

# Insights Into the Afterlife

## 30 Questions and Answers on What to Expect

by Nora M. Spurgin

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## Introduction

My interest in writing this booklet was inspired by the life and death of a dear friend. For most of the five years she had battled cancer, Linna believed that she would conquer the fearful stalker; but in the end, she accepted that she was going to die. It was the process of her preparation to die that prompted a desire in me to share with others the understandings which she gained in anticipating the next life. Linna and I were friends and colleagues. She was an educator and a woman of determination. It was a shock to all of her friends when she was diagnosed with cancer. I remember visiting her in the hospital where she joked, We always thought I was the invincible one, so we have life insurance on my husband!

Following surgery and a course of chemotherapy, Linna began a new life. It was a life with greater awareness of its value. She looked at her relationships with family and friends with new eyes. She pondered the things she wanted to accomplish and those things which were of less importance. She sought changes in her life and habits to bring about optimum health. She began meditating and, in so doing, found a place of peace within, as well as a greater spiritual awareness. She made changes in her diet and found friends who prayed for her and introduced her to healing music, writings on positive thinking, healing imagery and internal body cleansing.

Her friends saw her blossom and make gains in spiritual and physical health. However, underlying everything was a nagging fear that the cancer would snatch away her life. And so it did. But she had four and a half years to accomplish things she wanted to do time to prepare with her husband and grown children and most of all, time to think about life after death.

In the final half year, Linna knew that her life on earth was coming to a close. In those last months her concern was, what should I accomplish, and how can I best prepare to die? During this time, a close group of her friends learned much about death and life hereafter.

My heart aches for the many who die without preparation without a sustaining philosophy of life, or death. This is the primary reason that I asked a few close friends of Linna's to help me in preparing this little booklet to share what we have learned through our experience with her, and throughout own reading and searching. If there is life after death, and if our earthly life is preparation for that then we have come to believe the greatest thing we could do for humankind is to share this understanding.

While surveys show that most people believe in some form of life after death, most of us are less certain what form that life will take.

Interest in death as a transition into a higher state of consciousness moved from the realm of the solely religious when psychiatrist and author Elisabeth K ybler-Ross, who writes and speaks extensively on death and dying, caused physicians, psychiatrists, and scientists to take a new look at the meaning of death.

Knowledge and understanding of the afterlife can help many of us overcome fear and pain when making preparations for our own death, or for that of someone we love. Understanding can help tremendously with the grieving or separation process. Our lives on earth are preparation for the eternal life and this is a source of great hope, expectation and joy.

We came to an understanding that every person has a place in the heart of God. Every individual has been created to receive the joy, the blessing and the delights of heavenly life because of God's love.

Death or passing to the spiritual world is like birth, into a new and deeper level of existence, and, if we are prepared, the time of passing can be a celebration of joy, like a birthday!

For the format for this informative booklet, I have chosen 30 commonly asked questions with answers that you will hopefully find simple and clear. These answers are presented without specific religious doctrine and dogma and are for the sole purpose of enhancing life both on earth and beyond. This booklet is for those who are in the full bloom of life; for there is still time to prepare. For those who are terminally ill, it might make a difference in the quality of the final years or months and help the new arrival into the spiritual world.

I want to express my gratitude to Farley Jones, Lynn Mathers, June Kiburz, Nancy Barton, and Anne Edwards, a few of Linna's friends, who helped pull together these ideas and pass them on to you.

Nora M. Spurgin, M.S.W.

*Life is real! Life is Earnest!*

*And the grave is not its goal;*

*Dust thou art, to dust returneth,*

*Was not spoken of the soul.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

## Questions and Answers

### **Is there life after death? How do we know?**

From Plato and the early Greeks, through Jesus and Paul, through most African and Oriental cultures, to spiritualists of the twentieth century, a belief in some kind of survival of bodily death has been unequivocally affirmed. Jesus' assertion that in his Father's house there are many rooms, would seem to be justified by the fact that this common belief is held by such divergent peoples.

While many traditional believers tend to shy away from the topic, testimony to the existence of a spirit world actually permeates the Bible.

Prophets such as Ezekiel and Isaiah report powerful spiritual visions, as does the writer of the book of Revelation. In the Gospels, angels speak (Lk 1:28) and on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus talks with the long-dead Moses and Elijah (Mt 17:1-3). Christian mystics and saints throughout history also spoke of spiritual experiences.

The proposition that life continues beyond physical death goes a long way toward explaining well-recognized and otherwise unexplainable phenomena, for example, near-death experiences, visions of deceased persons and the experience of authentic communication from the other side.

