

# Life after Death:

## Introduction:

**Charles Fink** investigates what it is about death that bothers us the most in order to find a definition of death. First he starts out by noting that people have a biological life, life of the physical body, and a conscious life, the life of experience or the mind. Then he asks, is it the loss of our physical life, or conscious life that most bothers us.

He gives two examples for us to consider. First, your doctor tells you that you are dying from a brain disease, but you can be cured if part of your brain is removed. However, after this operation, you will be a vegetable, and will never have a conscious thought again. Second example, your physical body is dying, but via a miracle of technology, your consciousness, your mind, will be transferred to a robot body intact.

He concludes that we would find the first example much more objectionable than the second example, and so it is the permanent loss of consciousness which bothers us the most about death. Consequently, "in the sense that matters to us most, death means the permanent loss of consciousness." (Fink, page 92) Fink points out that since the continuation of our consciousness is what we value with respect to life, then we should have no problem in accepting euthanasia for brain dead patients.

<sup>35</sup>However, it is certainly not a foregone conclusion that there is no life after death, given that we cannot argue be sure at this point about such basic things as does the external world exist, and do other minds exist! 4

## Definitions:

**Resurrection**/ is when a person survives death in the same body.

**Reincarnation**/ is when a person survives death in a different body.

**Discarnation**/ is when a person survives death with no body at all and is left just a soul.

<sup>36</sup>Still, Materialists offer the following argument as a reason why we should abandon the idea that there is life after death.

### **The Mind Body Dependence Argument:**

- 1) *You can only have life after death if a person's consciousness can continue after the death of the body,*
- 2) *But consciousness is dependent on a living body,*
- 3) *So therefore life after death is impossible. If you accept the idea that consciousness is dependent on the life of the body, then the problem that this argument has is that it does not rule out Resurrection or Reincarnation.*

If resurrection does occur after death, then consciousness need not be permanently suspended, since a body has been provided to be the source of your consciousness. The same can be said for reincarnation.

<sup>37</sup>Moreover, we need not accept the premise 2) that consciousness is dependant on a living body, for it certainly has not been proven beyond a doubt. Materialist offer as evidence the great number of cases of brain damage that have resulted in the impairment or extinction of mental abilities.

But such evidence in itself does not constitute irrefutable proof, for, I would like to point out here, brain damage may not mean that the mind has been damaged as well, it might mean instead only that means, or organs, by which the mind can interact with the physical world have been damaged.

For example, if I cut a person's spine in such a way that I tern him into a quadriplegic, and I also cut the nerves going to his ears and tongue, it does not follow that I have turned that person into an idiot who no longer can think.

Yet, any who had not met that person before would assume that he was such an idiot. Something similar may be happening to brain damage cases, the mind is still there, but its physical connection to the external world has been limited.

If Dualists are correct and the mind is non physical and does not even exist in space, there is no reason to suppose that the destruction of the physical brain would entail the destruction of the mind.

<sup>38</sup>Fink points out the possibility that mental events may be able to cause other mental events. So if a physical event causes a mental event, namely the impression of pain in my finger, I may have further thoughts about this pain, considerations, deliberations, judgments all caused by this mental impression of pain itself, and if mental events can cause other mental events, there is no reason why we must suppose that this chain of mental events must stop after the body has died and its physical input to the mind has ceased.

<sup>39</sup>So far, we have entertained the idea that death can be defined as the permanent loss of consciousness and moreover, this is the very reason why people think death is bad. But if this is the definition of death, then the odd question that pops up is, why fear death? Consider that the permanent loss of consciousness cannot be a bad experience, for it is no experience at all.

So it makes no sense to sit in fearful expectation of death itself, for it cannot feel like anything at all. Perhaps we fear death because it means the end of good things happening to us. But even the most miserable and unhappy wretch may well fear death. So perhaps the fear of death itself, something we can never know, is simply hardwired into us together with the instinct to survive. If the source of this fear is biological, then no philosophical discussions will serve to totally mitigate it.

