

**An Argument for Successive Lives ~
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Abstract

The following is a discussion concerning the contingency of life from a naturalistic, non-supernatural view, using only logical deduction and mathematics in an attempt to answer the age old question “What happens after we die?” It begins with mathematical observations, a discussion, followed by a conclusion that we must live not just once, but live perennially forever. There is also a lengthy section dealing with common rebuttals followed by how the findings contained herein can be applied to the Universe in general.

Introduction and Discussion

Most naturalistic types would have it that when we die, we just die – it’s all over. Any view that life continues beyond death is just religious fantasy. While this is understandable, due to some mathematical concerns, I can’t help but believe this down-to-earth, realistic view cannot be true. Let me demonstrate. Published statistics on death tell us that over 100 billion people have already lived and died. I have no way of verifying that figure, but certainly we can safely assume far more people have lived and died, than there are people presently living. Now, if we take that figure as being correct, we can easily compute the current odds of being a member of the living in relation to all the people that have thus far been born, which would obviously be about 6 percent. It strikes me a bit odd that I should be among that rather small six percent by mere luck.

We can also approach the issue from one of time. The average current life span of a human is about 70 years. It is believed that humanoid life arose approximately 4 million years ago. Therefore, the odds of any one of us being alive now as any type of human creature might be calculated as $70 / 4,000,000 = .0000175$, or about 1 in 57,000. These are pretty slim odds for any of us having our one life occurring now, and this calculation does not take into consideration all of future time which humans will live and in which we just as well could have had our one-shot at life. For example, If we were to project an equal time into the future for just being human, the odds against us being alive now would double from the previous figure given to about 1 in 100,000 to round things off nicely.¹

Given that naturalists believe in evolution, where life is a continuum from one form to another, there actually is no particular reason why we should limit our one life to just

¹ One could argue there are more people alive now than in the past, so that would slant the odds in our favor, but then the same argument could be used to favor our one life as being a member of some future generation when the population will be even much larger. With such logic, we would have to assume our one shot at life most likely should always be in the future, not now.

that of being human. In this view, we must consider that life arose on the earth some 3.5 to 4 billion years ago and that our one and only life could have been as any living creature that has existed in all that immense amount of time.

Taken to the extreme, we could even divide our 70 year average life span by all the years from the inception of the universe to its future projected demise. The universe is already some 14 billion years of age, how much longer it will last is not known, perhaps eternally, but certainly the odds of one's own life being simply coincidental with the current cosmological time would form a mathematical limit approaching zero:

$$\mathbf{70 \text{ year lifespan of humans} / \text{lifespan of universe (eternal?) = lim 0}$$

In attempting to resolve how we could have defeated such odds and be factually among the living right now, it would seem that we would have to assume that we **don't** just live once. Many people do believe in transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation, and there is a modest amount of supposedly empirical evidence that supports the notion. Much of this comes from mind regression hypnoses experiments and accounts of children having memories of people who have lived in the past. However, many people challenge this based on mathematics. After all, the death to birth ratio is certainly not one-to-one as one might expect; and the population keeps increasing, so where do all the additional people keep coming from, if not from those living previously? One answer might be that perhaps only some people are the product of reincarnation while most are just incarnating.

In any event, there is a problem with reincarnation in trying to solve the problem at hand. In an effort to be intellectually honest, we must ask how many times must one reincarnate to improve the odds to any appreciable extent of being alive now? To guarantee that our present life be coexistent with the current cosmological time, we would have to assume we have been reincarnating from the time of the Big Bang, and that process will continue till the end of time. To even have a 50/50 chance of being alive now, we would still have to assume that we have been alive as something for half the time since time began -- some 14 billion years ago. This clearly cannot be the case. We know that nothing at all was alive previous to about 4 billion years ago on earth and most probably not even in the entire universe, and that humanoid life forms have only been around for a time that can be measured in a few million years. It thus becomes apparent that any concept of reincarnating as an eternal unbroken chain to guarantee our present existence cannot be correct. Thus reincarnation alone does not fully explain how it is we could be so lucky to be alive now against all odds. We need to delve deeper:

It is said "You only live once," because we are talking to those who are in fact alive. What that expression really means is once dead, you're dead, never to return; but what we really need to ask is -- why even once? Why are we even here in the first place?