To understand what happens to us at death, we first need to understand of what we are made. Most of us tend to identify closely with our physical bodies, but this is only part of the picture. We are not only physical matter, but also spiritual essence. It is accurate to say that we are essentially spiritual beings who possess physical bodies. When we die, we in effect take off our physical bodies as one might take off an overcoat. The essential person remains. [⇒ \(Back to Q&A\)](#)

### **If life continues after physical death, where is such life lived?**

Our bodies exist, of course, in the physical world, which provides an environment for our activity and growth on earth and offers us nourishment, stimulation and joy. Likewise, there is a spiritual dimension of the universe the invisible spirit world- which serves as the environment for our spirits. Our spirit is the internal counterpart to our physical body, and the spirit world is the invisible counterpart to the physical world. This world is located not up in heaven, but in a different dimension, inter-penetrating the physical world and the universe. While on earth we exist in both worlds at once, in effect connecting the two. For this reason, people on occasion can have visions and communicate with the dead.

While most people are prepared to admit belief in some kind of life after death, fewer accept the proposition that during our physical lifetimes we are existing in two realms at once a material one and a spiritual one. There is an invisible spiritual world surrounding this physical one, inhabited by those who have passed on. Because the two realms inter-penetrate each other, the spirit of a person near death can float out of the body.

To begin to understand how we could simultaneously live in two realms and, for the most part, be unaware of it, we must remember that there are many things in the natural world that exist beyond the range of our five physical senses. For example, we cannot see infra-red light or x-rays, or hear sounds above or below certain frequencies. Nevertheless, x-rays and high and low frequency sound

vibrations do exist. In the same way, even though we cannot perceive a spiritual world through our physical senses, it exists all around us.

The discoveries of modern science lend credence to this prospect. Whereas in prior times scientists thought of the material world as constructed of solid, though minute, blocks of matter, they now believe this is not the case. Rather, what we think of as the material world seems to consist of invisible patterns of energy. The implications of this theory with regard to the existence of a spiritual dimension are clear. Indeed, it is probably such a discovery as this that gave rise to Albert Einstein's celebrated remark that his work was spiritual, involving the discovery of where matter ends and spirit begins.

Just as we perceive the physical world with our physical senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell), so the spirit world can be perceived by a set of spiritual senses; which are not limited by the physical laws of nature. Because most of us are not attuned to our spiritual senses, we become aware of the spirit world only when we pass into it at the end of our physical lives. ⇒

### **What is a near-death experience?**

Due to modern technology, the number of people who have been revived from clinical death and brought back to physical life has increased tremendously in recent years. Many such individuals have shared amazingly similar accounts of their experience. Whereas in the past people may have been reluctant to discuss their experiences, perhaps due to fear of ridicule, thousands are now reporting near-death experiences (NDEs). Documented observation on the subject of the next life reported by individuals who have had near-death experiences has taken this area of research beyond theory.

Near-death experiences gained widespread publicity when Dr. Raymond Moody's book, *Life After Life*, became a best seller. Dr. Moody writes convincingly of his vast research on people who were clinically dead for a short time and were revived. Elements which appear most frequently in such accounts are the following:

The identity of the individual who has died remains intact. The conscious self leaves the body and observes it in its lifeless state but feels no break in the continuity of consciousness.

The sensations associated with leaving the body are described as being very positive lightness, brightness, love, joy, peace and cessation of pain.

The consciousness, or spirit, enters a dark tunnel with an extremely bright light at the end.

Relatives and friends (already deceased) are often seen. Usually they communicate a welcome, and the person who has just died may be given the choice to return to physical life on earth.

Often the spirit is greeted by beings of great light and love perceived to be God, the Creator, or a religious figure such as Jesus.

There may be a life-review, which is a rapid panoramic view of the earthly life in chronological order.

The consciousness, or spirit, can hear and observe everything that is happening in the physical world, but cannot communicate with people on earth through speaking or touching.

There is instinctive knowledge that in going into the light there is a point of no return to physical earth life. Since these accounts come only from people who have returned to physical life, there was a point past which they did not venture.

When they return to physical life, most people who have had an NDE feel an enhanced quality in life; there is a lack of fear of dying, and a new purposefulness in living. ⇒

## **Is going to the spirit world automatic?**

Yes. It is not a matter of choice or qualification. Every person is created as a being whose spirit is eternal. Life in the spirit world is simply the next step after life on earth, much as life on earth is the natural step after life in the womb.

