

Research Paper

Fear, Death, and the Afterlife: A Psychological Reading of Prehistoric Burial Practices in India

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ABSTRACT

As individuals recognize the inevitability of mortality, it creates a profound sense of fear and existential anxiety. Prehistoric burial practices provide insight into the fact that these people didn't treat death as a mere end of life – rather they tried to construct meaning around it. The current paper aimed to offers a psychological interpretation of prehistoric burial practices in India by examining evidence from four archaeological sites – Adichanallur, Brahmagiri, Burzahom, and Chirand – through the theoretical perspectives of Ernest Becker's theory of the denial of death, Terror Management Theory, and Carl Jung's concept of archetypes. At Adichanallur, urn burials symbolically represent the womb – tomb archetype of Jung and reflects the ideas of transformation and rebirth. At Brahmagiri, the construction of megalithic monuments and secondary burials can be interpreted as material expressions of the human desire to transcend mortality. Burzahom's domestic burials indicate the continued integration of the dead within family and social life, while human–animal burials suggest companionship and guidance in the afterlife. At Chirand, grave goods and body orientation reflect continuity and cosmic renewal. Though, archaeological evidence cannot directly establish the psychological beliefs of prehistoric individuals, its psychological interpretation offers a valuable lens for understanding how burial practices were culturally connected with mortality, continuity and meaning of life.

Keywords: *Death Anxiety, Prehistoric Burial Practices, Afterlife, Archetypes, Terror – Management*

Death is among the most universal human experiences, yet it is also the most feared. From the earliest stages of human cultural development, communities have devised rituals, symbols, and practices to cope with the inevitability of mortality. Burial customs, in particular, provide some of the richest evidence for the ways in which prehistoric societies sought to confront and transcend death. In India, a wide range of prehistoric burial practices—from urn burials in the south to pit burials in the north—illustrate how fear of death was transformed into rituals of continuity, remembrance, and symbolic rebirth (Ray, 2006; Mohanty, 2011). Psychological theories such as Ernest Becker's *Denial of Death*, Terror Management Theory (TMT), and Jungian archetypes

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Received: August 17, 2026; Revision Received: September 03, 2026; Accepted: September 07, 2026

provide powerful interpretive frameworks for understanding these practices, offering insights into how prehistoric Indians grappled with mortality and imagined the afterlife.

Theoretical Framework: Death, Fear, and Ritual

The anthropologist Ernest Becker famously argued in *The Denial of Death* (1973) that human culture is, at its core, a defense against the terror of mortality. Unlike other animals, humans are conscious of their own finitude, and this awareness produces existential anxiety. To overcome it, societies construct symbolic systems—religions, myths, and rituals—that promise continuity beyond death. Burial practices thus become cultural strategies to deny or transcend mortality (Becker, 1973).

Building on Becker's work, Greenberg, Solomon, and Pyszczynski developed *Terror Management Theory (TMT)*, which emphasizes that humans cope with death anxiety by embracing cultural worldviews that give life meaning and by reinforcing self-esteem through participation in these systems (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). In the context of prehistory, burial rituals can be seen as communal acts that reaffirm cultural beliefs about life, death, and afterlife, thereby buffering individuals and communities against existential dread.

Carl Jung provides yet another perspective, emphasizing the symbolic dimension of death and ritual. His concept of *archetypes*—universal patterns in the collective unconscious—suggests that burial practices often enact timeless symbols of death and rebirth, transformation, and cyclical renewal (Jung, 1968). Orientation of bodies toward the sun, inclusion of animal companions, or use of circular megaliths, for instance, can all be interpreted as expressions of archetypal motifs embedded in human psychology.

Adichanallur: Urn Burials and the Womb–Tomb Archetype

The site of Adichanallur occupies a crucial position in the archaeology of early South India, not only for its material richness but also for the depth of symbolic meaning embedded in its mortuary practices. Located along the banks of the Tamiraparani River, the site has yielded one of the largest assemblages of urn burials in the Indian subcontinent, broadly dated to the early Iron Age (c. 1000 BCE and later). Early excavations by Alexander Rea and later investigations by the Archaeological Survey of India have revealed an extensive funerary landscape marked by large burial urns, grave goods, and complex ritual patterns (Rea, 1902; Sundara, 1975).