The renowned philosopher Thomas Nagel pondered (1986):

“It isn’t easy to absorb the fact that I am contained in the world at all. It seems outlandish that the centerless universe, in all its spatiotemporal immensity, should have produced me, of all people and produced me by producing TN [i.e., Thomas Nagel]. There was no such thing as me for ages, but with the formation of a particular physical organism at a particular place and time, suddenly there is me, for as long as the organism survives. In the objective flow of the cosmos this subjectively (to me!) stupendous event produces hardly a ripple. How can the existence of one member of the species have this remarkable consequence?”

Nagel ponders how is it he could have been born at all, when there is an infinite number of others who could have been born instead, and the world could have just as well gone on its merry way without him. He is really asking how can one be so lucky to be among the chosen when the unchosen are infinite in number? **Well, one can’t.** One cannot be a member of a finite subset of an infinite domain, certainly not by random chance.

To help visualize this, let’s exam the act of sex. We must assume that if we had to have been the particular genetic construct we are now to be having our first-hand experience of being alive, a particular sperm had to find a particular egg. Well, just a single human male can produce up to 500,000,000 sperm during a single sex act, and of course a woman produces an egg once a month over the course of her fertile years of about 40 years; 12 times 40 is 480. So even if the exact sperm and egg that is needed to make you is somewhere there, you still only have a 1 out of 2,400,000,000,000 (500,000,000 times 480) chance of getting conceived from that single act of sex. Now just think how much worse the actual odds would be if in fact you or I had to have been the product of a specific sperm and a specific egg from all males and all females that have ever or may ever live. Also, consider that any event that led to that precise union taking place would have had to have occurred. The Black Plague would have had to have happened, the Revolutionary War would have had to have happened, World War II would have had to have happened, and so forth; or we would not be here to even learn about such things – others would be here, but not us.

Let’s look at the problem from a purely mathematical view. If you or I could have only been alive as one specific creature, that is, the product of a particular sperm teaming up with a particular egg, the odds of us having been born at all, at any time, let alone now, would simply have been zero –

$$1 / \text{infinity} = \text{lim } 0$$

Where 1 represents our one unique gene structure that had to get formed, and infinity represents the infinitude of possible genetic structures that living things or even just

humans may take. One over infinity is generally given mathematically as a limit approaching zero.

In fact, any number over infinity still produces a limit approaching zero. Consequently, if you or I could have lived as any number of different -- **but specific** -- people or creatures that just had to be born for us to have a subjective experience of being alive, even millions, the preexistent odds of any one of them actually coming to fruition and being born would just still have just been zero! You just can't expect any particular gene structure you need for you to exist to ever get made from an infinite domain of hypothetical gene structures. With living creatures, we just get what we get, not what we want.

With the former being said, it would appear that a special explanation is required that allows us to not only defeat the immense odds against us being alive **now**, but being alive **ever**, and this goes beyond what reincarnation alone can explain.

In order to find the answer to this puzzling problem, we need to keep in mind we are speaking of what occurs from a subjective, first-hand experience of having a living consciousness, not from an objective view of life where each life appears to be unique and quite temporal. Coming from a subjective view, there is no need to assume we must literally be alive as something that correlates with every second of time immemorial to be alive now. We must only need to be alive from our own perspective; that is, only our subjective experience of life must continue and that need not embrace all of time. We also need to realize that asking what is it like to be dead, is the same as asking what is it like to not exist? The oxymoronic quality to the question is only too apparent, in that one can hardly be something that does not exist. This brings us to the issue of what is known as solipsism. Solipsism is the philosophical view that one can only be certain of the existence of one's own mind. Thus, solipsism incorporates the view that only to a mind can anything be experienced. So, if you don't have one, a mind that is, you're not around to know it -- **death is non-experiential**. The only reason we are not dead now is because it's impossible to be dead as a first-hand, first-person, subjective experience.