### **Questions For The Class:**

- 1) What is the mind body dependence argument?
- 2) What is disincarnation.
- 3) According to Fink, what is it that we fear most about death?
- 4) Does the mind body dependence argument rule out life after death?
- 5) Why do we fear the end of our consciousness when such an event cannot feel good or bad?
- 6) If a mental event can cause other mental events, than what does this say about life after death?
- 7) What is cryogenic suspension?
- 8) What is resurrection?
- 9) Can an omnipotent God destroy a soul?
- 10) According to Buddhists, do people have souls?
- 11) Everyone considers souls to be immortal. True or False
- 12) Imagine that you have a fatal illness, and the doctor tells you that he can cure you of it by performing an operation on your brain, but after this operation, you will have a completely different personality. Is this the same as death?

13) If the brain is damaged, does this mean that the non physical mind has been damaged?

14) What is reincarnation?

15) If your soul joins the soul of the universe, like in Buddhism, is this like death?

## **Different Conceptions of the Afterlife:**

### **The Aztecs,**

The conceptions of an afterlife that we are familiar with is one in which people are either rewarded or punished for their ethical behavior on earth. And this seems to be pretty natural idea, perhaps partly derived from such things as the parent child relationship and the boss employee relationship and certainly the prevailing societal pressure to conform to the prevailing value system.

However, the Aztecs had a very different idea of the after life than we do. What determined a person's condition after life was not how they lived their lives on earth, but rather how they died. Also, they did not believe that souls lived on forever. At the end of the world, all souls will die.

There were four destinations for the deceased corresponding to the cardinal directions, a western, eastern, and southern paradise and a northern hell equivalent.

Warriors who died in battle or as sacrificial victims were destined to depart to the eastern paradise of the sun or *Ichan Tonatiuh Ilhuijcan*, where assembled on a great plain, they greeted its rising by beating upon their shields and escorting it on its journey to the zenith. After four years in the 'heaven sun' they descended to the earth in the form of beautiful birds of bright plumage and butterflies spending their time among flowers. tradesmen who died on their journey, and those who were human sacrifices also went to this paradise.

The inhabitants of the Western paradise were women who died during childbirth. As the counterpart of the warriors they also went to the paradise of the sun bearing to it a litter of bright feathers from the zenith to the horizon, when they descended to the earth in the form of moths.

Thus the sun was eternally kept in motion through the constant alternating help of the warriors and the women, the former helping in its daily rise and the latter in its diurnal setting.

The southern paradise was the terrestrial paradise was the home of the god *Tlaloc*, the rain god, a place of delight "where plants and flowers flourished in a

miraculous fertility and summer was perpetual" (Joyce 1920: 102). To it were designated those who had died of dropsy, gout, scabies and leprosy; also either by drowning or being struck by lightning. Anyone who perished in connection with aquatic themes was assured a place there.

The Northern Hades was called *Mictlan* or the realm of the underworld. To it went those who died of natural death or old age. In it resided the god *Mictlantecuhtli*. Mictlan was variously described as an area of darkness situated below the earth on which the sun never shone, the kingdom of obscurity and death or a place without exits or holes.

**The Aztecs thought that the underworld had nine levels.** Mictlan was the lowest level. Those destined to go to Mictlan had to undertake a four year journey facing perils and menaces, through the eight underworld levels to get there. **One the first** level, the soul had to pass between two clashing mountains, **on the second**, to run on the back of a great snake, **on the third** to run on the back of a huge lizard, **on the fourth**, to traverse eight deserts, **on the fifth** to go over eight hills, and **on the sixth** to encounter a wind full of stone knives. **On the eighth level**, the soul reached the great river which must be crossed by swimming.

The aid of a red dog was necessary for this final stage and a dog of this color was reared in the house and slain at the funeral by thrusting an arrow down its throat. The body was placed by the side of the defunct, with a cotton string around its neck for guidance purposes. "The dog was to perform the part of Charon, and carry the king on his back across the deep stream called *Chicunahuapan* 'nine waters', a name which points to the nine heavens of the Mexicans" (Bancroft, 1883: 605).

