

Death and Life: Which is which?

A few years ago I was in the room with my father, and several other family members, when he died. What I found the most interesting was that none of us looked at him very much, but rather kept watching the monitors by his bed to see if his heart was beating, or if he was breathing. Those monitors were fascinating to watch and yet no one was connecting with him, his experience or his process. Granted, he was unconscious the entire time, but we were too engrossed by the monitors and watching for signs of death to pay attention to him. We weren't watching him for signs of death. Yet being there, holding his feet as he passed in the middle of the night that Christmas Eve was one of the best and most profound experiences of my life. I also had the privilege of carrying my grandmother's casket and placing her in the ground when she passed. Yes it was hard, but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything.

Noticing that phenomenon got me curious about our cultural values of death and life. We wish so much to disconnect from any reality around death because it reminds us of loss. We lose others to death and we all know that someday we will lose ourselves to death. The process of helping another pass over is incredible and yet we fear it. Why?

I remembered a line from my favorite prayer, psalm 23, "*Yeah though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me*". What did that mean?

What is the valley of the shadow of death? To me, it's what we call life. From Spirit's perspective, we are experiencing death while incarnate. We have lost our true selves through incarnation and when we pass over, we return to the living, our lives. I've seen souls pass over and I see where they go. Our eternal selves are truly where we live and this adventure we call life isn't real life at all. We are eternal beings and death from this life is of no significance. This life is a blip on the screen of our eternal selves just as this day is a blip on the screen of this life. Each one is both significant and completely unimportant.

But incarnate life is a good thing. It allows us the opportunity to experience all parts of us. As whole beings we cannot know our whole selves because we can't touch our

different aspects. Only through the process of entering darker energies, which creates separation, can we experience our whole selves.

I think it important to stipulate that being in this physical world, experiencing death (life) is a privilege and suicide is no solution to feeling like you want to go home. The reason is that when a person takes his own life, his soul goes to a different place than it would have had he died of natural causes. Where you end up is all about intent. I know someone who was paranoid schizophrenic and he was so miserable with hearing voices and having psychotic episodes that he wanted to die. He was thoroughly convinced that he would be better off. He was in the hospital on suicide watch and managed to hang himself with a towel in the bathroom. They revived him after 15 minutes. His body lives and his soul is stuck.

I've seen him hanging out in a void all by himself because he is terrified of passing over. He knows where he has to go and he doesn't want to. When a soul takes its own life, it must go through a process of having the tendency for suicide expunged from its karma. It would not serve us, or spirit, to come back time and time again only to leave immediately. The process of expulsion is done based on the soul's intent and clarity. In the case of the man I am referring to, he was very convinced that he was doing the right thing. He is now required to spend 75 of our years in suffering to completely remove all tendencies for suicide. He is still in a void because his body lives and he has remained attached to it although the brain is dead and he cannot occupy it. When his body does die, he will still have to go serve the process for the designated time. It is done in love and compassion just as we set limits for children with consequences, so must there be for souls. That is how we mature and get through the valley of the shadow of death.

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