Thesis

As we have seen, we do not have just one, but two infinity functions to contend with when dealing with the contingency of life. The infinite odds against being alive coincidental with the current cosmological time taken together with the infinite odds against us having to be any particular genetic construct to exist would form the following equation:

$$1 / \text{infinity squared} = \text{lim } 0$$

Luck runs out when things become impossible. At this point, it becomes quite clear that being something that is alive now had nothing to do with defeating immense

mathematical odds or grand luck at all; we instead just find ourselves to be alive as one of the currently living creatures that just happens to be alive at the current leading edge of cosmological time. That being the case, there can be no reason to think that this would not always be the case. If we could be dead, from a subjective experience, we most certainly would be quite dead right now. It can only be concluded we are alive now because that's the only thing that's possible from a personal subjective perspective -- **Life is a one-sided coin.**

The contingency of our lives is due to the solipsistic phenomenon that demands we have no choice but to be something that's alive when there is life in the universe, and which also makes it impossible for us to be aware of not being alive, or of even great periods of time when nothing at all is alive. Viewing life as a naturally occurring solipsistic phenomenon resolves the mathematical problems that classical reincarnation presents. In this model, we are just alive as something that's alive, and there need not be a one-to-one correspondence between what dies and what is born. .

The inductive logic argument – We are alive now!

There is another argument that one may wish to consider in support of perennial existence that is drawn from inductive logic. Inductive logic is logic that takes from specifics and projects to generalities, as opposed to the more common deductive logic, where one projects from generalities to specifics. It is said if something can happen, it will happen, and if it did happen, it will happen again. Using inductive logic, it would be reasonable to conclude that since we are alive now, we will be alive again at some future time after we die, even if as a completely different being. If it happened once, then life from a subjective experience has proven itself to be possible, so it would seem rather peculiar to deny such a phenomenon could happen again.

Summary of the Major Metaphysical Problems:

The time line problem~

If we live only once, that is, experience being alive as something only once for all time, how is it then we could be so lucky to be alive now, when we could much more easily have lived and died in the past or still be waiting to be born in the future?

The single genetic construct problem~

Moreover, if our being alive is solely contingent upon being the specific person whom each of us is now, how is it we could have been so lucky for that particular genetic construct to have been formed, when there is an infinite amount of genetic constructs that can live but never get the chance?

Preliminary conclusion

When there is no life in the universe, we have no means of sensing we do not exist. We therefore always find ourselves to be alive as one of the creatures that have a mind at a time when there is life in the universe, due to what could be termed as a solipsistic phenomenon.

The dominate species problem~

There is another related problem that one may wish to consider in this discussion. If life is completely random, then how is it we find ourselves being homo-sapiens, the dominate and most intelligent species on the planet, as opposed to an insect, fish, bird, or any of the other multiplicities of life forms, most of which have populations far greater than our own?

This issue gets a bit more tenuous or difficult to be as certain of; and requires a more traditional view of reincarnation; but I suggest, as some eastern religions believe, that we may pass through a few lower stages of existence to get to where we are now. Having to go through only a few levels of intelligence to get to be human would greatly improve the chances of being a member of the human species now. This would mean, from a personal first-hand experience, everything eventually evolves to being a member of the human species, and perhaps beyond There have been several books written that follow this line of thought, dealing with what they call "the evolution of the soul." For this to occur some essence would indeed have to pass from one life to another which allows for the same consciousness to keep advancing. Thus, there may very well be some logic to support something akin to a soul after all, a personal soul that evolves as life itself evolves.

The Debate

People don't like having their sense of logic disturbed, regardless of how incorrect it may be. How we reason is much about who we are, thus people develop a deep emotional investment in how they think making it difficult to sway opinion. Many people, who pride themselves in being non-theistic, "down-to-earth" types, view any suggestion of an afterlife as being completely absurd and just go "ape" when one even suggests the possibility of there being something after we die. It is obvious to such people that our being alive just happened, was not dependent upon any particular odds; and when we die, we are just relegated to an eternal state of death, or non-existence. To them, we must resign ourselves that after death our bodies die and decay, our brains likewise die and decay, souls are religious fantasy, so there is nothing to pass on and live again. The math becomes irrelevant due to the perceived impossibility of being able to have more than one life. If it's biologically impossible, it's impossible, so there must be something wrong with the math or the logic that appears to support the notion of living multiples lives.

