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## Perspectives on the Afterlife

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# Perspectives on the Afterlife

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THERE are infinite possibilities of what humans shall encounter after they have perished on this Earth. One cannot be certain what will transpire after death but every mortal being has their own belief on this matter. No human being really knows what happens after we die because we have not been able to communicate with the dead and ask them ourselves yet. Sure, there have been people who have had near-death experiences where they've encountered a dark tunnel with a bright light along with dead relatives, but we are not certain if it was the brain reacting to death or if these events really happened. Furthermore, there have also been religions that accumulated over millions of years that teach their worshippers what will happen if they follow a certain lifestyle. All these people can do is believe until one day, they experience it firsthand. Aside from religion, there is an opinion through science which has evidence of what happens to the body but not the spirit; as you can see there are many possibilities on this subject.

There are similarities between people's beliefs on afterlife. For example, in "Where Do You Go When You Die? The Increasing Signs that Human Consciousness Remains After Death" by Kastalia Medrano, and "Results of World's Largest Near Death Experiences," a study published by University of Southampton, both mention patients experiencing very similar insights during their near-death experiences. This would be something like coming across a dark tunnel with a warm bright light at the end. These two articles have very similar pieces of evidence on what happens after death, for instance, they mention why people seem to experience illustrations of things such as seeing loved ones, themselves on the operating table, or a tunnel. It is simply the body's brain trying to understand what is happening. In the article "What Happens to Our Consciousness When We Die?" author Kastalia Medrano states that after death the human brain is still active. Medrano continues, "can you imagine, 24 hours after [time

of death] you take a sample and the transcripts of the genes are actually increasing in abundance? That was a surprise" (Medrano). This explains that when the human body undergoes death, the brain cells seem to be more active and are not dying but instead, are increasing; the brain is possibly experiencing some form of activity even after death. A person would expect the opposite to occur but this can be a possibility of why people mention seeing things while on the brink of dying.

Furthermore, in other articles and documentaries I came across based on religions such as a YouTube video called, "What Happens to Our Bodies and Spirits After We Die?" In this video, it gave a clear explanation of what Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints believe happen to our spirits after death. These people are taught through their religion that their soul existed long before they were born on this Earth; their souls were in the heavens and were later Christ's "plan of salvation" to come onto Earth as mortals and gain experience over the years to later die and wait for resurrection, where their spirit will be joined together with their body ("What Happens to Our Bodies"). While watching this video, I made a significant amount of connections with a previous reading of another article named, "What Happens after Death?" by Bibleinfo, based on Christian beliefs. In this article it states Christians also believe in heaven, hell, and an afterlife in general (Bibleinfo). As you read on, the article gives off a few listings such as how they believe our spirits were created by the breath of life given by God and our bodies formed from the dust on the ground, and that once our time expires, the dust may return to the ground and our spirits to God during our 'resurrection'.

The belief of resurrection almost directly to how the Mormons believe Christ works - creating their souls and bodies to learn, then be brought back to heaven after one expires. One scripture from the Bible reads, "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing... their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). This clearly shows that the living know they will perish one day and fear for when their time comes, but the ones who have become deceased have had all their sins and worries washed away and live worry-free in the afterlife. The bible clearly states immortality for humans is impossible, that God himself is the only one who is truly immortal, so this raises a question about souls (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). If souls live on even after we die on another plane as a different entity from our bodies, then it would theoretically be immortal - so how does that fit in with those scriptures? We are told once Jesus comes back, we will receive immortality once again (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). We

are also informed that the righteous will not be brought to heaven immediately but remain slumbering in their tombs until Jesus returns and raises them to their new immortal lives (1 Corinthians 15:50-57).

I noticed the articles that I read were all from different time periods, some were from very recent years and some from the late 2000s. But I distinguished very little advancement in information. Each one lacked new knowledge and some even basic. I came to the conclusion that this question “what happens after we die?” is and possibly always will be a mystery. It has been centuries and no one yet is certain what happens after death because of lack of evidence and personal beliefs. I truly believe this question is an enigma, there are a lot of puzzles to it but people have lost interest because of its complexity. It seems that humans would rather leave it a mystery because of a fear factor we are all confronted with towards this question. Everyone can agree that death is a subject we are petrified of but people can all agree that it is definitely an interesting topic because we all have different opinions and not one can be proven yet.

One can argue that there is life beyond death, but is there really? This can only be demonstrated with a book written centuries ago and other sources can't justify this answer just yet either. This is just a question with many possibilities that are really based on the person's own beliefs. In the article “World's Largest near Death Experiences Study”, University of Southampton explains what happens to the human body as its life slowly perishes away. While reading this article it was straightforward about what happens during a person's last breath and what they think happens after. These medical professionals analyzed a person's death, mentioning how the brain activity is still very active even a few minutes after death, which they use to support the illustration of that near-death experience humans seem to encounter. “Researchers also tested the validity of conscious experiences using objective markers for the first time in a large study to determine whether claims of awareness compatible with out-of-body experiences correspond with real or hallucinatory events” (“Results”). The information from this article might be true but for some people, they explain that it was more than a hallucination; these people who have experienced that warm faint light at the end of the tunnel strongly believe it was their spirit going into heaven.

The article “What Happens to Us After We Die?” by Bibleinfo talks about Christian/Catholics; these people are taught by their church, there is a place called heaven and hell, and based on how you act on this earth, God, or Saint

Peter in some cases, will decide where you shall be placed after death. Those who are good will be resurrected: "At the end of time, our Lord will come again to judge the living and the dead. All souls will be rejoined with their bodies ("Roman Catholic Diocese of Allentown"). As you can see there are many beliefs in this category; the science is based on the physical structure of the human body and the religion is leaning more towards the spirit.

In the end, we do not know the definite answer to what happens in the afterlife; people have come up with many credences. These credences have yet to be proven credible because over the years, we have had no luck with finding fresh information, we've always used religion or past medical information. We may never know the answer until we're exposed to it firsthand ourselves. Until then we must all be considerate to other human beings' beliefs because in doing so we will live happier and more independently because we won't be worrying about other people's choices, after all, it is their choice. In the future, we will surely advance in technology that will help obtain more information about this topic, but I still believe it will be a riddle, one where people will have to wait and see for themselves in the afterlife. This really isn't something new, our life is like a riddle or even a box of chocolates, people might just never know what they might get but people should still be considerate with the type of "chocolate" they bite into and other people's choice of beliefs.

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