Once the souls have reached Mictlan, they die one final time and stop existing all together. Because of this, Aztec tradition prescribes that offerings to the dead will stop being made after the fourth year after death.

The Aztec religion was based to two ideas, the world was unstable and death and continually threatened it, and the necessity to make sacrifices to the gods.

Thanks to Quetzalcóatl's self-sacrifice, he sprinkled his own blood on the ancient bones of Mictlan, "the Place of Death," gave birth to men. Through sacrifice, the sun was created when the God Nanahuatzin threw himself in the fire, and later when the sun demanded that the other gods give him their blood so that he would move through the heavens.

The Aztecs believed that the world was coming to an end. The ultimate destruction of the universe could not be prevented, but it could be delayed. The Aztecs saw the sun as a warrior who fought a daily battle across the sky against the forces of darkness. As long as the sun remained strong, he would prevail in

combat and the world would survive. The Aztecs believed they could keep the sun strong by nourishing him with a source of vital energy: human blood, preferably the vigorous blood of warriors captured in battle.

To the Aztecs, unceasing warfare and human sacrifice were sacred duties upon which the preservation of the universe depended.

For the Aztecs, when the world finally ends, demon women who wear no skin, will devour the inhabitants of earth, the stars will fall from the sky, the ground will be consumed by earth quakes, and the sun will cease to rise. All will be darkness, and empty, and finally the world will come to an end.

### **The Egyptians,**

The Egyptians had an idea of the afterlife that was much more congruent to our own, consider the following quote from the book of the dead, {The soul in this case was facing the 42 gods on his personal judgment day}

*Homage to thee, O great God, Lord of Maati! I have come unto thee, O my Lord, and I have brought myself hither that I may behold thy beauties. I know thee, I know thy name, I know the names of the forty-two Gods who live with thee in the Hall of Maati...I have not committed sins against men. I have not opposed my family and kinfolk. I have not acted frequently in the Seat of Truth. I have not known men who were of no account. I have not defrauded the humble man of his property. I have not done what the gods abominate. I have not vilified a slave to his master. I have not inflicted pain. I have not caused anyone to go hungry. I have not made any man to weep. I have not committed murder....I have not encroached on the fields (of others). I have not added to the weights of the scales...I have not driven the cattle away from their pastures. I have not snared the geese in the goose-pens of the gods. I have not caught fish with bait made of the bodies of the same kind of fish.*

The Egyptians then did believe that what happened to you in the afterlife depended on your ethical conduct on earth. It is also apparent from this at least, that their ethical values were more or less like ours.

It is clear that the Egyptians believed that it was necessary for one to be mummified in order to have an afterlife at all. If you were one of those misfortunates who could not afford to have one done of you, then you were guaranteed oblivion.

For the Egyptians, the afterlife consisted of everlasting life in your own body enjoying all the things that humans enjoy, including material wealth---but much better. If you were a bad person or you could not afford a proper burial, then you did not go to some hell, you just stopped existing all together.

Death was not seen as the last stage of life, simply as a state in which one was at rest awaiting revivification. We know little of the peasantry; their lives, and thus their deaths, are not easily reconstructed.

For those fortunate to live comfortably, however, funerary objects, mummification, and entombment tell us how dangerous the next life could be. Ample evidence exists of how terrifying the afterlife was: inscriptions from the Book of the Dead, the Book of the Two Ways, the Amduat (a section of the Book of the Netherworld) found their way onto objects accompanying the corpse.

Often, the sarcophagus itself had instructions on the inside of it to tell the deceased what he needed to do in order pass the tribulations necessary to achieve the afterlife.

These inscriptions were spells to be ward off and protect the dead as they progressed from netherworld to the Hall of Judgment. The dead chose to travel on the solar barque, a low-slung boat from which Re, the sun god, recreated the world every day, as a way to achieve eternal life.