Physical birth takes place when a baby, having spent nine months in a small, dark, warm place, suddenly pushes through the birth canal into a bright, expansive new world. There is a similar sequence of events in our birth into the next life. Those who have had NDEs describe a dark tunnel leading toward a bright light where loved ones await their arrival.

It should be noted, however, that if one is educated to believe that there is no life after death, she may fail to recognize the natural process which automatically takes place. There are those who describe this lack of knowing as an incredible injustice, for the passage to the next world is confused and the spirit may wander indefinitely without the body, stuck between two worlds, feeling part of neither. This condition may persist until a spiritual guide is sent to rescue and re-educate the lost soul. ⇒

## **What is the spirit world like?**

Sensitive people who have had glimpses into the world beyond say it is a world much like our own, but having no time nor space as we think of these dimensions; it exists in a higher dimension of energy and, in its higher realms, is a world of inexpressible beauty. It is a world where it is possible to be fully alive, where, for example, the whole body perceives. It is a world of endless possibilities for creativity and full realization of self; and it is a world where the love of God is like the air we breathe. As air is the atmosphere on earth, God's love is the atmosphere in the spirit world.

One's spiritual body can travel with thought waves. Therefore, if one thinks of a person and place, he can immediately be transported there. Communication is also by thought. In addition, one is free from the restrictions of the physical body; eating, for example, is possible, but not necessary to maintain the physical body. In the spiritual world, one realizes that life on earth has, like life in the womb, been preparation for a fuller, freer and richer eternal existence. ⇒

## **Can spiritual growth take place on the other side?**

Yes, it appears to be a law of the universe that growth is always possible. According to many accounts, the spiritual world has teachers and guides (those who have died, sometimes centuries before, who have the mission to guide newcomers who want to learn and grow in the spirit world). For children, teachers are provided to give them basic knowledge, and people in the position of parents provide them with essential love.

Those who are lacking in emotional growth, or who have lived unloving, resentful, vengeful, or selfish lives will be given the opportunity to serve and help others in order that they may advance to higher realms. They may even come back to earth as spiritual helpers, like guardian angels, to influence people to avoid misdeeds and harmful lifestyles, and to overcome unloving attitudes. Those who have passed on often come back to their descendants to help and protect them. In so doing, spiritual growth takes place for both.

Desire for such spiritual growth arises from a desire to be close to God. The spiritual world is a world where an ever-increasing unity with the love of God is the goal of one's growth. ⇒

### **Are people on the spiritual side aware of our passing?**

Yes. Whenever someone passes from the earth, no matter who, people in the spirit world know that the person is arriving. Those on the other side know who, when and where, because it is the responsibility of those in the spirit world to receive the newcomer. In most cases, relatives are apprised so that they can welcome the one who is passing on. Because the major motive of those in the higher realms in the spirit world is love, there is great desire to help the new arrival leave the physical world in the best possible way. ⇒

### **Will we know and be with our relatives and friends who have passed on before us?**

Just as on earth we seek out relationships which are comfortable, the same is true in the spiritual world. We are likely to seek out our relatives, loved ones and ancestors with whom we have a bond. However, if there is a vast difference in spiritual development, a person of lesser development and thus having a lower vibration, will be unable to enter the higher realm to which those of greater development have advanced. In this case, the more highly developed loved one may choose to visit and help the person in need of spiritual development. ⇒

### **What will we look like in the spiritual world?**

As already stated, each person has a physical body and a spirit body, even while on earth. The physical body which one leaves behind is a reflection of his spirit and is similar in appearance. The spiritual body has the same identity, the same vibration; it simply lives in a different dimension. The higher one's development, or vibration, the brighter and more finely attuned will be his spirit.

Fundamentally, an individual maintains distinguishing characteristics. However, what determines what one looks like in the spirit world is the person's quality of heart and life. One's inner quality is perceived as light. One's features are visible but the light that comes from her very essence is the identifying feature. For example, because they lived totally for other people, Jesus and other religious leaders emanate brilliant light.

A very homely person who has served sacrificially will emanate such light and be very attractive to others in the spirit world. If at the time of death one's physical body was impaired, his spiritual body will be free of pain and impairment. However, because the spirit world is the world of mind, he may still think of himself as being in pain or having impairment. If so, as long as he carries it in his mind, such pain and impairment will be present. ⇒

### **What will we do in the spiritual world?**

It depends on where we are in the spirit world. The higher realms of spirit world is truly heaven; a world of enjoyment and recreation. People do things they enjoy, and keep company with people they enjoy. It is a world of joyful activity. The skills, interests, and abilities developed on earth may be reflected in the roles chosen in eternity. Each of us will contribute uniquely toward the goodness and beauty in our realm. Further, it is said that the spirit world is vast and of transcendent beauty. Those dwelling in the higher realms are able to travel to its vast reaches.



