the corpses of the dead in order to preserve them. This practice is based on the belief that the dead was reborn after death and therefore, needed physical bodies for the next life. According to McLeman (1965), mummification is aimed at making the body tissues imperishable and preserving the likeness of the deceased so that it can continue its former life in its fullness in the celestial realms.

In the ancient Egypt, death is perceived as a “passage” to rebirth, to a cyclical but unending palingenesis (Croatto, 1970). The ancient Egyptian hope in the resurrection of the body is expressed in the Osiris myth which dates as far back as 1200 B.C. Osiris is portrayed as a god-man, a peaceful and powerful ruler of the Delta region. He is said to be the husband of Isis, goddess of enchantment and magic; father of the great war god Horus; and conqueror of northern Upper Egypt with his principal city at Abydos. According to this legend, Osiris came into conflict with his brother Seth, who murdered and dismembered him. But his wife, Isis, used her magic to put him back together. Osiris resurrected from the dead. The cult of Osiris was established at Abydos, where he is invoked as the Lord of the resurrection. The myth of Osiris, who died and resurrected, kindled hope in a life beyond death in the ancient Egyptian religion (Woschitz, 1986). The Osiris doctrines are concerned with the problems of life, death, resurrection, and an afterlife. This mummification of the dead and the Osiris myth demonstrate that already ancient Egypt cherished a hope of afterlife

expressed in a form rebirth and resurrection of the dead. The hope in the rebirth of the dead finds a deeper expression in the Hindu worldview.

Afterlife in Hinduism

Hinduism teaches that time is cyclical. The Hindus also believe that people do not live and die just once but rather that they are reborn a number of times before reaching their final state. The process of being born, growing, dying and being reborn again for the Hindus is called “samsara” (reincarnation). *Samsara* is cycle of repeated births and deaths. This cycle involves a transmigration of the soul of the dead from one body to another (Croatto, 1970). According to the Hindu view, *samsara* is caused by a lack of knowledge of one’s true self and the resultant desire for fulfillment outside oneself. As a result of these unfulfilled desires, one continues to undergo a cycle of rebirths in this physical plane of existence. The chain of births lets the person resume the pursuit for the fulfillment of his/her aspirations.

The Hindu belief is that the circle of births and rebirths is determined by one’s actions (*Karma*) in the previous life. The choices one made in the past life directly affect one’s condition in this life, and the choices one makes today have consequences for one’s future life. The idea of *samsara*, however, cancels out the hope of eschatological fulfillment since it condemns man to an indefinite series of rebirths, which consequently ties him to the material world of phenomenon and illusion. Secondly, *samsara* offers no final answer to the question of ultimate happiness. The way out of this chain of rebirths, according to the Hindu belief, is the way of *moksa*(liberation). Salvation, therefore, consists essentially in the liberation of the person (*atman*) from the illusory world, an escape from the circles of *samsara*, and identification with *Brahman*, the principle and basis of all reality (croatto, 1970). Since, as Hindu thought holds, *samsara* is caused by ignorance (*avidya*), salvation can be achieved through *gnosis*(knowledge).

Ancient Greek Concept of Afterlife

The ancient Greeks present a somewhat different vision of immortality from the Hindu notion. The ancient Greek philosophy conceives of man as a composite of soul and body. According to this view, the soul is man’s spiritual essence, incapable of dying (Endres, 1965); while the body is a material entity. Plato developed the idea of immortality of the soul in the *Phaedo*. According to Plato, a person is an immaterial soul, temporarily imprisoned in the body. Consequently, Platonism held that life is an endless struggle against the tribulations inflicted by the material body. In Greek thought, death is conceived of as the liberation of the immortal soul from the body in which it is held prisoner (McC. Gatch, 1969; Greshake, 1978; Creel, 1981; Mondin, 2007).

The soul/body opposition impregnated Stoicism as well. The Stoics believed that at death the soul leaves the body to ascend to the celestial regions of the

moon before being absorbed in the “All.” The Epicureans, on the other hand, held that there was no immortality but instead freedom from the “terrors of the Beyond.” The Epicurean indifference to afterlife is reflected in such epitaphs as: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (*phagomen kai piomen, aurion gar apothneskomen*; cf. I Cor 15:32). It is, therefore, not surprising that the Stoics and the Epicureans at the Areopagus in Athens disdainfully dismissed Paul when he began to preach the resurrection of the dead to them (Acts 17:24-32). While the Greeks held on to the doctrine of immortality of the soul, the concept of afterlife expressed as bodily resurrection, began to develop among the Zoroastrians in the Persian era (Igbo, 2013).

