

Life After Death

by Dirk Gillabel, 2001

The Lord is never angry, never takes revenge, hates, condemns, punishes, throws anyone into hell, or tempts anyone; thus never does evil to anyone.

(Emanuel Swedenborg in True Christian Religion)

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Part 1 gives an overview of the hereafter according to Robert Crookal, and a couple of other authors. Robert Crookal was a retired geologist (1960's) who collected numerous accounts of astral travels and carefully analyzed and evaluated them. In approximately 10 years he collected and wrote about over 750 different cases. I also highly recommend the books of Michael Newton: *Journey of Souls and Destiny of Souls*. This contemporary writer is a hypnotherapist who developed his own hypnosis technique to reach the memories of the hereafter.

[2 The Hereafter according to Emanuel Swedenborg](#)

Part 2 gives an overview of the hereafter according to Emmanuel Swedenborg (1653–1735). He is a highly reliable source for information about the spiritual worlds, in spite of his archaic use of words.

[3 The Tibetan View of Death](#)

Part 3 gives an idea about how Buddhists think of death and what lies beyond.



Ascent of the Blessed from paradise and hell, Hieronymus Bosch(1450-1516)

1 Death and the Entrance into the Spirit World

(based upon several sources)

When a person dies the silver cord, which is an energy cord that connects the soul with the physical body, ceases to exist. The physical body is now under the influence of its spirits and the four Elements which will decompose it and return it to the earth. From near-death experiences we know that when people die, some of them go through a dark tunnel towards a light at the end; others are immediately greeted by already deceased friends and relatives; or they are bathed in a brilliant light.

The way of dying has a strong effect on the state of mind of the deceased immediately after passing over.

When a person dies a sudden death, as with an accident, he often has no clue that he passed over. He thinks he is still alive and is puzzled why he cannot do the things he used to do, or why people do not respond to him. His consciousness is as clear as when he was in the physical body just before he died.

When a person dies a natural death, he notices that he leaves his body, but soon afterwards he goes 'to sleep'. His consciousness goes into a vegetative sleep which is more like being in an undifferentiated state of mind for a while. In this state of mind he can hang around in the neighborhood of the place where he passed over. His nebulous consciousness is able to perceive the physical world vaguely, and sometimes he will attach himself to objects, plants, animals or people. In the esoteric teachings this is called the great Sleep, caused by the Dark Angel, the Angel of Death. This initial vegetative state can last from a couple of hours to several days.

When he leaves his place of passing over, he still thinks he is alive, and visits the living, and sometimes he lives with them for a while. He is still half or totally unconscious of his deceased state.

Many souls have little interest in what happens to their physical bodies once they are dead. But they do like to hover around the place where they died for a few days.

Some souls are still attached to the physical world. They try to communicate with the living. In houses that have been built over an earth's energy spot, they are able to use that energy to manifest himself to the living.

Some of the deceased are still so much attached to the physical that they attach themselves to a living person to enjoy, through that person, the earthly pleasures, like the taste of alcohol, cigarettes, food and so on. Those souls used to be habitual drinkers, smokers and even compulsive criminals. Such a situation is always to the detriment of the living person, as the deceased interferes with the energy body of that living person. Ailments and disease will follow, sometimes quickly, sometimes gradually. Some of the deceased have a grudge against a living person and will attach themselves to him in order to cause harm. Others had such a strong connection with for example a family member, that when they pass over they attach themselves to that family member, because they cannot give up the relationship they had with that person. This also causes harm to the living person, and the deceased often does not realize that. Such disturbed spirits

are rare, and help is available from higher, caring entities, who can assist in the adjustment process from the other side.

So, the deceased now knows that he has passed over. Some of the deceased now create themselves a dream world based on that what they had expected to find when they would die. Based on these expectations he creates himself a heaven, a hell or any other place he likes. Here he indulges himself in what he likes to do, like eating, feasting and so on, until, after a while, he gets bored with it and realizes that heaven or hell, as he imagined it, is a boring place, and that his expectations of these places were childish constructs of his mind. More developed souls will move much faster through this stage.

Many spirits will hear relaxing music, allowing them to feel more "at home". Souls will find themselves in an environment of houses, rooms, parks, nature and so on. These are all places created by their mind that relate to the places they have lived in on Earth. This astral world is usually much nice, more beautiful, more colorful, and much more euphoric.

Although the soul itself is androgynous, it will usually adapt an outer appearance of male or female in the spirit world. It is a question of what sex one wants to identify with.