Here are some actual responses to the arguments set forth in this paper:

“You’re talking shit, it’s all nonsense, and when you’re dead you’re just dead.”

“You’re what we used to call a ‘chop-logic.’ Have you had any college?”

“You’re a dingle berry. If we knew your address, we’d send the trash man to collect you.”

Such people cannot tolerate to have their views they identify with shattered, any more than religious fundamentalists can tolerate to have their dogmatic views of an afterlife in paradise shattered. Dying and just being dead forever has become a dogma for most of those who have rejected religion and consider themselves to be realists, naturalists, or atheists.

The main problem here is that such “down to earth types” cannot grasp how we can be alive again if it cannot be demonstrated that something physical passes from one life to the next. This is understandable, but to them I would suggest viewing us as being inexorably part of nature, and as part of nature we just always find ourselves as being one of the many living expressions of nature. We were literally the soil we walk on, and through the magic of DNA, those molecules got weaved into the lives we live. We – the chemicals of nature -- just always find ourselves to be one of those minds that gets made because we cannot know of anything when we are only dissociated chemicals, not even the passing of time. We eternally exist as either the substrate that living things are made from (chemicals and elements), or as the living creatures that come from those chemicals, but we only know we exist when we have a mind to perceive the world around us, thus to us we always feel we are alive. Nothing specific need pass to just randomly be one of the living creatures of nature; it would just be an ongoing solipsistic experience.

After death, we both mentally and physically are just in the same situation we were before being born this time, just nebulous matter; and like before, we just get born as something that’s alive because that’s the only place where we can have a mind to know of anything. As the steam bubbles in a percolator go round and round, or the blobs in a lava lamp go round and round, each living and dying, but none-the-less perennially existing as different ones, we go round and round living different lives. If we find ourselves conscious as one life now, we will most likely always find ourselves conscious as one in the future.

The following is a compilation of typical arguments people pose when confronted with the thesis of this paper:

Detractor Argument 1 ~ Opposition to Inductive Logic

The argument I pose that is a favorite of detractors to attempt to debunk is the inductive logic one. Their argument goes like this: “A proper induction is based upon many samples upon which one can see a pattern to base a reasonable prediction upon. Since you have only one sample, your own current life, your induction is very weak. It

would be like upon seeing a blue bird, we should inductively assume all birds are blue, which is clearly not the case.” *An actual detractor would not be so polite. I wrote this argument myself paraphrasing the general idea.*

Rebuttal

There is no rule that a proper induction be based upon having many samples, but only upon drawing a reasonable conclusion from what data is available. What one induces is what matters, not how many samples one has. While the proper induction upon seeing a blue bird would indeed not be that all birds are blue, it would be very reasonable to conclude there are other birds that are blue, or that you are bound to at some time or place see another blue bird. What it is you induce is what makes your induction sound or not. Some inductions may indeed require many samples, but certainly not all. Most people feel there is probably life elsewhere in the universe simply because life exists here on planet Earth and with the universe being quite large it should have other planets similar to ours. That is a very reasonable single sample induction.

Realizing that I am alive now, it is certainly fair to assume that what I know is happening now for a fact may very well occur again. What has happened, can happen, and what can happen, will happen – again!

Detractor Argument 2 ~ The big red apple

“Now let’s imagine there’s a big red apple setting on your desk [*Why is it always a big red apple when one wants to prove a point of logic?*]. What you are saying would be like saying the apple has to reincarnate over and over to be alive now.”

Rebuttal

False. The apple didn’t have to be that specific one. The apple that is setting there on my desk would have been chosen from a domain of currently existing red apples, taken from a store or tree or whatever. Since, it was chosen from the domain of currently existing apples, there is no way it cannot exist. When one speaks of oneself, that person is not chosen at random at all, but is quite unique, being the only person past, present, or future that can supposedly account for the phenomenon of having a first-hand experience of being alive right now. Having that specific person being born and alive right now would indeed be against all odds.

Detractor Argument 3 ~ I don’t have to be alive!