Urn Burials as Structured Mortuary Systems:

The urn burials at Adichanallur represent a highly organized mortuary system rather than a simple disposal of the dead. The urns, often large and globular, contained complete or fractional skeletal remains, sometimes covered with lids or associated with secondary urns. Many of these burials included grave goods such as iron implements, ornaments of bronze and gold, and pottery. In some cases, miniature objects and symbolic models were also found, indicating ritualistic intent (Sundara, 1975; Moorti, 1994).

Scholars such as K. V. Soundara Rajan and R. Moorti argue that these burial assemblages reflect social differentiation, where identity, rank, and occupation were preserved even in death (Moorti, 1994). The inclusion of weapons may indicate warrior status, while ornaments could signify gender or social hierarchy. Thus, the urn becomes a symbolic microcosm of the living social order.

The “Womb–Tomb” Archetype and Symbolic Regeneration

From a Jungian perspective, drawing on Carl Gustav Jung, the urn assumes deeper symbolic significance. The enclosed, rounded form of the burial urn corresponds to the archetype of the “womb–tomb,” a universal symbol in which death is reimagined as a return to the origin and a prelude to rebirth (Jung, 1968).

At Adichanallur, this symbolism is evident in multiple ways. The placement of the body within an enclosed container mirrors the condition of the fetus within the womb. The burial of urns beneath the earth reinforces the idea of the earth as a maternal entity, often conceptualized as *Mother Earth*. Furthermore, the circular form of the urn suggests continuity and cyclical existence. Together, these elements indicate that death was not perceived as final annihilation but as a transformative return, embedded within a cosmological cycle (Jung, 1968).

Immortality Projects and Cultural Continuity

The interpretation of Adichanallur burials can be further expanded through the framework of Terror Management Theory and the ideas of Ernest Becker. Becker posits that human societies construct “immortality projects” to cope with the existential fear of death (Becker, 1973). In this light, the urn burials at Adichanallur can be understood as material expressions of such cultural strategies.

The inclusion of grave goods—particularly items closely associated with the individual’s identity—suggests a belief in the continuation of existence beyond death. Weapons, ornaments, and tools function as extensions of the self, enabling the deceased to maintain their social identity in the afterlife (Becker, 1973; Moorti, 1994). These practices reflect a conscious effort to transcend mortality through cultural means.

From the perspective of Terror Management Theory, such mortuary rituals also serve to reinforce shared cultural worldviews. By participating in burial practices that emphasize continuity and afterlife, the community collectively affirms its beliefs, thereby reducing existential anxiety and fostering social cohesion (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986).

Ritual, Memory, and Landscape

The spatial organization of urn burials at Adichanallur further underscores their cultural significance. The clustering of urns suggests the existence of designated burial grounds, possibly organized along kinship or lineage lines. Such arrangements indicate that burial sites functioned as spaces of memory, where the presence of ancestors was embedded within the landscape (Sundara, 1975).

This pattern aligns with broader Iron Age traditions in South India, where megalithic and urn burial sites often served as territorial markers and symbols of ancestral continuity. The urn, therefore, operates not only as a container of the dead but also as a mnemonic device preserving collective memory and identity.

The urn burials of Adichanallur reveal a sophisticated interplay between material culture, symbolic belief, and psychological need. Archaeologically, they demonstrate technological advancement and social stratification; symbolically, they embody the archetype of the womb–tomb, expressing a belief in cyclical regeneration; and psychologically, they function as mechanisms to manage the fear of death. Through these practices, the community

transformed mortality into a meaningful cultural narrative, ensuring continuity between the worlds of the living and the dead.

Brahmagiri: Megaliths, Secondary Burials, and Eternal Cycles

The megalithic site of Brahmagiri in present-day Karnataka provides another important window into the mortuary practices and psychological worldviews of prehistoric South India. Excavated extensively by Mortimer Wheeler, the site has been dated from around 1200 BCE to the early centuries CE and reveals a complex burial landscape consisting of stone circles, dolmens, cist burials, and pit interments (Wheeler, 1948; Sundara, 1975). These burials were often furnished with grave goods such as iron implements, beads, ceramics, and occasionally animal remains, indicating ritual care and symbolic intent.

Megaliths as Monuments of Memory and Continuity

At Brahmagiri, the most striking feature is the construction of megalithic monuments—large stone structures erected over or around burial sites. These include stone circles demarcating burial pits and dolmens constructed with massive stone slabs. Such monuments required considerable communal effort, suggesting that burial was not merely a private act but a socially significant event (Wheeler, 1948).