Once the deceased wakes up from his dreamy consciousness, and is clear and lucid, he is calm and feels free. In this of mind he can also contact the living. Souls arriving in this world are greeted by soul mates, friends, guides. Initially guides might be in the background when friends welcome the deceased soul. After the initial stages souls will speed to their destination. They arrive at their own specific group of entities at their own maturity level. Group placement is determined by soul level. The souls represented in these cluster groups are intimate old friends who have about the same awareness level. It is usually a small primary unit of entities who have direct and frequent contact, such as we would see in a human family. Contact with souls from other groups is also possible. Members of the same cluster group are closely united for all eternity. They are often composed of like-minded souls with common objectives which they continually work out with each other. Usually they choose lives together as relatives and close friends during their incarnations on Earth.

If necessary the deceased will undergo a healing process and a reorientation to its spiritual environment. The reorientation is a substantial counseling session with one's guide. The newly refreshed soul undergoes a debriefing of the life just ended. It is a self-evaluation process. It also provides emotional release and readjustment back into the spirit world. More advanced souls might skip the orientation process, although they will meet and talk to their guides. They are usually able to move on much quicker after their arrival in the spirit world.

At a later time the soul will meet with a group of wise beings, usually called the Council masters or Elders. This board of review is generally composed of between three and seven members. While the Council is not prosecutorial, they do engage in direct examination of a soul's activity. Here the soul's higher self will then show him his entire past life with the highs and lows, and he will judge himself according to universal spiritual laws. Yes, there is no one else to judge you than yourself. You can also not deceive yourself in this regard, as your higher self is

straightforward, knows the truth, and shows you incontrovertible where you failed.

After the soul has spent time playing, studying, creating in the spiritual world in order to enhance its development, it will eventually feel the need again to reincarnate. This involves an orientation process too, during which a soul will be shown a series of possible lives on Earth.

2 The Hereafter according to Emanuel Swedenborg

When man dies, the breath and the systolic movements of the heart stop. The physical body and soul (the astral and mental body) immediately separate. After the separation, the soul stays for a little while by the physical body.

Once out of the physical body, consciousness is in the soul, and one is attracted to those souls or angels who correspond to the person's inner state of being. Now he is in the World of Spirits, which is an intermediate world between the heavens and hells. In the beginning he keeps the same appearance as he had when he was in the physical body, but this will slowly change, as his appearance will reflect exactly his inner state of being. By this other souls can see to which spiritual level one belongs. In contrast to life in the physical world, one cannot hide anything in the spiritual worlds.

In general, the deceased does not know he has passed over when he arrives into the World of Spirits. He thinks he is still in the physical body. He still keeps his memory and continues to act as if he is still in the physical world.

When more highly evolved beings interfere, the deceased is shown his past life in all the details.

There are three states the deceased undergoes before he goes to heaven or hell. The first state of the exteriors: this state is very much like on the physical plane. The deceased does not know that he has passed over and thinks he is still in the physical world. He meets old friends that have already passed over before him. They show him places, cities, people, and teach him about his new state of being, and the world he is now living in. Most deceased are so ignorant that they think they are already in heaven, because they think they have lived a moral and civil life. They never considered that both the bad and the good live a similar life outwardly, alike in doing good to others, attending public worship, hearing sermons and praying. They are ignorant not understanding that external deeds and external acts of worship are of no avail, only the internal state of being from which the external acts proceed is real.

The second state of the interiors: now he starts to go into his own inner state of being. In the previous state he still could pretend to be different than he actually is. Now he can only act according to his true intentions. He thinks from his own will, from his own affection, from his own love. As in this world there is no fear of losing one's face, or one's reputation, he starts to speak and act openly that which he otherwise would have kept secret or hidden in the physical world. His good and wicked characteristics come out unrestrained.

The third state is of instruction: This state is only for those who go to the heavens. They get instructions by angels of different orders. After the instruction

the deceased are clothed with angelic garments, which are mostly glowing white as if made of fine linen, and they are lead towards the heavens and introduced to societies. Those who are spiritually well evolved have clothes that sparkle like flames; less evolved ones have cloths that shine like light; and lesser evolved ones have glittering or just white cloths. The lowest have cloths of different colors.

Swedenborg divides the spiritual world into three: The World of Spirits where the deceased arrives and stays at most thirty years, the heavens and the hells. In the hells the souls create themselves environments in which they continuously suffer, engage in heated discussions, act out their anger and so on.

3 The Tibetan View of Death

Tibetan monks have studied the human being for centuries and have come up with a clear understanding of what death is and what happens after death. According to Buddhism, death is the separation of the mind and body. Each living being has a mind or consciousness which continues to exist after the death of the body, and takes a new rebirth.