“Your views of odds in relation to being alive only apply if one must be alive, but I’m saying though I happen to be alive, I in no way had to be alive. My existence is just random like all the other people seen are random. I could just as easily have not been born.”

Rebuttal

False. This is a simple conditional logic problem: *If it's sunny, I'll go on a picnic. I'm on a picnic, so obviously it must be sunny.* The necessary antecedent is affirmed by the fact the consequence took place. So saying "But I didn't have to be born," doesn't escape the fact that you were born. For that reality to be happening the conditions you set would have had to have been met – but in this case the conditions you set simply are not possible. If you believe you can only live contingent upon being the person whom you are, then that implies that specific person just had to have been born from an infinite number of hypothetical people, which would not have been mathematically possible.

Let's take an example, let's say you are diving and claim the only way you can be driving is because the exact car you needed was luckily built. The fact that you are driving then would have to mean that the car you needed was in fact built by random chance, which of course would have been impossible, given there is an infinite number of ways to design cars.

Detractor Argument 4 ~ Everyone else could say the same

"If you say it's nearly impossible for you to be alive now unless you live over and over, all other people could say the same, as could any flea, tick, gnat, or cockroach, so one would have to conclude that nothing could be lucky enough to be alive now without the help of living over and over. This is obviously absurd -- living things are bound to be alive now as they are at any point in time when life exists."

Rebuttal

False. Because everyone could make the same claim does not equate to life being impossible without reincarnation or some form of perennial existence. Attributing odds to a member of a set, then extrapolating to the set taken as a whole is a logical fallacy. This can easily be demonstrated with a coin. If heads has a $\frac{1}{2}$ chance of coming up and tails has a $\frac{1}{2}$ chance of coming up, that does not mean you only have a $\frac{1}{2}$ chance of anything coming up at all. As you make your assertion for one side and then the other, the odds add up and the chance of one or the other coming up is $\frac{2}{2}$, or 100%.

To demonstrate this with very large odds, let's look at what I call the "raindrop fallacy." Let's say a big thunder storm is coming. I choose one of the raindrops at random (assuming this could be possible) and declare that it won't strike me because it's only one of perhaps a trillion raindrops that will fall, and out of that trillion drops maybe at most a few hundred will hit me. I would most assuredly be correct in predicting that the one drop I picked beforehand won't hit me. Now the detractor argument would be like saying: "Hey wait, since you could make the same claim for each of the trillion drops, then what you claim amounts to saying that you could walk through a rainstorm without getting wet! You obviously can't be right about the original drop not going to hit you."

Now let's exam what the logical flaw is. How can the original assertion be true for one rain drop without being true for all? Well, just as with the sides of a coin, as I continue making the assertion from one raindrop to the next, I'm really adding the odds, and in the end all of the miniscule odds add and I am assured of getting wet.

So let's see how this relates to our situation. If we can only live as one specific genetic construct, I must figure my chances of being here were pretty much zero because the preexistent odds of me being born from an infinite domain of possible candidates would be $1/\infty = \lim 0$. Since the next person, and the next person, and the next could all claim the same, I'd have to conclude it would be impossible to have life at all. However, as we make our assertion for each member of the domain of possible life forms, all of the infinite $\lim 0$ odds add. We then end with $\infty \times \lim 0$, which when divided by the infinite domain of all possible life forms, gives us ∞ / ∞ . ∞ / ∞ is considered to be undefined. Being undefined means we can ascribe any value at all to it.² And guess what? This is exactly what we get! The actual population of living things taken from a domain of infinite possibilities can be just anything at all. The detractor argument is not valid.

Detractor Argument 5 ~ It's like a Lottery

"You are making the classic mistake that if the odds are high, it just shouldn't happen, but look at a lottery for example. Though it may be against the odds that you will win, it is also true that someone has to win, so why should you need any special explanation if that somebody just happens to be you?" *This is one of the most common challenges and deals with what I call the "If he did, you can fallacy"³ that many people make when dealing with odds.*

Rebuttal

False. In speaking of any game, lottery, or gambling scenario where the odds are extreme, an unavoidable dichotomy of logic arises. While someone is certainly going to win, I most certainly will not be that person. With a great many players my certainty of not winning is practically the same as is the certainty that someone will win. As you add

² Infinity divided by any finite number is infinity: $\infty / 5 = \infty$, $\infty / 7 = \infty$, $\infty / 22 = \infty$, and so on. Therefore, $\infty / \infty =$ can represent any finite number.

