

Life After Death

By Clark M. Thomas

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ABSTRACT

Belief in spiritual or physical life after mortal life is a lifeline to functional sanity for most of us. Whereas we humans can never scientifically prove this belief thesis, it has rarely been questioned within everyday cultures. How do humans differ from all other sentient species? What clear consequences flow from seemingly hardwired belief systems? Are modern science and logical philosophies essential guides, or is self-serving magical mysticism the best social formula?

In this month of Halloween [which is also my precise birthday] it is proper to cover the idea among humans of life after death.

Other highly sentient mammals and their families are acutely aware of individual death. Only we humans elevate elaborate ideas and schemes of life after death into timeless mysticism in the service of anthropocentric social order.

From an honest scientific perspective questions of individual and collective human life after death should be left unanswered, or just hypothesized. It is OK to wish, but not OK to equate all wishes with facts. Belief can summon some supporting evidence, but seldom enough evidence to equate mystical belief with facts.

Whereas many interesting metaphysical books have been written on eternal life, this essay will focus on four dimensions of life after death. We can make some progress by analyzing these four areas as if they were separate:

Individual Life After Death

No human is a spiritual island. We like to envision each of us as like the core within spheres of life and not-life, all of which equal the knowable and unknowable universe.

Where fact and fantasy diverge is when we attribute our spiritual journey to divine beings or forces that actually care about us. Logically, divine love of humans (*agape*) is perfectly possible, and on which we cannot place a probability. If things stopped there, then all of us could be happy scientific agnostics.

Individuals begin social life as the light in their parents' eyes, as we all should be. Loving nuclear families are a key bridge between individuals and the greater social order. Loving gods and their required rituals cement our ideas of transmigrating selves and souls. Everyday life thus goes forward until personal physical death, when we simply acquire another life after death, negating death itself. This is a structural functional belief matrix that nearly all of us embrace in one form or another. If religion were so accurate, then I could easily convert from scientific philosophy to being a priest in one religion or another.

However, there is "one small problem" that I confronted when I was seventeen and weakly considering becoming an Episcopal priest: There are many possible paths to gods or God. Some deities are jealous. Which is the correct path leading to the perfect afterlife? Can we ever know? We cannot know, because *finitude cannot surround infinitude*. Embracing one religious package and rejecting others is theologically dishonest *and* risky. I checked out of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and looked for honest inspiration elsewhere and everywhere.

Life Eternal Among Groups and Species

The *Bible* says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." (John 3:16 KJV) Note that God did nothing to rescue us all as individuals, only as a world species. Love for the human world is absolute; but love for individuals is conditional.

This passage is not far from what really goes on in the world, gods or not. We call this survival of the fittest, and by fittest we mean collectively the fittest. Species that can prosper in many environments are most likely to postpone joining the world's long history of extinguishing all but less than one percent of the total variety. Squishy humans are able to survive nearly everywhere. We also have been given the power through evolution and science to damage our mother biosphere, and we are doing it to our peril. As God passed around survival wisdom he seemingly ran short when he got to myopic *Homo sapiens*.

Meanwhile, we humans are mostly devoted to the everyday world with its immediate material rewards. Whenever one of us passes, there are somber graveside rituals reaffirming the value of the group and life everlasting, with only brief mentioning of the deceased. Go into any public cemetery, and contrast the vast family wealth wasted on granite memorials and buried caskets against the general paucity of daily visitors.

Only two junior generations usually remember the deceased, unless you were a major historical figure deserving a statue (too often somebody involved in the cruel deaths or exploitation of thousands of people not us).

In sum, life-after-life transmigration and reincarnation for cozy groups of humans is as sketchy as life-after-life transmigration and reincarnation is for individuals. Like it or not, for us all we exist from dust to dust. The eternal view beyond is essentially dusty and a real mystery. Most people therefore flee cemeteries, and quickly return to their happily myopic daily lives.

Life After Life for All Forms of Life

The Earth is not 6,000 years old, despite what magical Bronze Age creation texts suggest. Life on Earth, our genetic heritage, goes back several hundred million years. Earthlings may even be genetically Martians, or Martians may have first been Earthlings, depending on whose life-filled meteorites first arrived billions of years ago. Furthermore, it is becoming clear from astronomical discoveries that the thesis of *panspermia*, or universal life, makes sense, especially within the multiversal context.

