

# Religious Conceptions of Life After Death - No Thanks!!

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Humans are by evolutionary nature omnivorous multi-taskers. Not multi as in “at the same time,” but multi in the sense of many varied tasks over time – in the daily and seasonal and yearly rounds. Always on the move and ready to take on what appears to advantage, humans do not sit well – for long. Leisure, rest, relaxation, and respite are momentary pulses in a schedule of moving and doing. We are not happy with static dwelling in any one state or activity; we thrive on variety and seek it out; or we make it for ourselves if our situations become too constant, consistent or predictable. Constant states, even of the most delightful kind quickly become BORING, and we leave them behind, even if it means taking substantial risks in doing so. Human life is grounded in the discovery of the next challenge. The need for diversity of activity is reflected in our saying, “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy.” We break down formal education into 10, 20, 40 minute pulses of different activities, and our play and game are all about downs, and innings, and sets, and hands, and rounds; and varied kinds of involvement and strategies of interaction in each of these units. We have discovered that the assembly line, when designed for repetitious acts, does not work, even in industry. Productivity and quality soar when work is varied and human teamwork is invoked. We are social animals, and we thrive on variety so long as it is not threatening.

So, if we are by nature in need of variety and challenge, why do we map out a life after death that is so placid, so static, so just dwelling in a constant state of being, knowing, bliss? It is as if death is just a time out, a moment of relaxation – that is eternal. It is as if we conceive of life as work, and death as perpetual time off with nothing we have to DO. But what our life tells us is that we could not tolerate a state of nothing to do for very long. As humans, we do not dwell well in idleness, even blissful idleness. So, while it SEEMS desirable to pose blissful idleness as our ideal perpetual state after death, in fact we would find ourselves “climbing the walls” to get out of it after a very short stay. Or is this blissful idleness we so gloriously prepare for as our reward for a life well led really Hell in disguise? Without realizing it, have we envisioned an ideal Heaven that in fact is our worst nightmare, Hell? To be idle is to invite trouble since we WILL find something to do, and when we can do anything we want, what we want to do can be totally ego driven, destructive and hellish. Ironically, the conditions our major religions suggest for heaven in the afterlife for the worthy are in fact quite hellacious.

All of this just exposes the foolishness of religious conceptions of life after death. It takes almost no reflection at all to recognize that these conceptions deny our very nature as exploratory humans and are entirely unsatisfactory and actually degrading. What seems an ideal alternative in the context of the travails of everyday life is in fact a form of torture for the ever after. We have to offer ourselves something better than this because any God worthy of the concept would not “reward” us with perpetual torture.

A little thought suggests that a milk and honey eternity is little more than a horror show constructed for humans who are unhappy and exhausted in life and who recognize neither their basic nature nor what would be really fulfilling. Personally, I do not want to have anything to do with the way these versions of life everlasting are envisioned in our major religions. If I have to “go on” in any sense of my separate self, I would rather continue to be stimulated by many challenges and much to DO! My ideal life after death is a “forever” of discovery that is unencumbered by physical limitations, that is surrounded by creative and respectful relations, and that participates productively in our expanding universe.

Come to think about it, maybe there is no better way to accomplish this state of infinite continued participation at death than to release all notions of a separate self and dissolve into the ever Re-creative ALL, especially since this is the same “ether” out of which we emerge at conception! Forget the worm return until I get it “Right;” merging with the ALL is a form of “reincarnation” I can go with, a version of dissolving to become some of every thing – Again!

Start.....To....Finish, Beginning...To...End, Alpha...To...Omega  
The Beginning and the End are Identical.

I Revel in Recycling!!