Zoroastrian Doctrine of Resurrection

The belief in corporeal resurrection is believed to have developed in Persia ca.1000 - 800 B.C., and passed to Judaism around 400 B.C. The ancient Persian religion (present-day Iran) had conceived of the world history as the arena of conflict between two cosmic forces - good and evil, or light and darkness, each contending for control of the world. The Iranian religion envisaged a time when Light and Truth will conquer Darkness and Lie. They also looked forward to a new life in the world beyond. This religion held that the righteous will enjoy a new age; even if they have died, they will be raised and justified (McLeman, 1965). The resurrection of the dead is believed to be an event that will take place in the eschatological future (Birkeland, 1950-51; Becque, 1960).

The doctrine of bodily resurrection was probably influenced by the teachings of the Persian prophet Zoroaster (Wu, 1965,) (Greek form of the Persian name Zarathustra). Zoroaster predicted the coming of a new world where the powers of good will utterly and finally defeat the powers of evil (Cannoy, 1981; McLeman, 1965), a time when the righteous will be rewarded in the hereafter (Oxtoby, 1996,). Zoroastrianism held that souls will be judged one by one. Man determines his own destiny by his choice between good and evil (Croatto, 1970). The final judgment will decide the eternal destiny of the righteous and that of the wicked. Zoroastrianism looked forward to a time in the eschatological future when the one Supreme Being will physically resurrect the dead (Moore, 1971), while the wicked will be cast into hell (Hume, 1959; Becque and Becque, 1960). Zoroastrianism was, perhaps, the first ancient religion to have taught the doctrine of bodily resurrection of the dead (J. D. G. “Zoroastrianism and Persiism,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol 29, 1983, p.1086; Maccullouch, 1981; Eliade, 1977). Indeed, Zoroaster’s doctrine of the resurrection represents a new conception of immortality (Eliade, 1978). Scholars like Hume (1959) and Conzelmann (1975) are of the view that the idea of “bodily resurrection” entered Judaism from the Persians.

Afterlife in Ancient Judaism

The Jewish belief in afterlife has its roots in the oldest strata of the religious thought of Israel. While the language of the Old Testament is more concerned

with community survival than individual immortality, there is nonetheless a strong consciousness in ancient Judaism that a person is not utterly annihilated at death. In the Patriarchal and Mosaic period, immortality for the individual consists in survival in his descendants (Sir 30:4-6) and in the good name which one leaves behind.

One of the questions that Jews in the Hellenistic period grappled with concerns the fate of those who have died on account of their faith in Yahweh? Is there such a thing like afterlife? The standard view in ancient Israel was that the dead descend to the region of the underworld generally called *Sheol*, where they dwell in a shadowy existence (Collins. 1993; Achard. 1992; Leon-Dufour, 1974). Job 7:9-10 and 16:22 refers to *Sheol* as a “land of no return.” While ancient Judaism taught that life goes on after death, it also held that God will “at the last day” raise up the just from the dead. The idea of resurrection, however, did not develop in the Jewish consciousness until the Hellenistic period (Gaster. 1962; Obilor, 1993; Brandon, 1970; Oepke, 1964). Belief in after-life sparked off by the question about the divine justice, the fate of the righteous dead and the question of retribution. Both Isa 26:19 and Dan 12:2-3 proclaim a resurrection of the dead. However, the doctrine of corporeal resurrection, as Zwi Werblowsky and Wigoder (1966) remark, proved a stumbling block to those who conceive of immortality as involving only the soul, and who thought of a continued life in a material body as impossible. In the inter-testamental Judaism, the doctrine of afterlife, expressed as resurrection from the dead, became pronounced particularly in Daniel 12:1-3; 2 Macc 7:ff and Wis 3:1-10.

Resurrection in the Inter-testamental Judaism

Dan 12: 1-3 is the first undisputed evidence of a belief in the resurrection of the dead in the Jewish Scripture. The book of Daniel can be dated around 164 B.C, shortly after the Maccabean revolt (167 B.C). The book is addressed to a people brutalized into despair as a result of the persecution unleashed by the Seleucid Monarch, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, on Jews who had refused to adopt Hellenism. The author looked forward to a period of redress when God would awaken those who have died for the sake of his Law. The character of afterlife which the author of Dan 12: 1-3 formulated was an extremely important one in apocalyptic Judaism and later became an absolutely central truth for Christianity (Lindenberger, 1985).