The quality of life in the spirit world is directly affected by one's heart and his activities on earth. Since love is supreme, opportunities for the practice of love will continue. The means for spiritual growth is through the dynamic of love, which is to serve. Relationships are thus very important. ⇒

### **Do we have to be religious?**

As indicated above, everyone, religious or not, believing in God or not, transitions to the spirit world as part of the natural process of life. Just as one does not need to be religious to live in the physical world, one does not need to profess a particular faith to live in the spirit world.

Nevertheless, it is also true that the great world religions have been the carriers of universal spiritual truth, have been the source of the spiritual education of millions, perhaps billions, of people and have been the central force in the spiritual development of the human race. Properly understood and fully lived, the teachings underlying the great religious traditions inevitably promote the spiritual growth of their followers and thus are enormously valuable in preparing such individuals for the richest possible lives in the spirit world.

Thus while one does not have to be religious to dwell in the spirit world, one inevitably will benefit from a thorough understanding and practice of a particular tradition. This said, however, it needs to be recognized that not all teachings described as religious are beneficial. Religion which is judgmental, prejudicial, critical, and narrow may impede the spirit's natural growth.

It is love, not religion, which creates spiritual growth. Where religion teaches love, there is growth. Where religion impedes love, there is stagnation. ⇒

### **If we are not religious, what happens?**

As explained above, everyone transitions to the spirit world on the death of the physical body. One's state there is determined by the level of spiritual maturity. If not mature, one may find that an understanding of the knowledge available through the various religious traditions may help him to begin the process. This knowledge is best acquired through an experienced mediator who in effect serves as a type of spiritual parent or guide for one just beginning his journey.

Further, while the ideal place to grow spiritually is on earth indeed, this is the reason for life on earth growth in the spirit world remains a possibility. There, however, in the absence of a physical body, growth is more difficult. The opportunity for the full range of love (child's love, marital love, and parental love) is ideally available while one is on earth. Love which has been misused or misdirected, is also best corrected in the physical life, for there is the full range of physical and spiritual senses with which to act and communicate. ⇒

### **Does what we believe and practice in different religious traditions make a difference in terms of quality of life in the spiritual world?**

It is said that the Golden Rule is the governing principle in the spirit world: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. People who truly practice the religion of love will find themselves in a universal sphere where everyone understands that true religion is to love others as ourselves.

The most difficult thing for a person who has been deeply steeped in a particular religious tradition is to realize that the form alone is not what elevates a person; it is the heart. Still, those who cling to

an external form of religion will be most comfortable with others who practice the same rituals, whatever they may be. In this sense, congregations may continue centered around the particular religious traditions they practiced while on earth. ⇒

### **Will we meet God and other religious figures?**

Everyone in the realms of light knows that there is a Creator. It is said that this presence is so obvious it cannot be denied. In the spirit world one can see and experience the source of life. So the first awesome feeling is said to be, God IS! There is no question.

Other religious figures including the founders of world religions, the saints and prophets, exist in their own dimensions of the spirit world. The similarity of one's life, heart and knowledge to a particular figure determines one's closeness to these religious figures. ⇒

### **Of what significance are repentance and making amends before we die?**

Wrongs which cause injury to others require repentance, forgiveness and restoration of wholeness. When one has hurt someone else, unless she apologizes to that person, repents for the hurt caused and is forgiven, she will carry that burden into the spirit world. If someone has something against a person who has not apologized, progress is impeded in the spirit world.

When we can recognize the hurt brought to others, and make amends for it by seeking forgiveness, then healing of the spirit can take place. This liberates both parties for greater love and spiritual growth.

A re-orientation of one's life toward God and love at any point has great value. If a person can take this step while still on earth, and in particular can make amends for any wrong done, this will do much to enhance his status in the spirit world. The next step for the last minute repentor is to preserve this new orientation and upon arrival in the spirit world to do whatever is necessary to continue growth there.

The quality of the energy that we maintain is affected by whether our intentions and actions lead us toward, or separate us from, goodness and God. ⇒

### **What about heaven and hell?**

On earth we are all aware of different gradations in the lifestyles of various individuals. Some seem to have a very desirable lifestyle, others less so. The same may be said about life in the spirit world. In terms of externals, some persons there live in more attractive and comfortable environments, others in less appealing conditions. At the extremes there are beautiful and uplifting settings which are truly heavenly and, on the other hand, there are very unattractive, even repugnant, environments which are without a doubt hellish.