From the perspective of Ernest Becker, these megaliths can be interpreted as material expressions of the human desire to transcend mortality. Becker's concept of "symbolic denial of death" posits that cultures create enduring symbols to assert permanence in the face of inevitable decay (Becker, 1973). The megaliths of Brahmagiri, constructed from stone and designed to endure across generations, function precisely in this way. While the human body perishes, the monument remains, embodying a form of cultural immortality that preserves memory and identity.

Secondary Burials and Social Reintegration

One of the most significant aspects of Brahmagiri's mortuary practice is the presence of secondary burials. In such cases, the dead were initially left to decompose, after which the bones were collected and reinterred, often within urns or designated burial pits (Sundara, 1975). This two-stage funerary process indicates a prolonged engagement with death, extending beyond the moment of physical demise.

Through the lens of Terror Management Theory, secondary burials can be understood as mechanisms for managing collective anxiety about death. The ritual reburial of bones symbolically reintegrates the deceased into the social and cultural order, transforming death from a disruptive event into a controlled, meaningful process (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986). By participating in these repeated rituals, the community reaffirms its shared beliefs about life, death, and continuity, thereby strengthening social cohesion.

Moreover, secondary burial practices suggest that identity was not fixed at the moment of death but evolved through ritual processes. The transition from decomposition to reinterment marks a symbolic passage—from individual existence to ancestral status—indicating that the dead continued to occupy a meaningful place within the community.

Circular Megaliths and Jungian Symbolism

The architectural forms of Brahmagiri's megaliths, particularly the stone circles, carry profound symbolic significance when viewed through the framework of Carl Gustav Jung.

Jung identified the circle as a universal archetype representing wholeness, eternity, and the cyclical nature of existence (Jung, 1968).

At Brahmagiri, the circular arrangement of stones around burial sites can be interpreted as a visual and spatial expression of this archetype. The circle encloses and protects the dead, symbolically integrating them into a cycle of life, death, and renewal. Unlike linear representations of time, the circle emphasizes continuity and recurrence, suggesting that death is not an endpoint but part of an ongoing cosmic process.

This symbolism resonates with broader patterns in prehistoric and early historic cultures, where circular forms—whether in burial monuments, ritual spaces, or cosmological diagrams—frequently signify the eternal return and regeneration of life.

Megalithic Landscapes and Cultural Memory

Beyond individual burials, the megalithic landscape of Brahmagiri reflects a collective engagement with memory and ancestry. The clustering of monuments indicates designated burial grounds that likely served as focal points for ritual activity and communal identity. These spaces would have functioned as enduring markers of territorial and ancestral presence, linking the living community to its past (Sundara, 1975).

In this context, the megalith is not merely a grave marker but a cultural text—encoding beliefs about death, continuity, and the relationship between the living and the dead. It transforms the landscape into a repository of memory, where each stone monument stands as a testament to both individual lives and collective identity.

The mortuary practices at Brahmagiri reveal a sophisticated interplay between material culture, symbolic thought, and psychological need. The construction of megaliths embodies Becker's notion of symbolic immortality, while secondary burial practices reflect the principles of Terror Management Theory by reinforcing social cohesion and shared belief systems. At the same time, the circular forms of the monuments resonate with Jungian archetypes of cyclical existence and renewal.

Together, these elements demonstrate that prehistoric communities at Brahmagiri did not passively confront death; rather, they actively transformed it into a structured, meaningful, and symbolically rich process—one that ensured continuity between the individual, the community, and the cosmos.

Burzahom: Domesticating Death in Kashmir

The Neolithic site of Burzahom in the Kashmir Valley (c. 3000–1000 BCE) presents a markedly different mortuary pattern when compared to the megalithic traditions of peninsular India. Excavated by T. N. Khazanchi and studied in detail by scholars such as Y. D. Sharma, Burzahom is characterized by pit dwellings—subterranean habitations—and an associated burial practice in which the dead were interred directly beneath or within the domestic space (Sharma, 1969; Pande, 2001). In several instances, graves also contained animal remains, particularly dogs, placed alongside human burials, suggesting a complex symbolic relationship between humans and animals.

