

On The Edge of the Unknown:
Death -
the Ultimate Nondual Experience

(Phenomenological/Insight)

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DEATH:

the ultimate nondual experience
truly on the Edge of the Unkown

Thank you for coming to this workshop to
experience - albeit virtually -

DEATH

Beginning of Human Life?

When does human life begin?

An age old question yet unanswered.

A Philosophy

When human life begins depends upon one's philosophy:

At the conscious/unconscious **intention** to possibly generate a human zygote?

The moment of conception?

At the first heart beat?

At the first breath?

Seven days after birth?

Birth and Death

On the other hand ...

"Birth" and "Death"

are just terms describing an illusion as there is no birth and no death.

No Birth No Death???

- Human life never begins or ends.
- Life is a form of energy.
- Energy cannot be created or destroyed.
- Energy just individuates.
- Emptiness is Form.
- Form is Emptiness.
- Hence, *Birth & Death* are surface labels.

Assumption of an event

So let us assume that there is an event we label as

"birth"

and another as

"death".

THE FACT OF DEATH

has several considerations:

www.tc.umn.edu/~parkx032/UD.html

***An Existential Understanding of Death:
A Phenomenology of Ontological Anxiety.***

James Park.

(Minneapolis, MN: www.existentialbooks.com, 2001)

(ISBN: 0-89231-949-6; (Library of Congress call number:
BD444.P37 2001)

Based upon insights provided by Martin Heidegger

THE FACTS OF DEATH

1. An intellectual construct (*cf* Birth/Death).
2. An empirical fact.
3. An observable occurrence.
4. A finitude.
5. Objective-external.
6. Abstract-general.
7. Unowned.

Death: Intellectual Construct

Death as an intellectual construct takes on many meanings or no meaning:

Death is the end.

Death is the beginning.

Death is the completion.

There is no death as there is no birth

Therefore, Death is an illusion.

Death: Empirical Fact

All phenomenal things cease to be.

“Dust to dust.”

"Ashes to Ashes."

Death: Observable Phenomenon

If we trust our senses,
we experience human forms in death,
real or imagined (enter **ZOMBIES!!**)

Death: Finitude

- *Eternal* means "no beginning and no end".
- *Infinite* means "a beginning and no end".
- *Finite* means "a beginning and an end".

Given conventional reality and one's philosophy,
death begins when human life begins.

At best, death is a *finite* experience
with infinite or eternal **(energy)** overtones,
depending upon one's cosmology:

Does the universe continue to come into and out of
being? The answer suggests an overtone.

Death: Objective-External

If one takes one's own death *PERSONALLY*,
then death is an *objective-external experience*.

If one takes one's own death with equanimity,
dispassionately,
then death is an *subjective-internal experience*.

Life is not a personal event.

Life is just life.

Death: Abstract-General

This discussion we are having now may be said to be an abstract-general consideration about death.

Death: Unowned

All of the preceding may be taken with a grain of salt or a ton of gold bullion.

In either case, **it is not until we actually die to our own selves that we CAN actually live.**

Until we die to our own selves, death is unowned.

Being unowned, we kid ourselves into thinking we are indestructible, this pill or that procedure will give us life eternal when in truth such only masks the inevitable, if we are honest with ourselves – otherwise, we are just

neurotic, the hallmark of duality.

Essence of Neuroticism

The essence of neuroticism is fear, in this case **THE FEAR OF CEASING-TO-BE:**

1. Emotional response.
2. Arises from empirical fact.
3. Personal apprehension.
4. Awareness of my finitude.
5. Subjective-deep.
6. Specific-personal.
7. Owned.

Fear of Death: Emotional Response

Remember Frank Herbert's "DUNE" and the Litany of the BeneGesserit?

"Fear is the little mind killer.

Fear is the little death.

I will face my fear,

I will allow fear to pass through me.

Once fear is gone, only I remain."

.

Facing FEAR

Such a remembrance would be an emotional **RESPONSE** to death with equanimity.

Otherwise, we **REACT** with terror, remorse, sadness, hope and so forth - all natural dualistic emotional reactions to death: another's or one's own

Fear of Death: Empirical Fact

The basic human emotion is FEAR, specifically, the **FEAR OF DEATH**.

This is a fact of life.

To the degree we might wish to and do avoid death in all its trappings, to that same degree do we express neurotic behaviors, specifically *anxiety* as the definitive symptom.

ONTOLOGICAL ANXIETY

1. Inner state-of-being.
2. Arises from my internal 'nothing'.
3. Existential disclosure.
4. Constant internal threat.
5. Arises from the core of my self.
6. More “mine” than “my” death.
7. Lays claim to my self.

O. ANXIETY: Inner State-of-Being

We are anxious if not anxiety itself: vague, free-floating sense of doom - the other shoe is about to hit the floor.

We may be consciously aware of this angst or not depending upon the degree we distract ourselves from ourselves.

Distraction may be any behavior we engage in so that we do not have to face the reality of our own existence: ***over involvement*** in Drugs-Sex-Rock'n Roll, TV, Sports, vacations, shopping, ***comfort*** food, etc.