The difference between life in the physical world and life in the spiritual world is that the environment in the spiritual world corresponds to one's internal nature rather than to that which can be created through external resources, as is possible in the physical world. If, during our lifetime on earth, we matured in a spiritually rich and beautiful way, we will come to dwell in an environment that corresponds with these qualities. Indeed, such environments are said by those who have experienced them to possess a beauty that is beyond anything seen on earth.

In the spirit world, God's truth is represented by light and His love by warmth. Those individuals in the spirit world who live in harmony with God thus live in light and warmth. Conversely, if one has been stunted in his spiritual growth through an undeveloped or misdirected lifestyle, has led a purely self-centered life or has hurt other people, his spiritual environment will reflect something of these realities. A self-centered life on earth places one in an area of the spiritual world with like-minded people who have yet to learn the value of unselfishness for the advancement of the soul. Environments distant from God are said to be dark, cold and inhospitable. Indeed, they reflect the spirits of those dwelling therein.

In between these extremes are many levels representing different stages of spiritual growth. The central factor determining our level is the degree to which we have lived for the sake of others, and the extent to which we have been able to influence others likewise to follow paths of service and love. In this respect, the actions of loving, serving and teaching others carry the highest spiritual value. ⇒

### **What could we do while still living in the physical body to make a better transition at death?**

We should educate ourselves as much as possible about the spirit world. Even gaining the smallest impression that there is life after death will bring enlightenment and understanding. The more understanding one has to illuminate the objective reality of the spirit world, the more one has the desire to live in accordance with natural and spiritual laws and is enabled to go directly from earth into the higher realms of the spirit world.

Betty Eadie, author of *Embraced by the Light*, explains that it is possible for the uneducated and unbelieving spirit to be a virtual prisoner of this earth. This is especially true of those who remain bonded to the earth through greed, bodily appetites and other earthly commitments which make it difficult to let go and move on. Such spirits, she was told during her near-death experience, may not recognize the energy and light which draws one toward God. Lacking the faith and power to reach for the light, unenlightened spirits may actually stay on earth until they learn of the higher power which surrounds, and is available to them. ⇒

### **After entering the spirit world, can we return to loved ones on earth?**

Unknown to most of humanity, the moving back and forth of spiritual beings to their loved ones on earth is going on night and day, all over the world. As indicated previously, it is due to our inability to see spiritually that we have no awareness of the spirit world. Dreams, a visitation beside one's bed which seems like a dream, visions of departed loved ones and appearances of religious figures are all manifestations of spirit return. The major purposes of these visits is to guide those on earth or to comfort those who are bereaved by a beloved one's passing. Those from the other side are continually working to elevate the spiritual level of those on earth. By aiding in the spiritual growth of those on earth, the attending spirit derives energies for his own advancement. ⇒

### **Why can't people on earth see or hear the spirit if it is still alive and trying to make contact?**

It seems from the accounts of people who have had NDEs that the spiritual self can hear and see everything physical, but the reverse is not true. Because their spiritual senses are undeveloped, those on the physical plane usually cannot penetrate this dimension, making communication impossible.

The spirit on the other hand, may not necessarily know that death has occurred, and may be bewildered to discover that no one in the physical world responds to his efforts to communicate. No one sees or hears him. It is important for a person to know of the spirit world before death; otherwise the spirit may enter his new life frustrated and ignorant of the fact that he has, in fact, passed on. Seemingly intact, and not realizing that the physical body is dead, the spirit may wander indefinitely, seeking to make contact with those still in the physical body. It may be noted here that there are people on the physical plane whose senses are attuned to the vibrations of the spiritual world. They have experiences other than the near-death experience which give them extraordinary insight into the spiritual realm. They may be called clairvoyant (if they see spiritually) and/or clairaudient (if they hear spiritually). While it is often not reported, it is common for spouses and relatives to receive communication from their deceased loved ones.

Among noted individuals who have recorded these unique experiences are Emanuel Swedenborg and Anthony Borgia. Emanuel Swedenborg was an eighteenth century scientist, philosopher, and theologian who explained that the Almighty allowed him to make frequent visits to the world beyond for a period extending over 25 years.