Burial within the Domestic Sphere

One of the most striking features of Burzahom is the integration of burial and habitation. Unlike cemeteries that separate the dead from the living, here the deceased were placed

beneath house floors or within settlement areas. This spatial proximity indicates that the dead were not removed from everyday life but remained embedded within it (Sharma, 1969).

From the perspective of Ernest Becker, this practice can be interpreted as a form of “domesticating death.” Becker argued that human societies attempt to neutralize the terror of death by incorporating it into familiar cultural frameworks (Becker, 1973). At Burzahom, burial beneath the home transforms death from an external and भय-inducing phenomenon into an intimate, controlled presence. The house becomes both a dwelling for the living and a resting place for the dead, symbolically dissolving the boundary between life and Death.

Terror Management and Cultural Security

Through the lens of Terror Management Theory, such burial practices can be seen as mechanisms that reinforce cultural security and reduce existential anxiety. By keeping the dead within the household, the community maintained a sense of continuity between generations. The deceased were not lost or alienated but remained part of the family unit, thereby mitigating the fear of isolation that often accompanies the awareness of mortality (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986).

This practice also likely strengthened kinship bonds and ancestral identity. The presence of ancestors beneath the dwelling may have served as a constant reminder of lineage continuity, reinforcing social cohesion and collective memory (Pande, 2001). In this sense, the domestic space functioned not only as a physical shelter but also as a symbolic repository of familial and cultural identity.

Human–Animal Burials and Archetypal Companionship

An especially intriguing aspect of Burzahom is the occurrence of human–animal burials, particularly those involving dogs. In some graves, dogs were buried alongside humans, either as complete skeletons or in partial form (Sharma, 1969). This practice suggests that animals held a significant place within the symbolic and possibly spiritual life of the community.

From a Jungian perspective, drawing on the work of Carl Gustav Jung, such burials can be interpreted through archetypal symbolism. Animals, in many cultural traditions, function as companions, guides, or guardians in the journey to the afterlife (Jung, 1968). The inclusion of dogs in burials may thus reflect a belief in their role as protectors or escorts for the deceased, facilitating the transition from the world of the living to the realm of the dead.

More broadly, animals in Jungian analysis often symbolize instinctual or unconscious aspects of the psyche. Their presence in burial contexts may indicate an attempt to integrate these primal elements into the process of death and transformation, reinforcing the idea that death is not merely a biological event but a deeply symbolic passage.

The House as a Ritual and Cosmological Space

At Burzahom, the house itself acquires a dual function—as a place of daily life and as a sacred space connecting the living and the dead. The pit dwelling, descending into the earth, already carries symbolic associations with the underworld or the womb of the earth. The placement of burials within this space intensifies its cosmological significance, turning the household into a microcosm of life, death, and regeneration.

This integration suggests that the inhabitants of Burzahom did not perceive death as a distant or separate realm but as an integral part of existence. The dead continued to inhabit the same spatial and symbolic universe as the living, blurring distinctions between presence and absence.

The mortuary practices at Burzahom reveal a unique approach to death in prehistoric northern India. By integrating burials within domestic spaces, the community effectively “domesticated” death, transforming it into a familiar and manageable aspect of life. From Becker’s perspective, this represents a cultural strategy to neutralize the fear of mortality, while Terror Management Theory highlights its role in reinforcing social cohesion and cultural continuity. At the same time, the inclusion of animal burials, particularly dogs, reflects deep archetypal symbolism, suggesting companionship and guidance in the afterlife. Taken together, the evidence from Burzahom demonstrates that prehistoric communities developed diverse and sophisticated ways of engaging with death—ways that were not only practical but also deeply symbolic, psychological, and cultural.

Chirand: Orientation and Cosmic Renewal

The Neolithic–Chalcolithic site of Chirand, located on the banks of the Ghaghara River in Bihar and dated to around 2500 BCE, provides important insights into early agricultural communities and their mortuary practices in northern India. Excavations conducted under the direction of B. P. Sinha and later analyses by scholars such as A. K. Ghosh have revealed a range of burials accompanied by grave goods including pottery, bone ornaments, microliths, and other utilitarian objects (Ghosh, 1989; Verma, 2002). A notable feature of these burials is the deliberate orientation of skeletal remains, indicating a structured ritual framework rather than casual interment.