Usually the name Bardo is used for the afterlife. The name bardo means "an interval between two things" and can be used for any interval. In the context of the afterlife we call it the Bardo of Becoming. As there is no physical world present anymore for the soul to interact with, the desires of the individual carry the largely helpless soul through a variety of emotional states. As the inner state of the soul now immediately manifests itself, the soul will experience pleasure, pain and other emotions depending on the inner qualities of the soul. Nothing in the Bardo is real, it is all projected by the soul, it is like a dream state where the soul creates what it wants to experience.

The Tibetans say that immediately after death the soul becomes unconscious for a short or long time.

When the soul awakens it comes face to face with the Dharmakaya, the body of truth. It is an all pervasive light, it is pure consciousness. With conscious effort the soul should dissolve itself into the light, and thus enter a state of light and bliss beyond the continual cycles of birth and death to which most souls are subjected. It all depends, at that moment, if we can become aware that this light is the true essence of our being. However few beings have completed the necessary preparations to remain fully aware during this state. To most souls the radiance of this light is too overpowering and they shy away from it. An opportunity of enlightenment has been lost, although it will present itself again later on but in a more fragmented and fleeting way. The soul falls into darkness and awakens in the next stage of the Bardo.

The soul awakens again and is confronted with the brilliant light of the realm of the enlightened beings, also called the realm of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities. All Gods, Goddesses and mythical images become vividly alive within consciousness. Because the ego is habituated to dualistic perception, the soul tries to cling to the forms of the Peaceful Deities and is repulsed by the Wrathful deities. When the mind perceives these deities it should remember that it still has

a dualistic impression of an "I" experiencing the "other" (the deities). It should take this opportunity to transcend the illusion of duality and recognize the deities as projections of his own mind. In essence they are neither peaceful nor wrathful, this is only a perception of the mind. But most souls get confused and miss the opportunity to liberate themselves. The habitual tendencies, like anger, hate, attachment, ignorance and so on, drive the soul to the next stage in the afterlife: the six realms of samsara, symbolized by the well known Wheel of Samsara, or Existence, or Birth and Death.

In it we see Yama, the god of death holding the Wheel. At the center we see a cock, a snake and a pig. They symbolize the "Three Poisons": ignorance (pig), which give rise to aversion (snake) and attachment (cock). Snake and cock are sometimes taken for greed and pride. All three keep the human being in a vicious circle of self-sustaining suffering. In the circle around it are beings moving up or down, symbolizing their progress or downfall in their spiritual lives. When death strikes man goes to the afterlife which is divided in six realms: the realm of the gods (Devas), the realm of the demi-gods (Asuras or titans), the realm of the humans, the realm of the Hungry Ghosts or continually frustrated spirits, the realm of the hell beings, and the realm of the animals. This correspond more or less with the heavens and hells of other religions.

Where the soul will go in the realms of the afterlife, depends on how the person has lived and thus on his state of mind. In other words, it depends on the karma he has generated. As all the subconscious things in the soul are coming up, and depending on what the strongest tendency inside us is, then one of the six afterlife realms begins to predominate.

If the soul has lived a life in which it has done a lot of good things for other people, it will go to the realms of the gods (Devas). However they are under the illusion that they have achieved the highest level. They are filled with pride, condescension and self-righteousness. When jealousy is the strongest feeling, the soul goes to the realm of the demi-gods, as they are always fighting for what others have. They are bound by competitive conditioning and underlying feelings of inadequacy. The Preta or Hungry Ghosts realm is occupied by those beings whose hunger is insatiable, not only for solid food but for subtle foods like knowledge and all forms of stimulation. The animal realm is filled with those so confined by their habitual tendencies that any threat to their narrow and frozen condition sets off the "flight or fight" reaction (animals feel secure in their habits and fear the unknown). The human realm is a combination of floating anxieties about praise and blame, with hopes and fears rising and falling, underlined by the painful reality of impermanence and death. The realm of the hell beings is marked with catastrophic pain, panic without rest. So you see, the six realms are a division of six main psychological characteristics that keep the human mind bound to its projections in the material world.

Although every ego may be dominated by a particular psychological characteristic and dwell in one particular realm during certain times, there will be a movement from one realm to another, because we, as humans beings, contain all these realms within ourselves.

When in the Bardo one should wake up from those dream states, or the

projections of the soul, and start meditating to make a connection with the divine. There is always the possibility of experiencing the true nature of mind, and pure awareness. Only then the soul can escape the realms of the afterlife. However most souls reincarnate again, as their desires and passions drive them to a new physical body. It is said that the soul remains forty-nine days in the afterlife before reincarnating again, but this number should be taken symbolically.