A priest had to perform the, "Opening of the Mouth," ceremony over the mummified body, whereby all the incantations restored all the senses to the body. Speech especially was needed, since the Egyptians had to justify their time on earth upon arrival at the Hall of Judgment.

The other senses were needed immediately because the first trip after death was to the Field of Reeds, the land of wish-fulfillment. Having to pass through seven gates, aided by the magic spells inscribed upon the funerary objects, the dead arrived in the presence of Osiris, god of the netherworld, to face judgment. The ceremony was called, "weighing the heart," and explains why the heart remained intact while the priests removed the other vital organs and placed them in canopic jars.

Justifying himself was not easy. Face to face with forty-two gods, the heart of the dead was weighed in the presence of the jackal-headed Anubis, god of the dead, against a feather, representing Maat, goddess of truth. Balancing the scale meant immortality.

Should the heart not balance perfectly, Amemet { the head of a crocodile, the body of a leopard and the backside of a hippopotamus } devoured it, and Seth, murderer of Osiris, ate the rest of the body. It is little wonder then that spells, tokens, ushebtis, shabtis, amulets, and charms held such sway over the Egyptians.

Curiously, the Egyptians thought that one could not continue in the afterlife if one's mummified body was destroyed.

## Questions for the class:

- 1) The Aztecs thought that the world would last forever. True or False
- 2) The Aztecs thought, in general, that souls lasted for ever. True or False
- 3) The Egyptians thought that bad people did not have an afterlife. True or False
- 4) According to the Egyptians, what would happen to you if you were not mummified?
- 5) According to the Aztecs, what is it that determines where a given person's soul will go?
- 6) For the Aztecs, what type of afterlife did the majority of the people have?
- 7) According to the Egyptians, what is it that determines where a given person's soul will go?
- 8) What type of life is the afterlife for the Egyptians?
- 9) Why did the Aztecs think that human sacrifices were necessary?
- 10) For the Aztecs, if you had been sacrificed to the Gods, what paradise did you end up in?  
(Eastern paradise)
- 11) How long did the Aztecs think that the afterlife lasted for the average person?
- 12) For the Egyptians, what was the function of the heart?
- 13) For the Aztecs, what was the end of the world going to be like?
- 14) For the Egyptians, what would happen to the soul of a person whose mummy was destroyed?
- 15) The Egyptians thought that the mummy would come back to life and travel to the land of the Gods. True or False?



## The Greeks,

For the Greeks, moral conduct on earth dictated where one would go in the afterlife. Also they thought that souls lived on forever. The main “Locations” one could go would be **Hades**, **Tartarus**, and **Elysium**, the Island of the blest. There are some other special arias around Hades that will be mentioned later.

Hades was more or less a neutral place, **Tartarus** was a place of punishment, and Elysium was a place of reward. Hermes would guide the dead first to Hades across the river Styx. Charon, the ferryman, would charge a fee to transport the dead across the river. Because of this, it was a Greek custom to put a coin under the tongue of the deceased so that he/she could pay the toll.

**Hades** (Hades is also the God of the underworld and his wife is Persephone, daughter of Demeter) was the place most people ended up. Here, people lived a flavorless existence of a shadow or phantom. This is not a place of punishment, but there is no pleasure and the mind is confused and oblivious. If you were not particularly bad or exceptionally good or friends with a god, this is where you ended up.

Beyond Hades, there is **Limbo** where the souls of children, and suicides and those condemned to death on false charges would go. Next you would find **Vale of Mourning** where the souls of those consumed by unhappy love would go. Next you would get to the **Fields of Gold** where those who were famous in war would go. It is not clear that those living in these other fields were much better off than those living in Hades.

Finally you would come to the field of judgment which would contain a forking road, one side going to **Tartarus**, and the other going to **Elysium**. In this place you could be judged to be good or bad and sent to the corresponding place. Most people did not get to go to the fields of judgment according to this conception of the afterlife.