Grave Goods and Symbolic Continuity

At Chirand, the inclusion of grave goods reflects a belief system in which the identity of the deceased extended beyond physical death. Objects such as tools, ornaments, and ceramics were not randomly placed but selected in ways that likely corresponded to the individual’s social role or daily life (Ghosh, 1989). These items functioned as symbolic extensions of the self, ensuring continuity between life and death.

From the perspective of Ernest Becker, such practices can be interpreted as part of an “immortality project,” wherein societies construct symbolic systems to transcend mortality (Becker, 1973). At Chirand, the deposition of grave goods represents an attempt to project the lived identity of the individual into a post-mortem realm. The dead, equipped with culturally meaningful objects, were imagined to persist as recognizable social beings, thereby mitigating the finality of death.

Ritual Practice and Collective Worldview

The structured nature of Chirand’s burials—evident in both the inclusion of grave goods and the careful orientation of bodies—points to a shared set of beliefs governing death and the afterlife. Through the framework of Terror Management Theory, these practices can be seen as reinforcing a collective worldview that provides psychological security (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986).

Engaging in elaborate burial rituals allows the community to reaffirm its cultural narratives about death, continuity, and existence beyond the physical body. These shared practices help to reduce existential anxiety by embedding individual मृत्यु within a larger, meaningful

cosmological order. In this sense, burial rituals at Chirand were not solely about the deceased but also about sustaining the emotional and social equilibrium of the living community.

Orientation and the Archetype of Renewal

One of the most striking features of Chirand burials is the deliberate orientation of the body, often aligned along specific directions. Archaeological evidence suggests that some burials were oriented toward the east, the direction of the rising sun (Verma, 2002). This spatial arrangement is unlikely to be accidental and instead points to a symbolic association with cosmic cycles.

From a Jungian perspective, drawing on the work of Carl Gustav Jung, such orientation can be interpreted through the archetype of renewal and rebirth. The east, as the direction of sunrise, universally symbolizes beginnings, regeneration, and the cyclical return of life (Jung, 1968). By aligning the dead toward this direction, the community may have been expressing a belief in the rebirth or transformation of the individual after death.

This symbolic association between death and the rising sun reflects a broader cosmological worldview in which human life is integrated into the rhythms of nature. Death is not an endpoint but part of a continuous cycle, mirroring the daily rebirth of the sun.

Mortuary Practice and Cultural Landscape

The burials at Chirand also suggest that mortuary practices were embedded within the broader settlement landscape. Unlike later traditions that often separate burial grounds from habitation areas, early sites like Chirand may have integrated the dead within the lived environment, reinforcing the continuity between past and present (Ghosh, 1989).

Such integration transforms the landscape into a space of memory and identity, where the presence of ancestors is materially and symbolically preserved. The burial ground becomes a cultural anchor, linking the community to its lineage and reinforcing a sense of belonging across generations.

The mortuary practices at Chirand reveal a sophisticated interplay between ritual, symbolism, and psychological need in early agrarian societies. The inclusion of grave goods reflects Becker's notion of symbolic immortality, while the structured nature of burial rituals aligns with the principles of Terror Management Theory in reinforcing collective belief systems. At the same time, the deliberate orientation of bodies—particularly toward the east—resonates with Jungian archetypes of renewal and cyclical regeneration.

Together, these elements demonstrate that the inhabitants of Chirand engaged with death not as a mere biological event but as a deeply meaningful cultural process, embedding individual mortality within a broader framework of continuity, memory, and cosmic order.

Synthesis and Broader Implications

Across the diverse archaeological landscapes of Adichanallur, Brahmagiri, Burzahom, and Chirand, a remarkably consistent psychological logic underlies mortuary practices despite regional and cultural variations. These sites collectively demonstrate that prehistoric communities in the Indian subcontinent did not perceive death as a simple biological endpoint but as a profound existential rupture that required structured cultural mediation (Sundara, 1975; Sharma, 1969; Ghosh, 1989).

From the perspective of Ernest Becker, burial monuments, grave goods, and funerary rituals can be understood as forms of “immortality projects”—symbolic systems through which humans attempt to transcend the inevitability of death (Becker, 1973). At Adichanallur, urn burials enclosing the body with personal objects; at Brahmagiri, enduring megalithic monuments; at Chirand, carefully selected grave goods; and at Burzahom, the integration of the dead within domestic space—all represent culturally constructed strategies to deny the finality of death. These practices allowed individuals to persist symbolically within a shared cultural framework, transforming death into continuity.