He recorded his extensive experiences as a resource for others to understand the life hereafter. Borgia likewise has produced volumes of information on life after death based on spiritual communications with a deceased nineteenth century priest. ⇒

### **Do our prayers for the deceased help?**

As a form of positive mental energy, prayer rightly directed represents our joining our energies with those of God as He seeks the growth and well-being of His children. Through prayer we cooperate with both God and the angelic and spiritual beings of the spirit world in an on-going, cosmic effort for the liberation of humanity.

Because God looks to humankind as cocreators, and because He cherishes all efforts for the well-being of others, prayer is never wasted. Sooner or later, these efforts inevitably bear fruit, assisting in the positive advancement of those persons on whose behalf they are made. Calling out a specific name in prayer will draw cosmic energy to that person.

Praying for someone who has passed on will be a boost on the other side to enlist the help of spiritual guides for the new arrival. Indeed, living in the spirit world, spirit persons may be even more sensitive to the beneficial effects of prayer than they were on earth. ⇒

### **Is there time and space in the spiritual world?**

If one is in the highest realms, love reigns. And where there is love, there is happiness. Where there is happiness, there is no awareness of time. Therefore, there is no time as we know it here.

However, in the lower realms, because one is very unhappy, time seem interminable. There is space, but the whole spirit world is a reflection of the qualities of the people who live there. Where love reigns, there is no distance between people. The spirit world is thus not like our three-dimensional world, but is more like a symbolic reflection of the inner quality of the people. ⇒

## **Can we still enjoy physical and sensual pleasure in the spirit world; for example, food, drink, and sex?**

All that is good in human experience, whether it be food, drink, human affection, or sexual intercourse can be experienced in spirit world. Because our physical senses of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching are only poor reflections of our very sensitive spiritual senses, music, art, fragrances, occasional spiritual food and the feeling of textures are all more rich and enjoyable in the spiritual world.

Swedenborg comments that husbands and wives enjoy intercourse just as on earth, only happier and richer, because when the love becomes spiritual, it becomes deeper and purer and therefore more fully appreciated. Intercourse does not conceive children, however, because the material element is missing.

Since the spiritual world is a world of mind and imagination, physical nourishment is not necessary for the maintenance of the spirit. One may still have a desire for familiar physical pleasures as they were experienced on earth. There is fruit to be eaten; one can even have a banquet.

It may be useful to mention here that a spirit obsessed with or addicted to sensual pleasures may sometimes seek to gratify these desires through a person on earth. This is very harmful to the spiritual growth of both parties. These spirits are called possessing or obsessing spirits; they do not realize the harm done by the wrong use of another's body.

Excessive or unbalanced behavior distracts one from those activities which nurture spiritual and physical vitality. Edith Fiore, psychologist and author of *The Unquiet Dead*, records numerous anecdotal accounts of clients who, through hypnosis, were able to identify and be liberated from such possessing spirits. Dr. Fiore is one of a growing number of professionals who use hypnosis in depossession or spirit releasement therapy to free clients of emotional traumas due to spirit possession. It appears that educating the earth-bound and possessing spirit about the existence and laws of the spirit world can liberate the spirit to begin his upward journey and the troubled client to live an emotionally healthy life on earth. ⇒

## **What happens to one who commits suicide?**

This booklet would not be complete without mention of those who enter the spiritual world as a result of ending their own physical lives. The death of the physical body is determined by natural law, which is governed by divine law. To take one's physical life is to break that law, with the result that there must be special care and arrangements made in the spiritual world. In other words, breaking natural law must be accounted for before one can go to higher levels.

According to some psychics, because the person's life was cut short and her work on earth incomplete, it will be necessary to live out this uncompleted time in spirit aiding the very ones on earth who were most hurt by the suicide.

Since the motivation for suicide is usually to avoid unhappiness, we can assume that the spirit takes such unhappiness into the spiritual world. Any problems experienced on earth are always better worked out on earth. ⇒

## **Does suffering on earth have spiritual value?**

Few things on earth are inherently good or inherently evil. Money, power, knowledge, and even love can be used for either positive or negative purposes and can be either good or evil. Suffering, too, can be meaningful or meaningless, valuable or worthless. Suffering, for example, that accompanies one's pursuit of a noble goal, or that produces a depth of character or sensitivity to the suffering of others, has positive spiritual merit and no doubt contributes to spiritual advancement. Indeed, one need look no further than the recognition that history has accorded those who have endured suffering for the sake of others, e.g., Jesus, Gandhi, or Martin Luther King, Jr., to see the truth of this principle.