Those who were very bad or had annoyed the gods especially were sent to **Tartarus** (Among those punished in **Tartarus** are also those who in life hated their own brothers, those who struck their parents, those who loving fraud entangled their clients, those who kept their wealth for themselves without ever sharing (these are the majority), those who killed for adultery, those engaged in treason, those who corrupted the laws and became dictators, those who entered the beds of their daughters, and others who committed numerous crimes which would never cease to fill an unending catalogue; but equally unending are the punishments and retributions inflicted here: rolling huge rocks, whirling round, or sitting in the Chair of Oblivion are just a few examples.).

**Tartarus** is pretty much an equivalent of our hell. **Tartarus** is a dark place under the earth with fire and brimstone guarded by **Erinye Trisiphone**, with

her bloody robe, and sleepless day and night. Here avenging spirits, goddesses of vengeance punish the wicked. Those who are very good or are especially favored by the gods get to go to **Elysium**. Those who dwell in Elysium exercise upon grassy playing-fields or have friendly wrestling matches on the yellow sands; others dance or chant and sing poems.

## **Zoroastrianism,**

Zoroastrianism, being approximately 3000 years old, is the second oldest living religion. Hinduism is considered older for it is the religion that **Zarathusta** was preaching against. It is not known when Zarathustra lived. The Greeks placed his birth at 6000 BC, but western scholars place his time at 2000-1000 BC—perhaps latter (The Gathas of Zarathusta, Ed Pilo Nanavutty, 1999, 13-16) Zarathushtra was its founding prophet, and he lived in the what used to be known as Persia but is now modern Iraqi and Iran. The main symbol of Zoroastrianism is a burning fire, which is thought to represent the likeness of Ahura Mazda, the omni sent, omnipotent, benevolent god of the universe.

Locked in open conflict he proclaimed, were the two primordial spirits---Spenta Mainyu, the Holy Spirit of **Ahura Mazda** and His diabolical adversary, **Anghra Mainyu**, the Hostile Spirit.

According to the Zoroastrian texts, Ahura Mazda (Ph. Ohrmazd), through His Omniscience knew of His Own Goodness and His Infinite Self, as well as He was aware of the Hostile Spirit's limited strength and finite existence. In order to destroy His adversary, Ahura Mazda created an immaculate material world of the seven creations to trap the Hostile Spirit.

Ahura Mazda knew that Anghra Mainyu, because of his inherently destructive nature and ignorance, would attack the material world bringing within it disorder, falsehood, wickedness, sorrow, cruelty, disease, suffering and death. Man, Ahura Mazda's finest creation, is believed to be the central figure in this cosmic struggle.

The prophet declared that it is during this period of conflict that man, through free will, should choose to fight and vanquish the Hostile Spirit using the ethical paradigm of Goodness, the Good Mind, Truth, Power, Devotion, Perfection and Immortality. These seven qualities collectively came to be known as the Amesha Spentas---"Bounteous Immortals".

It is the responsibility of man to imbibe the virtues of these divinities in order to know how to generate the right thoughts, words and actions. Zarathushtra recognized that the use of these principles of righteous living would enable man to bring about the eventual annihilation of evil in this world.

Man's unique spiritual quest, according to Zoroastrianism, is linked to the preservation and promotion of the Wise Lord's seven creations, namely the sky, waters, earth, plants, cattle, man and fire.

The last creation, fire, is a potent reality in Zarathushtra's revelation, as the prophet saw fire to be the physical representation of Asha (Order/Truth/Righteousness), and as a source of light, warmth and life for his people. All the religious rituals (the performance of which is an important Zoroastrian duty), are solemnized in the presence of fire, the life-energy which permeates and makes dynamic the Wise Lord's other six creations.

Zarathushtra, or Zoroaster, taught that since this world created by Ahura Mazda is essentially good, man should live well and enjoy its bountiful gifts though always in moderation, as the states of excess and deficiency in Zoroastrianism, are deemed to be the workings of the Hostile Spirit.