O. ANXIETY: Internal 'Nothing'

We distract ourselves from the reality that *in the stream of things* we are essentially nothing to speak of given the sum total of humans before, during and after our presence now in human form.

There is really *nothing within us of worth or value* so we stuff ourselves with material things we really do not need or even want: with wine-men/women-song, with blind acquisition of material or spiritual wealth and other forms of

DENIAL (Don't Even kNow I Am Lying).

O. ANXIETY: Existential Disclosure-1

Life is continually offering us lessons.

Birth and Death are obvious givens of human existence.

Anxiety is but yet another teacher.

Sometimes a life-changing event occurs that puts us directly in touch with the fact of our mortality.

Are we living our life or is our life living us?

O. ANXIETY: Existential Disclosure-2

We lack confidence or trust in ourselves to do this, that or the other thing.

If we but listen to our anxiety, we come to know that **we create a lack to avoid owning up to one essential truth:**

**That in the Face of Death
we are the Masters of our own Fate.**

By saying we lack confidence or trust, we shift from ourselves the burden of responsibility to our created lack.

We create **VICTIM**.

O. ANXIETY: Internal Threat.

Because we are anxious about the eventuality of our death and are, hence, in a state of reactive threat, we may REACT to external situations which may cause us harm.

We know that discretion is the better part of valor, yet we REACT unconsciously rather than take a more responsive (*i.e.*, **responsible**) tactic.

When we are in touch with our internal threat of the fact of our own being no-more, we tend to be less reactive and more responsive.

O. ANXIETY: Core of Myself

The more we are in touch with our own anxiety, the more we come to know that **we are actually the creator of that anxiety of being no-more.**

A duality (self/anxiety) dissolves within a sense of just being *Presence* (for the lack of a better term).

O. ANXIETY: More Mine Than My Death

ONTOLOGICAL ANXIETY becomes more **mine** rather than **my** death.

Thus,

**I own my anxiety and
my death ceases to be a consideration.**

I own death.

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O. ANXIETY: Lays Claim To Myself

Thus, instead of we becoming slaves to our anxiety,

we let it pass through us and know:

only I remain.

This I is unidentified, boundless Presence or AWARENESS, let us say.

SIDE BAR Neurotic (1)

Note on being Neurotic (Wikipedia)

"Neurosis may be defined simply as a 'poor ability to adapt to one's environment, an inability to change one's life patterns, and the inability to develop a richer, more complex, more satisfying personality.'" (Boeree, Dr. C George, "A Biological Theory of Neurosis").

In contradistinction is self-realization, "a state of being in which the person RESPONDS to the world with the full depth of his or her spontaneous feelings, other than with anxiety driven compulsions." (Karen Horney).

SIDE BAR Neurotic (2)

We grow neurotic to the degree we try to live up to an idealize (Dualistic) image-aspect (our identity) we have created for ourselves.

We identify early on with the Perfect One - in this case The Immortal One - and the promise of Life Eternal – or the like. Thus, the Great Trinity is created: ME, MYSELF, and I

SIDE BAR Neurotic (3)

SENSE of Self:

Physical Self: *Soma* (Physical Body)

Psychic Self: *Psyche* (Cognitive, Affective, Instinctive aspect)

Operational Aspects: **ME, MYSELF, I**

AKA: The Great Trinity

SIDE BAR Neurotic (4)

Operational Aspects: ME

Adaptive Mode: Things happen to me.

Maladaptive Mode: Besieged, Battered,
Fearful Self, The Victim

---- high blood pressure, physical ailments

SIDE BAR Neurotic (5)

Operational Aspects: MYSELF

Adaptive Mode: Just my thoughts, my
body parts, possessions

Maladaptive Mode: Clutching, Craving,
Needy Self

SIDE BAR Neurotic (6)

Operational Aspects: I

Adaptive Mode: I exist, feel, know, act.

Maladaptive Mode: Aggressive, Angry,
Arrogant Self

--- somewhat hidden given DENIAL:
Who me? I can't be *that way*.

SIDE BAR Neurotic (7)

Thus, in the face of Death we may display:

Narcissistic, perfectionistic, vindictive tendencies,
or

Self-effacing, compulsively codependent
tendencies,

or

Avoiding it all by engaging schizoid tendencies.
(K. Horney)

*And remember, it is we who have made all of
these descriptions up.*

Summary FEAR OF DEATH

- Involves personal apprehension
- Masks my awareness of my finitude
- Becomes subjective-deep
- Is specific-personal

Fear of Death: Personal Apprehension-1

It is the human condition that we tend to choose
DENIAL (Don't Even kNow I Am Lying
as our natural dualistic stance toward being no-
more.

*(When we are no-more, our duly loving surviving
family members may neurotically duke it out for
the spoils <such as they may be> of our life.)*

Fear of Death: Personal Apprehension-3

Without ego, we would not be -
or so we think.

We let our ego be who we are.

We let go of our personal responsibility
to live our life (blaming our environment, the
government, our upbringing, or DNA, etc.).