Further, it is often through suffering that one may come to appreciate God's grace. If one sees suffering as a means to understand more deeply the love of God, or indeed to become more God-like, such suffering will have great value. ⇨

### **What about reincarnation?**

Traditional Judeo-Christian teachings describe a single incarnation with eternal, personal existence after death. On the other hand, many contemporary writings and some established Eastern teachings embrace reincarnation as true. Phenomena described by spiritually gifted persons may be logically justified by either concept; therefore, ideas common to both theories are important:

Unique, personal existence continues after the physical body dies.

Continued spiritual growth through love and service is a central aspect of eternal existence.

After passing into the spiritual world, we do not lose interest in the welfare of our loved ones or the human race. We achieve merit and benefit from helping those on earth toward higher truth and greater love.

It is extremely important on passing into the spiritual world to look toward the light and accept orientation from spiritual guides. If a person dies ignorant of the spiritual world, an earth-bound state or spirit possession may result, severely hindering the growth of all involved. A prayer or call for help may be enough to move us through the tunnel and into the light described in NDEs.

Most psychics who espouse reincarnation do not believe that one must immediately inhabit another body upon physical death. Long periods (centuries in physical time) are used for continued growth by entities who earn merit by temporarily visiting earth as spiritual guides and teachers. Psychics believing in a single incarnation describe a similar return of spirit helpers who work so closely with us that thoughts and feelings blend, causing the distinct impression of past lives.

Proponents of both schools share the belief that it is best to exist in eternity without reincarnating. Reincarnationists see this as the liberation of the soul from illusion, when the lessons of physical life have been learned. Others believe it is God's ideal for an individual to evolve through love and service beginning in this life and continuing in the next, without the necessity for reincarnation. ⇨

### **Are angels different from spirits of people who have lived on earth?**

There is much interest in angels today. An angel is a spiritual being who lives in the spiritual realm and, yes, is different from the spirits of people who have lived on the earth. The angels were created first, to assist with the creation of man and woman as well as with the rest of the creation. The Bible and other scriptures speak of angels as spiritual beings who serve as messengers or helpers to men and women on the earth. Without our spiritual senses, we are not aware of their daily presence in our lives. Have you heard of guardian angels? It is said that we all have at least two.

The angels of God are beautiful, radiant beings of light, similar in form to humans, often beautifully clothed, with the ability to speak, act and fully communicate. We might say that fallen angels are those spiritual beings, originally of God, who chose not to respond to the light and have turned away from God. Such spiritual beings seek to separate or distract humans from fulfilling their purpose, which is to fully live as God's children. ⇒

### **Are there demonic spirits and angels?**

Numerous scriptural accounts describe angels who turned against the pure goodness and love of God, and also turn humankind toward evil by malicious intent. The master of such forces is often called Satan or the devil. There is no doubt that evil exists on earth. Similarly, those who have communication with the spiritual world state that all is not goodness and light there as well. Since we know that we enter the spiritual world at the same level of spiritual development we have gained while on earth, then it makes sense that those who have had much give and take with selfishness, revenge and maliciousness will continue such acts in the spirit world.

There is, therefore, evil and darkness in the spirit world. The darkness may be a result of ignorance and lack of understanding. Spiritual guides will enlighten willing souls and offer growth opportunities to lead the spirit into the light and warmth of higher realms. Some accounts inform us that ignorance of the need to seek growth may keep someone in a state of darkness for a long period of time.

Apart from ignorance, there are also dark forces in the spirit world created by those of vengeful and malicious desires. Such are the forces, often called demonic, which influence, obsess or possess people on earth and which may be instigators of crime and violence, sexual abuse and aberrations, and belief in Satanism. A person of such interests on earth will inevitably be drawn to similar companionship in the spirit world. The dwelling place of such evil could certainly be called hell.

Everyone entering the spiritual world, however, should know that a God of love suffers for those in darkness, ignorance and misery. Based on desire and willingness, the spirit is given opportunity for an upward journey. One book recently reprinted, *A Wanderer in the Spirit Lands* by Franchezzo, is a vivid descriptive account of this process of growth and development. ⇒

### **Do we pass through some kind of judgment on our earthly life?**

Upon one's entering the spirit world, we face a life review. In this review, a panorama-like view of one's whole life will appear in which both the good and the bad, the right and wrong are presented and are self-judged. Typically there is a good feeling for all the good, and a deep remorse for the wrongs. This is the judgment; it is self-imposed. Such judgment, however, is not the end. Out of remorsefulness can come the beginning of repentance, which enables the spirit to be liberated from ignorance and to begin to grow spiritually. ⇒

### **Are there marriages in the next life? If I'm married now, will our family be together?**

According to Emanuel Swedenborg, people who were married on the earth meet in the spiritual world, recognize one another and may want to live together as they lived on earth. As the superficialities drop off, the couple will discover what they are like inwardly, what their love and attraction were and whether they can continue to live as one. A marriage without God's love and blessing may soon disintegrate. Where love is undeveloped, growth is necessary before such

blessed oneness can be experienced and enjoyed. In fact, misuse of love and sex during one's earthly life leaves a deep scar on the spirit which can be mended only through true love.