Man, in Zoroastrianism, is encouraged to lead a good and prosperous life and hence monasticism, celibacy, fasting and the mortification of the body are anathema to the faith; such practices are seen to weaken man and thereby lessen his power to fight evil. The prophet saw pessimism and despair as sins, in fact as yielding to evil. In his teachings, man is encouraged to lead an active, industrious, honest and above all, a happy and charitable life.

Upon physical death (which is seen as the temporary triumph of evil), the soul will be judged at the Bridge of the Separator, where the soul, it is believed, will receive its reward or punishment, depending upon the life which it has led in this world, based upon the balance of its thoughts, words and deeds. If found righteous, the soul will ascend to the abode of joy and light, whilst if wicked, it will descend into the depths of darkness and gloom. The latter state, however, is a temporary one, as there is no eternal damnation in Zoroastrianism.

There is a promise, then, of a series of saviours the **Saoshyants**, who will appear in the world and complete the triumph of good over evil. Evil will be rendered ineffective and Ahura Mazda, the Infinite One, will finally become truly Omnipotent in Endless Light.

There will then take place, a general Last Judgment of all the souls awaiting redemption, followed by the Resurrection of the physical body, which will once again meet its spiritual counterpart, the soul. Time, as we know it, will cease to exist and the seven creations of Ahura Mazda will be gathered together in eternal blessedness in the Kingdom of Mazda, where everything, it is believed, will remain in a perfect state of joy and undyingness.

Zoroaster taught about a resurrection of the dead in the Gathas. Known as the "future body," the bones of the dead will assume their flesh and be re-entered by the soul (which has been present in heaven, hell) on the Last Day. Zoroaster

claimed that every created thing has its own spirit within. Ahura Mazda first created the spirits and later gave them their "material forms." This form was what Zoroaster called perfection; the Last Day will return the spirits to that perfection when they may enter Ahura Mazda's Paradise as a soul clothed in a flawless, immortal body. A physical resurrection was also a main concept in the Last Day. It is expected that a river of molten metal will capture all of humanity, those living and the "future bodies." This would create the perfect kingdom of Ahura Mazda on earth. It is important to note that Zoroaster spoke of an end to history, not an end of the world (Boyce 366).

### **Christian Tradition,**

The afterlife according to the Christian tradition is also a two stage affair curiously reminiscent of. Paul Kriwaczek suggests a historical connection between Zoroastrianism and Christianity in his "In Search of Zarathustra." Paul Kriwaczek points out that it is in the book of Daniel, old testament, in which we first get the ideas of resurrection after death and here there is also the idea of a final judgment and the end of the world. (2003, 160-1) Daniel lived with the Babylonians, part of the Persian Empire whose state religion is Zoroastrianism. So, during the first stage, the wicked and those that deny God go to hell, those who accept God and have committed pardonable offenses go to purgatory where they are purified so that they can go to heaven. And those that have accepted God and have been good, go to heaven. Hell is dark, fire and brimstone and the wicked are punished there. Purgatory (for the Catholic Tradition) contains a purifying fire that for those who need to be improved. Heaven is where the good get to enjoy the beatific vision, or the direct contemplation of God. This is conceived of as the highest obtainable pleasure. The second stage happens during the apocalypse, or the last judgment of mankind. On this day everyone is resurrected and judged as good or bad for the last time. Presumably, those who were at that time were enjoying heaven or suffering hell are interrupted and then resurrected for the final judgment. Those who are judged bad are sent back to hell again, but those who are judged good do not go back to heaven, instead they get to live in the new city of god or the new Jerusalem on Earth. Consider the following quote.

From Revelation,

Resurrection of Mandkind:

{NOTE: Harper's Bible Commentary (Ed James L. Mays, 1988, 1317) points out that the second resurrection in Revelations, or the resurrection of mankind, is not directly mentioned in Revelation, but is implied, and they have as evidence of this the following quote:}

*And I saw the thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the*

*word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand were finished. This is the first resurrection. Rev 20:4-5*

Here those who had refused the beast and his prophet and were killed thereby, were brought back to life in the first resurrection and lived with Christ in the millennial city for a thousand years. Afterwards, Satan and his army attack the city and he is defeated and cast to the lake of fire. (Rev 20:5-9)

*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev 20:12-15*

We also have,

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

*And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: Mat 25: 31-34, 41.*

Then we get the idea that the world is going to come to an end. It will be replaced by a new heaven and earth.