³ The "If he did, you can fallacy" goes like this: "Odds say you have a million in a one chance of winning, but the same odds say someone must win, so if he can win, so can you?" The first part of the fallacy "but the same odds say someone must win," seems to somehow improve the odds, but of course it doesn't. The second half of the fallacy implies that since someone can win fair and square, so can you, which disregards the fact that one can always say that of the random winner, regardless of the extremeness of the odds. It ignores the fact that when the odds are extreme, that person is just not going to be you, at least not without some sort of cheating.

more players, these two become more and more indistinguishable, eventually reaching lim 0 odds of my winning, though there are 1/1 odds others will win. At this point I can honestly say I have no chance what-so-ever of winning regardless of the fact that someone or even many others will win. This is the situation we have if we believe we only live once. We then have to assume life is a kind of lottery that we have won. But, having anyone specific win is simply utterly impossible. It would be like rolling a die with an infinite number of sides. You can roll and people will get born, but you personally have no chance of being among them no matter how many times you role the die. As contradictory as it may seem, that's just the math and the reality of the situation.

We also need to consider that comparing this life lottery to a real lottery is different in one major respect. In a real game, the alternative to winning is just going about one's normal business. In our lottery game of life there is an inherent necessity to win, for otherwise there would just be nothing at all, and that is not a rational state in which someone can exist. This brings us back to the issue of solipsism – you just can't be anything without a mind. Our life lottery can only have winners.

Detractor Argument 6 ~ You are saying you need a special explanation for being alive, but others don't

“It is a contradiction to say you would need a special explanation to be able to defeat immense odds because you are specific, while readily admitting others could win by random chance with no special explanation required.”

Rebuttal

It may seem like a contradiction, but it is not. From my perspective I can't win without a special reason because my mind is the unique one that must exist for me to be having the first-hand sensation of life. The other people I see, to me are just those randomly coexistent with me. From their perspective however, they are each the one that needed a special explanation for being alive now, and I and all other people are just randomly coexistent with them. So, who is random and who is lucky? To understand this we need to go back to a lottery. If I'm not the winner, the actual winner to me is just a random winner – that person didn't need to be that person. On the other hand, if I'm the winner I'm incredible lucky, but to others I'm just the random person who just happened to win. Odds have to do with perspective. The fact remains that I can't win this lottery without a special explanation, though I can view others as having done so.

Detractor Argument 7 ~ There was a time when nothing was alive

The universe may not support life forever and there was in fact a time when nothing was alive, so how can you claim that to be alive now requires that you must have lived and will forever live over and over? We already know for a fact you could not have lived over and over for all time in the past.

Rebuttal

This is actually an excellent argument, but what we are talking about is a subjective experience of feeling alive, not an objective view that would naturally see individual lives and all of life itself on the planet as being temporal. To understand how it is we can always feel we are alive, though there are times when obviously nothing is alive, we must explore the issue of solipsism. Solipsism is the philosophical view that all that exists is in one's mind. A related interpretation is that only to a mind can anything exist. Of course, we can probably safely assume that even if minds didn't exist, the universe would in fact still exist, but the idea here is that if you are not alive, you are not around to know it, so it doesn't really matter. Death is non-experiential, thus even great periods of non-existence would have no effect on our subjective experience. When a person gets born, he doesn't feel he had to wait 14 billion years to get here. That person's birth is just when things begin for him or her.

Counter detractor argument

"Well, if you say we are alive now simply because we can't know anything of being dead, why have the necessity of living over and over at all? You seem to be saying that all that is necessary for being alive now is the inability to know of death from a subjective experience."

Counter Rebuttal

Unfortunately we do die, but at the same time we know we are alive now. The only conceivable way to be alive continuously in a situation where death is a certainty is to be born again. The solipsistic argument helps explain both why it is we must get reborn, and how great periods can pass devoid of any form of life without it mattering. We can understand better how it is that we don't need to be alive as something concurrent with all cosmological time to have a subjective consciousness now.