Truly loving marriages are perhaps God's greatest gift. These marriages in which the love of God is expressed between the spouses are for eternity. Each person experiences a deep inner relationship of love with God and with his spouse. Such a marriage is a union where each individual continues to grow close both to God and to his or her mate in the marital relationship. Where children were born to such a union, the depth of love shared on earth keeps the family together in the spiritual world. ⇒

### **What are some guidelines for disposing of one's estate?**

Perhaps one could look at it this way: material possessions are a legacy which can bring about certain good and joy to others. It is one last service which one can control with a clear will. It may be wise to imagine watching the distribution of one's personal estate without being able to communicate your desire for its use. Then make a will accordingly as a final unselfish act.

#### **Epilogue**

Our life on earth is a precious growing opportunity. All of us, in living, are preparing to die. Some know that it will be soon, others will have many more years to prepare, and there will be those who die far sooner than they expect. It is a fact of life that everyone will pass on and none of us knows exactly when. Many will not be given an opportunity to prepare to make their passing a new celebration of life. ⇒

### **Epilogue**

The purpose of this booklet is to educate people about the next life in order to provide guidelines for a more meaningful life on earth, offer enlightenment and comfort, and dispel the fear of death and the next life.

This booklet is written as a tribute to my friend Linna who was mentioned in the introduction. At this point I would like to recount Linna's final hours.

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It was summer and a warm August breeze blew through the open window by Linna's bedside. From the window, she could see the countryside, familiar since her childhood: there was the yard she had played in, the trees she had climbed. She had gone home to say good-bye to this life. Linna's husband and children, and other family and friends, kept vigil seeking to bring every comfort and love to her final hours, as they sought the right moment to say good-bye.

On numerous occasions during those final days, Linna spoke with fading strength, I feel the presence of people from the other side around me. They are talking; there is a flurry of activity and excitement. They are waiting for me.

At another point Linna looked up and smiled. Her breathing was labored and irregular. Don't you hear the beautiful music? she asked. Then as night fell, she closed her eyes and took her last irregular breath. Her frail body was no longer host to her lively and witty spirit.



But we all know she lived on in the loving embrace of those who had been waiting to receive her. Several days later, her pastor spoke the following words at her funeral service:

... A funeral is in one way comparable to the celebration of a wedding; it is entering into a new life. It is seemingly a paradox that life imparts to us. On the one hand, we seek joy; and yet, on the other hand, our lives are filled with moments of sad good-byes. When parents send a son or daughter off to college, they are filled with a sense of pride and fulfillment, joy and hopes for the future. Yet, somewhere lingers the sadness of good-bye, and with that sadness, remain memories of past times when their children were young; when the home, Mommy and Daddy, were the only world they knew.

The same is true of the wedding day; the father says good-bye to the daughter who for all her life was only his. In one moment, joy and sorrow encounter in one heart.

Our lives are filled with such moments, for God is teaching us always to temper our sorrows with the knowledge that a greater good and higher destiny is being fulfilled. The parents who sent a child to college with a smiling face and a joyous, happy mind may later quietly shed a tear; but that sorrow passes and is consumed in the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. They remember that, after all, it is this moment for which they sacrificed their lives.

Likewise for the father whose daughter becomes a wife and a mother; his momentary sorrow is washed away in the new dimension of his life as a grandfather.

All of those moments are but practice for this moment. God is teaching us to go forward, trusting that a higher destiny, a greater good is being fulfilled. To give us that insight is one of the more important roles of faith.

Today we are sending Linna away to the ultimate college, and as we watch her go, we can be filled with a sense of joy for her accomplishment and hope for all that she will achieve there. Today, we give Linna away to the ultimate of bride-grooms. We watch her walk down the aisle of heaven with her beloved, and know that in this moment, she is consumed with an immeasurable joy. Let the knowledge that a better life has come for Linna temper our pain and properly position our sorrow as a secondary, temporary condition. Let our sorrow be washed away by the faith that in freely giving her, Linna will, one day, be returned to us in unimaginable splendor, when we join her there.

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