The resurrection to everlasting life in Dan 12 takes place at the turning-point of the aeons, i.e., “at that time” (Hasel, 1980; Collins, 1974); at the climactic time leading to the *eschaton* (Nickelsburg, 1972). The author describes the resurrection as an awakening of the dead. Dan 12:2 declares that two groups will be raised – the righteous and the wicked. But while the righteous are raised to eternal life, the wicked are resurrected to eternal disgrace and everlasting abhorrence (Barton, 1993). This is the first time in the Jewish Scripture that we have an explicit affirmation of resurrection (Hammer, 1976). What this text indicates is that in the realm of the afterlife, each person will receive from God

the recompense he or she deserves (Di Lella, 1978). Daniel's concept of the resurrection is judicial. God will not only judge those who live but also those who are dead.

Like the author of Dan 12:1-3, the author of 2 Macc 7:1ff further underlines the belief in the resurrection of the dead. This passage gives a very moving account of the martyrdom of seven brothers, whose names are unknown but who are popularly called "the Maccabees" (2 Macc 7:1 ff). Their faith in the resurrection, which they explicitly assert (7:11), gives them the courage to undergo martyrdom than disobey the Law of God. What gives them motivation is their faith that even if they lose their lives, God, on account of their fidelity to his Law, will raise them up to live again forever (2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36; Dentan, 1971; Bartlett, 1973). According to Hans Küng (1984), the basis of the hope of resurrection in Dan 12:1-2 and in 2 Macc 7 is the conviction that God will eventually vindicate his faithful people, who died for the sake of his name, by raising them from the death.

Like Dan 12:1-3, the author of Wis 3:1-10 divides men into two camps: the righteous and the godless. As the author views it, the life of the godless, no matter how magnificent it appears to be in the eyes of men, ends in the darkness of Hades (Schedl, 1973). On the other hand, the death of the righteous is only a transition to immortality with God (Winston, 1979). As Anjos (2006) sees it, the fate of the righteous is ultimately tied to their communion with God. This communion endures even after their corporeal death. The author states categorically: the "souls of the just are in God's hand" (v.1), even if they appear to die, they are in peace (v.3) and share in everlasting felicity (Dentan, 1971). The author declares that the suffering of the righteous in this life is only temporal (v.5); it is purificatory; it prepares them for union with God. This union, which already begins in this earthly existence, cannot be broken by death; it continues beyond the grave (Ceresko, 2005). Death is not the end of life; it is only a transition to an everlasting communion with God in the hereafter. This fact is not only held by ancient Judaism, it also finds expression in the Igbo worldview.

Igbo Concept of Afterlife

When we place the doctrines on afterlife of the aforementioned worldviews side by side with the Igbo belief in reincarnation, we notice some points of contact and certain points of disagreement between the two. Clearly, these religions teach that something lies beyond the grave; that corporeal death is not the end of existence but that death is rather a gateway to another realm of existence. Just like the ancient Egyptians, the Igbo express their belief in afterlife in their burial customs. The dead is accorded a "decent" or "proper" burial to enable him rest in peace in the spirit world (Ita Edet, 2016). The Igbo hold that life continues after corporeal death; they also regard death as a gateway to the ancestral abode. Like the Hindu, the The Igbo believe that the dead can reincarnate into another body and return to this earthly existence. This is known as "Ìlọ ụwa" in the Igbo worldview.

Reincarnation (*Ilọ uwa*) in Igbo Worldview

The Igbo word for reincarnation is *Ilọ uwa*, which means “a return to the world.” By “reincarnation” we mean a dead person coming back to life through rebirth (Nzewi, 2001; Uche and Uche, 2020). They believe that the spirit of the dead can enter another body to be born again into this earthly existence. In the Igbo worldview, a person does not just die; he goes to join his ancestors. The Igbo believe in the life-beyond and in the reality of the spiritual world (“*Ala-mụọ*”). The term, “*Ala-mụọ*”, refers to the realm of the dead. The Igbo conceive of ‘*Ala-mụọ*’ as the realm of the ancestors (Amakulo, 2020). The implication is that death is not the end of life; there is life after death; the dead are somewhere waiting for a return to this worldly existence. The Igbo people do not speak of survival of the soul after death like the Greeks, but the whole person survives, but in a superior realm of existence (Okoro, 2019).