*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Rev 21:1*

*God brings the new Jerusalem to earth.*

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Rev 21:2*

*God will live amongst his chosen people in this new Jerusalem,*

*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Rev 21: 3*

Also,

*And I saw no temple therein (the ne Jerusalem); for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. Rev 21:22*

The new world has a very different nature than the old world that we are accustomed to.

*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. Rev 21:4*

Describe for the class the new Jerusalem as described in the bible.

### **Questions a la Sigmund Freud.**

- 1) What purpose does the afterlife serve for people alive now?
- 2) Why is it comforting for people to have in place a system of divine punishment?
- 3) What is the point of having evil people roast in hell for ever? They could just disappear instead for example?
- 4) Freud says that the regulations of a given society can only be maintain through some form of coercion because people have the following two characteristics. 1) people are lazy and 2) that rational arguments cannot stop them from pursuing their passions. Given this, is religion, considered as a system of automated coercion, necessary for us to have a moral society?
- 5) Is there something to be said against having a perfect world, ie a perfect everlasting natural world inhabited by immortal perfectly moral people?
- 6) Can science ever replace religion?

7) What would be the most satisfying kind of afterlife, and does the Christian Tradition provide it?

8) Freud says “Critics persist in describing as ‘deeply religious’ anyone who admits to a sense of man’s insignificance or impotence in the face of the universe, although what constitutes the essence of the religious attitude is not this feeling but only the next step after it, the reaction which seeks a remedy for it. The man who goes no further, but humbly acquiesces in the small part which human beings play in the great world—such a man is, on the contrary, irreligious in the truest sense of the world. (Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, 1989, 41-42)  
What does Freud mean here.

### **Questions for the class:**

1) Is Hades like hell for the Greeks?

2) What kind of people go to Hades?

3) What kind of people go to Limbo?

4) What kind of place is Tartarus?

5) Do the Greeks think that souls live forever? Yes or No

6) What kind of place was Elysium?

7) Zoroastrianism maintains that there is a heaven and hell which are pretty much equivalent to the Christian Heaven and Hell. True or False

8) What is the Zoroastrian supreme God, Ahura Mazda, like?

9) What is the Zoroastrian evil spirit, Anghra Mainyu, like?

10) What is Judgment Day like for the Zoroastrians?

11) Will the world as we know it end on this day?

12) What is the Kingdom of Mazda?

13) What is Judgment day like according to the Christian Tradition.

14) According to the Christian tradition, will people live in heaven or earth after Judgment Day?

15) What is the Kingdom of Jerusalem?

16) Will the world as we know it come to an end on this day?

**Additional Questions for the class:**

- 1) The Aztecs thought that the world would last forever. True or False
- 2) The Aztecs thought, in general, that souls lasted for ever. True or False
- 3) The Egyptians thought that bad people did not have an afterlife. True or False
- 4) According to the Egyptians, what would happen to you if you were not mummified?
- 5) According to the Aztecs, what is it that determines where a given person's soul will go?
- 6) For the Aztecs, what type of afterlife did the majority of the people have?
- 7) According to the Egyptians, what is it that determines where a given person's soul will go?
- 8) What type of life is the afterlife for the Egyptians?
- 9) Why did the Aztecs think that human sacrifices were necessary?
- 10) For the Aztecs, if you had been sacrificed to the Gods, what paradise did you end up in?  
(Eastern paradise)
- 11) How long did the Aztecs think that the afterlife lasted for the average person?
- 12) For the Egyptians, what was the function of the heart?
- 13) For the Aztecs, what was the end of the world going to be like?
- 14) For the Egyptians, what would happen to the soul of a person whose mummy was destroyed?
- 15) The Egyptians thought that the mummy would come back to life and travel to the land of the Gods. True or False?