Detractor Argument 8 ~ You can't place odds on events after they occur

"Odds have nothing to do with any of this because no matter what the predetermined odds were, once something happens, the odds of its occurrence change to 1. You cannot place odds on something after the fact. The odds of the factual existence of you or me being here are 1, by virtue of the fact we do exist now."

Rebuttal:

False. This is a fallacy because we are not placing odds on if the object exists or not, but on how it came into existence. We always have the right to exam the issue of preexistent odds after the fact. The luckiness of an event occurring is the same before, during, or after the fact. The person who won the lottery is in fact very lucky to have won, his preexistent odds of winning did not change to 1. If you bet on a horse race at 10 to 1 odds and win, when you go to the window to collect your winnings, the cashier doesn't tell you that since you factually won the odds are now 1/1, so you can only receive back the amount of your bet. Consider this, if you choose a number on a die, your odds of it coming up will be 1/6. If you roll the die first and then choose the number you want before looking at the die, the odds of you choosing the number showing will still be 1/6. If you roll the die, look at it, and only then find out what number you needed to win, the odds of that number matching the one that came up would still be 1/6. No matter how you look at it before or after the event, the luckiness does not change.

If the preexistent odds of you existing right now were 1 / 100,000,000,000 because you can only experience life once, and you do exist, you have to consider yourself either extremely lucky or search for an alternative explanation that allowed for you to defeat such immense odds and that is all that is being done here.

Conclusion

There is in fact some type of successive lives or perennial existence which we experience. It cannot be any other way. If it was possible to actually be dead from any sense of a subjective state, all odds would have it that's where we would be now.

The successive lives could just be random however, which I call successive incarnations, rather than reincarnation. You constantly being alive from your own view would be merely a solipsistic phenomenon. True reincarnation requires something be passed from one life to another, and that is a bigger issue. In this paper I only support true classical reincarnation on the grounds that if life were completely random, it would be very difficult to be born anything other than a microbe or perhaps an insect. Given the fact that I am a person, I postulate that perhaps there is ascendancy towards greater intelligence driven by experience gained from each previous life. If this is true, I would have to contend that we as humans cannot be reborn as less than a human next go around, since human experience and intellect would preclude devolving to a lesser intellect. There may even be something above humans elsewhere in the universe that we will ascend to next.

This kind of thinking has parallels in Buddhism, which is highly philosophical, and being philosophical, rather than merely religious in nature, should not be ignored even by naturalistic thinking people.

Finally, a response that some naturalistic atheistic types sometimes make is, "So what? If you're not going to be alive again as the same person, then what's the difference?"

There is a difference. There is a big difference. You're alive now due to living successive lives, and isn't that important to you? When you're alive in the future, even if as a different person, it will be just as important. There is also a world of difference between just being dead for all eternity and being alive -- even if not as the same being. However, some feel we do come back as a better version of the same person. I can rest assured on my deathbed I will have a new life awaiting for me, but a person who cannot understand what is being presented here cannot. Also, in the event there actually is true reincarnation that goes beyond a mere random solipsistic reoccurrence of life, then what we do in this life most assuredly will determine what or who we will be in the next, so we can start working on that now.

Epilogue~

The jest of this paper, that a single human life is too short to account for the personal subjective experience of being alive now, thus there must be some type of perennial existence, can be extended to the universe in general. Scientists debate whether or not the universe will somehow recycle once its energy is spent, or just remain forever dead. Using the same logic presented herein, we must consider that if it were possible for the universe to only exist for a relatively short time compared to an eternity in which it would not exist, the time of its existence would form a mathematical limit approaching zero compared to the eternity it would not exist; thus, it most certainly would not be in existence now. Buddhism has taught exactly this for centuries, in that the universe lives for awhile, goes into a period of rest, followed by a rebirth in which it thrives again. Therefore, we having a first-hand experience of being alive now would appear to prove that not only we, but the universe in its entirety is a perennially reoccurring phenomenon, thus eternal.

You will be here forever, so you might as well get used to it!