According to this worldview, only qualified ancestors can reincarnate. Generally, in Igbo worldview, when a baby is born within the family, kindred or community, it is carefully examined to see if it bears any resemblances to any of the ancestors. Sometimes the diviner (*dibia-afa*) is consulted to know who has “come back”, i.e., reincarnated in the baby. Once the diviner has revealed the ancestor, the child is given the ancestor’s name (Schmitz, 2020). Certain Igbo names are indicative of the Igbo belief in reincarnation. These include, Nna-nna (the father of his father); Nne-nna (the mother of her father); Nneka (mother is greater), Nne-ji (my brother or sister) etc. Despite the strong influence of Christianity in the Igboland since 1885, the belief in reincarnation has remained firmly impressed into the psyche of the Igbo.

Basic Igbo Ontology and Reincarnation

African metaphysics differs from the Western metaphysics. While the themes discussed in philosophy are universal, the treatment of these themes varies from culture to culture. Metaphysics is conceived as the study of “being” or the study of reality. Each culture’s understanding of what “being” or “reality” is, is relative to that culture, just as the conception of the nature of afterlife varies from worldview to worldview (Ita Edet, 2016). Birth, death and hereafter are a tripod in the Igbo metaphysical ontology. At death, one enters the sphere of afterlife. The Igbo believe that death is not the end of life, but rather a portal through which one journey to the great beyond, i.e., to another level of existence. Thus, death is regarded as a journey to the spirit world (*Ala-mụọ*) or the land of the ancestors (*Ala ndi Ichie*). The ancestors are the human spirits of former members of the community who had lived well. They are the living-dead who take their abode in the metaphysical world. Since the ancestors are thought to be alive, their presence with the family or community is held to be real among the Igbo people (Okoro, 2019).

The Igbo cosmology conceives of the universe as being divided into three spheres: (1) the sky (*Elu-igwe*) – the abode of Chukwu (the Supreme Being), with his

deputies and primordial beings; (2) the spirit world (*Ala-mụo*) – inhabited by spirits. The realm of the spirit is also the future abode of the living after this earthly existence. This plane of existence is believed to be a transit point from where spirits of the ancestors return to the earthly existence through rebirth (reincarnation); (3) the earth (*Ala Mmadu*) – the sphere of animate beings/things (humans, animals, plants, etc.). There is a relationship, fellowship, interaction and exchange between the world of the spirit and the world of humans. Hence, as Okoro (2016) is of the view that the gods, divinities, ancestors, unborn progenies and the living form one continued community that stretch from the infinite past to the continued present and snowballs into the infinite future. Thus, the Igbo family is not conceived as being made up of only the living; the unseen ancestors (the living-dead) are believed to be part of the family. The ancestral world is believed to be a gateway to life; it is the state from where the dead re-enter their human families in another earthly existence.

Reincarnationists hold that the reincarnated person usually exhibits concrete signs of his former person in the form of bodily marks, discernible character and personality traits and the ability even to remember events in a previous life. This, according to Ita Edet (2016), explains why child geniuses or prodigies (translated in Igbo as *ebibi uwa*) are considered as reincarnates of deceased intelligent, crafty and successful persons from their lineage. The Igbo describe such children as “being older than their ages.” The belief in reincarnation of the ancestors contradicts the belief in the ancestral realm in the great beyond. The view has always been that the reincarnated ancestor still continues to live in the after-life? Okoro (2019) has maintained that though the ancestor reincarnates into another body, he does not vacate his/her spiritual abode in the metaphysical world. Since the birth of the child does not put an end to the existence of the deceased ancestor in the spirit-world, it follows that the personality and identity of the child is not the same as that of the ancestor. This becomes clearer when one realizes that Africans do not hold that the biological conception of a child is caused by the spirit of the ancestor, but by the concurrent act of the creator God and the parents (Ita Edet, 2016). The questions that reincarnationists need to address are: What reincarnates, the whole person, certain features of the person, or some characters of the ancestor? Is the personality of the reincarnated ancestor same as his reincarnate? What then is the degree of the personality of the ancestor that is transmitted to the reincarnate child? Ezeogu (1995) distinguishes three levels of rebirth: (a) Rebirth of physical features. This, according to Ezeogu, occurs when the new born bears “a perfect physical resemblance of a deceased person, same sex, same face, same stature, same complexion, and even same natural distinguishing marks, wounds or deformity”; (b) Rebirth of nature and character. A child, as it grows up, could be seen to be an exact replica of a deceased, not so much in physical resemblance as in nature and character; (c) Rebirth of the essential person. Here the spiritual entity that survives the death of a human person is supposed to return to this world in a new body of a baby.” While the first and the second cases are consistent with the Igbo view on *ịlọuwa*, it is doubtful if the third is in harmony with the Igbo concept of reincarnation (Ezeogu, 1995). Ezeogu’s view further raises the question of