At what point does one form of life become “worthy,” and the rest is to be used by the preferred life form? Is this something related to just one ecosystem, or is there something greater at work? Cosmologically, there is no way to discuss life outside of what we know, or to gauge their level of consciousness and worthiness. Mathematically, given all the potentially habitable planets we have already identified within a few hundred light years – and all the many others that are likely in our galaxy – and all the many, many others beyond – it is highly unlikely that human earthlings are at the apex of anything other than our local spot, for the time being. Loving gods will have their hands full.

Life itself is not really trying to get smarter, just to survive. Genes are at work even among viruses just as much as they are among us humans. Also, viruses are vastly more common than humans. The infamous Covid-19 viruses are just looking for ways to reproduce. They survive by numbers, and we try to survive by our wits. When by comparison we humans annually slaughter in factories billions of tame animals, we are just looking to maintain our superior place in the biosphere, for now.

If humans deserve life, why do other species not deserve life? If we move from expecting only individual eternity, to maintaining our genetic pool for much longer, then that is *de facto* life after life. Long after arrogant humans nuke themselves to oblivion, the so-called lowest life forms will enjoy our abandoned niches.

The True Life Eternal

So far we have shown that there is no demonstrable existential or essential life eternal that we can clearly perceive and conceive. There may be aspects of life going onward, if only in memories of later generations, but this is not what messianic religion wants for us. We desire something like a plush Heaven where we can go to escape the perils of daily life leading to illness and death. Ideally, we want our souls in the hereafter to be preserved and cleansed. We want flowers and puppies both now and forever. That's how churches fill pews and collection plates. However, we lose with our willful blindness understanding of that which is truly eternal.

Religions have an answer for the source of eternity. It is the idea that God is beyond time and place. A personified god was developed when gods were local and favored specific tribes, as with the Olympians or the Hebrew god. However, nobody has ever clearly shown how such gods appeared in the first place. If God is timeless, then how and why did he/she first exist? It is not enough to go full Roman Catholic and claim this core question is a mystery. Mystery or not, the question stands.

As weak as fuzzy mystical ideas of "the unmoved mover," or "the eternal oneness," or "the essence before existence," or all sorts of additional clever dodges may be – there is something here that can clearly lead to envisioning the true life eternal.

It is logically possible (with unknown probability) that there is a timeless "god force" that created and determines all that follows. The challenge today is to find some shred of physics that can help in understanding this eternal "god essence."

At the same time, progressing from our buddies on Mount Olympus to a distant, yet omnipresent, god force is a challenge we can accept. It is important to find in an elegant formula some way to explain infinite time and space, and still perceive the emergence of complexity leading to higher consciousness.

My physics, which is explained in recent essays found in the "Clark's Web Pages" section of ***astronomy-links.net***, starts and ends with the idea of resonating, *beaded, 3D strings*. Composing those beaded strings are *individual yin/yang electromagnetic spheres* at about the 10^{-37} m logarithmic dimension.

If you are serious about learning *and contributing to* a new physics that will be commonplace in a few years, then you are invited to peruse this collection of essays. I have chosen not to clutter this one essay with numerous footnoted links, most of which are ignored anyway by most readers. Do you seriously accept my growth challenge?

Consider that solar neutrinos near 10^{-22} m are about fifteen logarithmic dimensions larger than individual yin/yang EM spheres. Neutrinos easily penetrate the Earth. Yin/yang spheres are alone in the realm of sub-Planck quanta, but they only share some of the qualities of QM quanta as was conceived in the 20th century. Consider too that individual humans are about fifteen logarithmic dimensions larger than protons, which are 10^{-15} m.

How ironic and very beautiful it is that the smallest elemental unit of matter/energy is also the physical foundation of the entire multiverse of dynamic structures.

Yin/yang EM units are constantly interacting in time and space to both create and disassemble much larger components of it all. Yin/yang units appear to be immortal and fundamental. Upon this EM structure is the architecture of it all, including individuals and groups of human beings. This emerging paradigm is far from Michelangelo's God; but even such a god would be composed of far more ancient and fundamental yin/yang units.

This elegant paradigm reveals itself as poetry at the highest and most sublime level, if you choose to learn the symphony of 21st century physics. Step out of your physics Plato's cave, and embrace Reality.