Fear of Death: **Personal Apprehension-4**

This ego lives our life for us,
creates erroneous distinctions
such as “Life and Death” situations
wherein we can be afraid and anxious,
self-centered and egotistical -
because, ghee whiz, isn't that the way it is?

Fear of Death: **Masks My Finitude**

Fear is just a symptom essentially of my guilt.

We know we shirk our personal responsibility for our own integrity, our nondual way of being.

We know we are just actors on a stage.

We know we overlook the fact we are the producers and directors of our own show on Planet Earth.

Fear of Death: **Masks My Finitude-2**

We create distractions (excuses, rationalizations etc.) for ourselves so we do not have to own our own finitude - not intellectually, but emotionally.
that essentially:

I am a living death sentence.

Fear of Death: Subjective-deep

When we actually feel in the depth of our being human
that we are a living death sentence
and allow that realization to pass through us and
we can let it go;
then and only then are we free of the fear of
being no-more. We may even find it humorous
that we ever thought,
much less believed,
we were who we thought ourselves to be.

Fear of Death: **Specific-personal-1**

We realize that our death is just a specific event within an alleged stream of things and is, in itself, of no consequence. We sense the folly of taking life personally.

We realize that we were not born into the world, but more so, we created our own world at our first breath. We created our parents, family, society. We live out our life. We die, our world dies with us.

Fear of Death: **Specific-personal-2**

We realize how we have victimized ourselves by our own creation, our ego, that we made-up to meet our fantasy of the way we thought people, places, things and events were/are or supposed to be and/or wanted us to be.

All that we have experienced is our own creation.

**We make our experience of life
to be what it is or is not.**

Fear of Death is owned -1

- We realize that we have used our Fear of being no-more to avoid taking personal responsibility for our own integrity.
- We realize that Life and Death or both are just our created fantasy, a mirror reflection of who we have created ourselves to be and not be.

Fear of Death is owned -2

Once owned, we can smile
at our fear of being no-more and
just let our fear of being no-more
be no-more, as if it ever was.

We recall that fear itself is simply
another belief: ***the belief that I
cannot handle a situation*** –
so I grow fear.

Fear: But an Illusion-1

“Space and time are constantly in flux, and *all stories, expectations, and experiences are configurations of space and time.*”

(cf SAND)

Fear: But an Illusion-2

Yet when experience is allowed the fluidity of **not knowing** - **the freedom from fixation, assumption or belief** - then it can expand and morph into **ultimate presence**.

This is what both scientists and mystics would call *mystery*.”

SAND letter 07/22/16 re Alice in Quantum Land – Part Two – The Dissolving of Space and Time

Fear: But an Illusion-3

How to resolve the Illusion:

One way:

Recognize:

***This image (thought/feeling/emotion)
is in my brain. I am making it up.***

Fear: But an Illusion-4

The universe I know
is the image of my own self.

I can only know what I am.

The image maker strives to maintain
the image at all costs,

By controlling the reproduction
by aligning it with the production.

Spiritual Poverty-1

A human being shall be free,
And as pure as the moment
Prior to his/her conception
in his/her chosen mother's womb
When s/he has nothing,
When s/he wants wants nothing,
When s/he knows nothing.

Adapted from M. Echhhart

Resolution

"Fear is the little mind killer.

Fear is the little death.

I will face my fear,

I will allow fear to pass through me.

Once fear is gone, only I remain.

Spiritual Poverty-2

This is when compassionate oneness has so transcended all thought of self that not even the oneness exists*:

Nonduality



***Zen is Eternal Life**. Rev. P.T.N.H. Jiyu-Kennett, 4th Ed., 1999.
Shasta Abbey Press, Mount Shasta CA . ISBN 0-930066-20-0)

Upajjhatthana Sutra of the Buddha (1)

-
- * I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.

Upajjhatthana Sutra of the Buddha (@)

- * I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape having ill health.

Upajjhatthana Sutra of the Buddha (3)

* I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.

Upajjhatthana Sutra of the Buddha (4)

- * All that is dear to me, everything that I have, and everything that I love are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape losing them.

Upajjhatthana Sutra of the Buddha (5)

- * My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground on which I stand.

How to Live Life in Death

Pay attention to how you live.

Pay attention to your actions.

Are your actions kind?

Are your actions honest?

Are your actions supported by the desire to help beings, to benefit beings?

Are your actions selfish or generous?

How are you living this life?

In Short:

Laugh and Be Merry!

Quiet and be still!

The Merry Dance of Life!!

Summary: On Dieing

- I am afraid that “me” and all of this will end.
- Reflect on the tens of trillions of humans who have died – and the fact what I will be part of that group.
- FEAR: a belief that I can't handle the situation, so I grow fear,
- I can't = I do not want to (3 year old)
- I am the Creator of my Experience:
experience “I DON'T WANT TO!!” smile
and just let it go **it's just Ego-talk!!**

Realization!

Laugh and Be Merry!

Quiet and be Still!

All is OK.

Thank You.

Peace and Joy!

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