identity and the question of the degree that reincarnation takes place. Is there such a thing as partial reincarnation? If the ancestor can reincarnate in a child and still retain his personality in the ancestral world, then reincarnation in such a sense is no more than something partial or apparent. A partial reincarnation does not address the question of the nature of afterlife. Either it is or is not.

Interface Between the Igbo Concept of *Ịlọ Ụwa* and the Notion of Afterlife in Ancient Religions

The Igbo belief that the spirit of an ancestor can reincarnate and begin another cycle of earthly existence is consistent with the Hindu concept of *Samsara* and the Greek notion of Metempsychosis. While there are points of agreement, there are also discernible difference between the Igbo concept of *Ịlọ Ụwa* and the Hindu understanding of *samsara* and the Greek doctrine of metempsychosis. Generally, reincarnation, denotes a return of the soul of the dead into a physical body to continue another cycle of life.

In the Hindu worldview, the soul after it has survived corporeal death, spends some time in another realm and then is reborn in a new body. Karma and reincarnation are key factors in the Hindu belief in the afterlife. In the Hindu understanding, *Samsara* (reincarnation) is determined by one's karma. The quality of life one lived in his former life determines the kind of body he will reincarnate in. Thus, the soul may enter into either a lower life or higher one; it can also migrate into either a living or non-living object, depending on the quality of life it had lived in the previous earthly existence. *Samsara* becomes a practical way one reaps from the fruits of one's deeds in the previous life. The self is forced to enter into another material existence until all karmic debts is paid (Okoro, 2019). This is fundamentally with the Igbo belief in reincarnation. In the Igbo understanding, not all the dead reincarnate, only the worthy souls reincarnate.

Just as the Hindus, the Greeks hold that the quality of life a person lived in the previous life can determine what kind of body the soul will transmigrate into. The Greeks taught that the immaterial soul can transmigrate to another body, either human or animal. This is known as metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. According to the ancient Greek worldview, a human person can come back as another human or as a bird or animal or reptile of some kind. Pythagoras was the first to theorize metempsychosis as a potential life-after-death experience. This is also reflected in the thought of Plato. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato held that after the death of the body, the immortal soul passes through the realm of the ideas, that is why some people possess particular kinds of knowledge, such as the consciousness of virtue and perfection, through the process of anamnesis or recollection (<http://www.english.hawaii.edu>). On the one hand, metempsychosis is similar to reincarnation. Both hold that there are such things as rebirth and afterlife. On the other hand, metempsychosis differs from reincarnation because in reincarnation the soul is not going "up" or "down" the ladder as a result of the sum of the one's good or bad actions in the previous life, as is the case in metempsychosis. At times the degradation may be so extreme that one's soul is

embodied in an inanimate form
(<https://www.compellingtruth.org/metempsychosis.html>).

Conclusion

This paper establishes that most religions and cultures have a concept of life beyond the grave, but the form in which these beliefs are expressed varies from worldview to worldview. For the Greeks, the soul is man's spiritual essence, incapable of dying. Corporeal death, therefore, is a portal into another state of existence. The Greek and Hindu view that the soul of the dead can enter another body (higher or lower) and thus experience another cycle of earthly existence agrees much with the Igbo belief in reincarnation. For both the Igbo and the Hindu worldviews, reincarnation is a return of the dead to another earthly existence. For the Hindu, *samsara* is a cycle of rebirths, and is dictated by the principle of karma. One's actions in the past life determine the body into which he will come back in the next life. For the Igbo, *Ilọ ụwa* (reincarnation) is the means by which the "living-dead" (the ancestors) come back to another cycle earthly existence. But unlike the Hindu worldview, the Igbo hold that only the qualified ancestors reincarnate. The evil people do not reincarnate. The consciousness of the possibility of continuity of life through *Ilọ ụwa* (reincarnation) encourages good conducts and discourages wickedness in the society. what these worldviews have in common is that life is not vanquished by corporeal death; death is only a portal to life beyond the grave.

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