The insights of Terror Management Theory further illuminate the collective dimension of these mortuary traditions. Burial rituals were not merely acts directed toward the deceased but were deeply embedded in the social fabric of the living. By participating in shared funerary practices—whether through the construction of megaliths at Brahmagiri, the repeated rituals of secondary burial, or the maintenance of ancestral presence within homes at Burzahom—communities reaffirmed their cultural worldviews and reduced existential anxiety (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986). These rituals functioned as mechanisms of psychological stabilization, ensuring that the awareness of mortality did not lead to social fragmentation but instead reinforced cohesion and identity.

At a deeper symbolic level, the framework of Carl Gustav Jung reveals the presence of universal archetypes that shaped these burial practices across regions. The urns of Adichanallur evoke the “womb–tomb” archetype, where death is reimagined as a return to the origin and a prelude to rebirth (Jung, 1968). The circular megaliths of Brahmagiri embody the archetype of cyclical time and eternal recurrence, emphasizing continuity rather than finality. The eastward orientation of burials at Chirand reflects the symbolism of the rising sun, a universal sign of renewal and regeneration. Meanwhile, the human–animal burials at Burzahom, particularly those involving dogs, resonate with archetypal motifs of companionship and guardianship in the journey to the afterlife.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that prehistoric Indian burial practices were not isolated or purely functional acts but psychologically charged cultural strategies. They transformed the fear of death into systems of meaning by embedding mortality within broader narratives of continuity, regeneration, and cosmic order. Ritualization allowed communities to confront the inevitability of death while simultaneously transcending it—socially, symbolically, and psychologically.

In this integrated understanding, death was neither denied nor passively accepted; it was actively reinterpreted. Through monuments, rituals, spatial organization, and symbolic forms, prehistoric communities in India constructed a worldview in which life and death were interconnected phases of a larger cycle. Thus, mortuary practices became a powerful medium through which human beings negotiated the deepest anxieties of existence and converted them into enduring cultural expressions (Becker, 1973; Jung, 1968; Greenberg et al., 1986).

CONCLUSION

Psychology and Archaeology converge most powerfully in the study of prehistoric burials, where material remains illuminate the inner worlds of ancient societies. Across sites such as Adichanallur, Brahmagiri, Burzahom, and Chirand, the diversity of burial traditions—urn interments, megalithic monuments, pit burials, and carefully oriented graves—reflects not

only regional cultural expressions but also a shared human concern: how to confront and manage the inevitability of death.

Through the theoretical lens of Ernest Becker, these mortuary practices can be understood as “immortality projects,” whereby societies symbolically deny the finality of death by embedding individuals within enduring cultural systems. Urn burials preserving identity through grave goods, megaliths standing as permanent markers of memory, and domestic burials maintaining proximity between the living and the dead—all represent creative cultural responses that transform mortality into continuity.

The framework of Terror Management Theory further highlights the collective dimension of these practices. Burial rituals were not merely acts of disposal but communal performances that reinforced shared beliefs about life, death, and the afterlife. By participating in these structured and repetitive acts, communities reaffirmed their worldview, thereby reducing existential anxiety and strengthening social cohesion. Death, in this sense, became a socially mediated experience rather than an isolating rupture.

At a deeper symbolic level, the insights of Carl Gustav Jung reveal how universal archetypes shaped these burial traditions. The urn as a “womb–tomb” signifies return and rebirth; the circle of megaliths embodies eternity and cyclical time; the eastward orientation of bodies invokes renewal through the rising sun; and the inclusion of animal companions suggests guidance and protection in the afterlife (Jung, 1968). These recurring motifs indicate that prehistoric societies drew upon shared symbolic structures to make sense of death within a larger cosmic framework.

Ultimately, prehistoric Indian burial practices demonstrate that the fear of death was never confronted in isolation. It was mediated through culture, ritual, and symbolism—transforming an existential crisis into a meaningful passage. By ritualizing death, these communities did not simply respond to mortality; they redefined it, embedding it within narratives of continuity, regeneration, and cosmic order. In doing so, they ensured that death was not perceived as an end, but as a transition into enduring meaning.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Ray, S. & Samantaray, J. (2026). Fear, Death, and the Afterlife: A Psychological Reading of Prehistoric Burial Practices in India. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(3), 1644-1654. DIP:18.01.146.20261403, DOI:10.25215/1403.146