

Global Focus on Knowledge Lecture Series

**Humans Considered From the Point of View of Beings Who Must Die—the
Concept of Life and Death**

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A History of Thought Concerning The Transition To Death

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Things To Be Considered In This Session

- From ancient times, humans, faced with the proposition [We must all, sooner or later, die] have puzzled over this proposition and thought: “How can we cope with this terrible fact?”
 - Furthermore, faced with the reality of death can we go forward clinging to some form of hope?
 - From among the various attempts to answer this question we will take up (and examine) the position of traditional Christian thinking.
- Contents
 - What is this thing called “death” ? /Separating the concept of the body from the concept of a person’s death / And....examining various thoughts concerning the transition to the other world
 - Thoughts on rebirth and the background for the interpretation of death
 - The path that leads to the extinction of the hope for life after death

1. What is this thing called “death”?

The End Of Life

- What words do people use to describe the end of life?
 - Death
 - Cease to exist/ Vanish
 - Pass Away / Depart
 - To go away
 - To be taken away
 - To laid to eternal rest

The Two Faces of Death

- [This is dead.] This is what we say when we point to something that exhibits the conditions of death.
- [Father has died (He is no more)]
this is not what we say about something that is in front of us=It is not in this world=Where did it go?

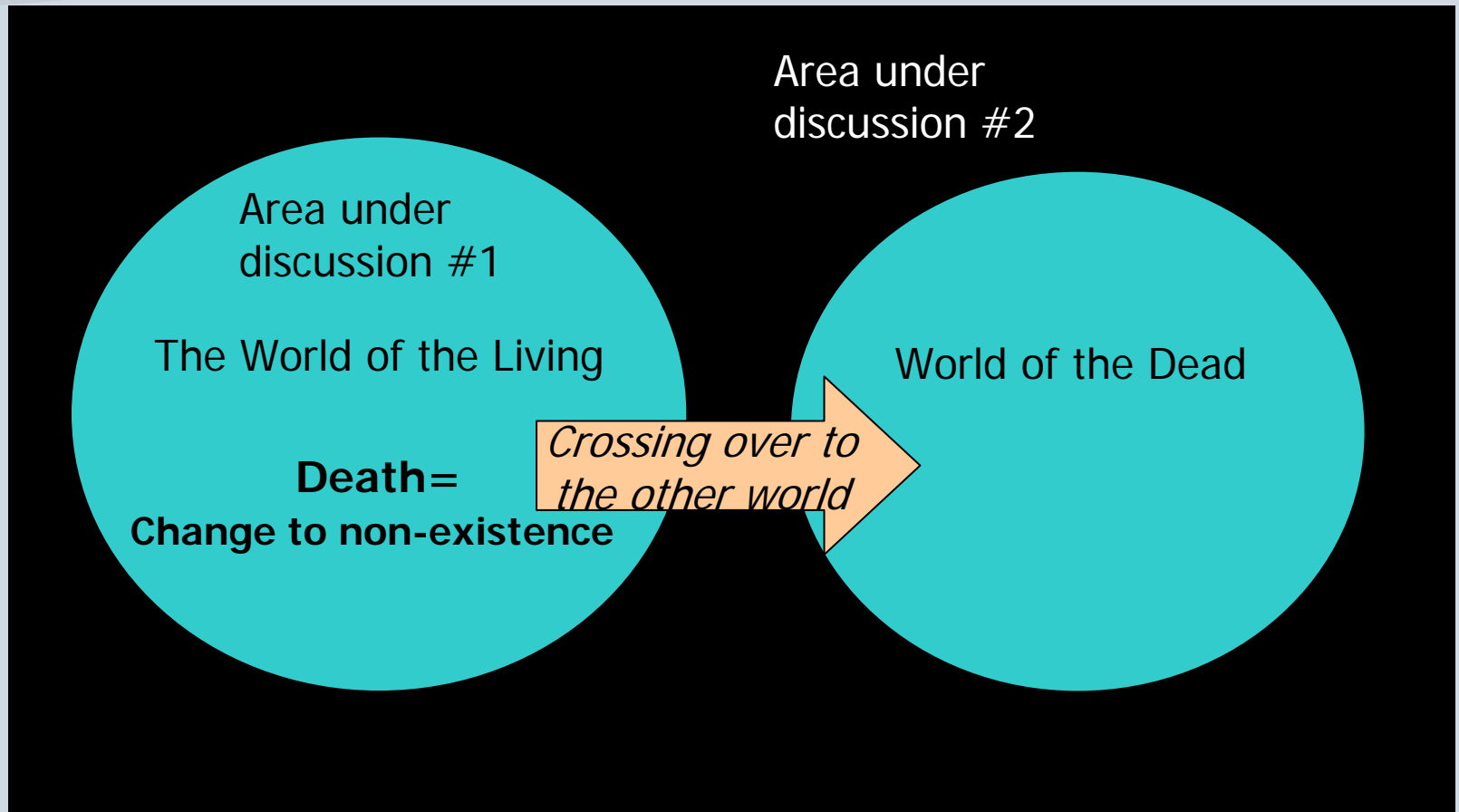
Death of The Body

- [This is dead...] We say this as we point to something no longer living.
- When we say “The Body Is Dead” we realize that...
 - That which was able to move can no longer do so
 - There is no further possibility of movement (=it is irreversible)
 - Change of state has begun
- In general, this can be said of all living things.
- It is now simply an object to be buried

The Death of Personality

- [Mr./Ms./Mrs. X has died] is the subject under discussion=human personality
- The Death of Personality
 - Personal interchange becomes impossible [Departed]
 - Interchange can not be resumed (It is irreversible)
[Parted forever]
- The person no longer exists here (in this world)-----
-----From the point of view of no longer being here
(in this world)
 - Where (To another world?) did they go? Transition to the other world
 - [Passed away, Gone] When we speak about these things, we assume the person who has died is in the world of the dead

This World and the Other World



**With regard to the death of human personality
(Continued)...**

Examples of Some Other Ways Of Thinking About It

- “Father has been dead for 10 years” (=He died 10 years ago)
 - Both this world and the other world are considered in totality in the area under discussion
 - [To be dead] means [To exist in another place separate from this world]
- When we speak of crossing over to the other world, we do not consider this from the point of view of [non-existence]

The Parting of Izanami and Izanagi

- The death of Izanami
 - Izanagi visited Yomi (Yellow Spring Underworld) in order to bring Izanami back > Izanami makes an entrance; there is only an account of their conversation...
 - They re-open personal interchange cf. spiritualism, mediumship etc.
 - Izanami said “While we are discussing this...do not look at me.”
 - But...Izanagi looked at her
 - He saw the horrible transformation of her body
- * The joining and separation of body and spirit

**biological
life**

and

**biographical
life**

- **Points To be Given Attention When Considering The Body:**
 - Individual biological life
 - Points to be considered by medical science

 - The body is the foundation for the life of the personality

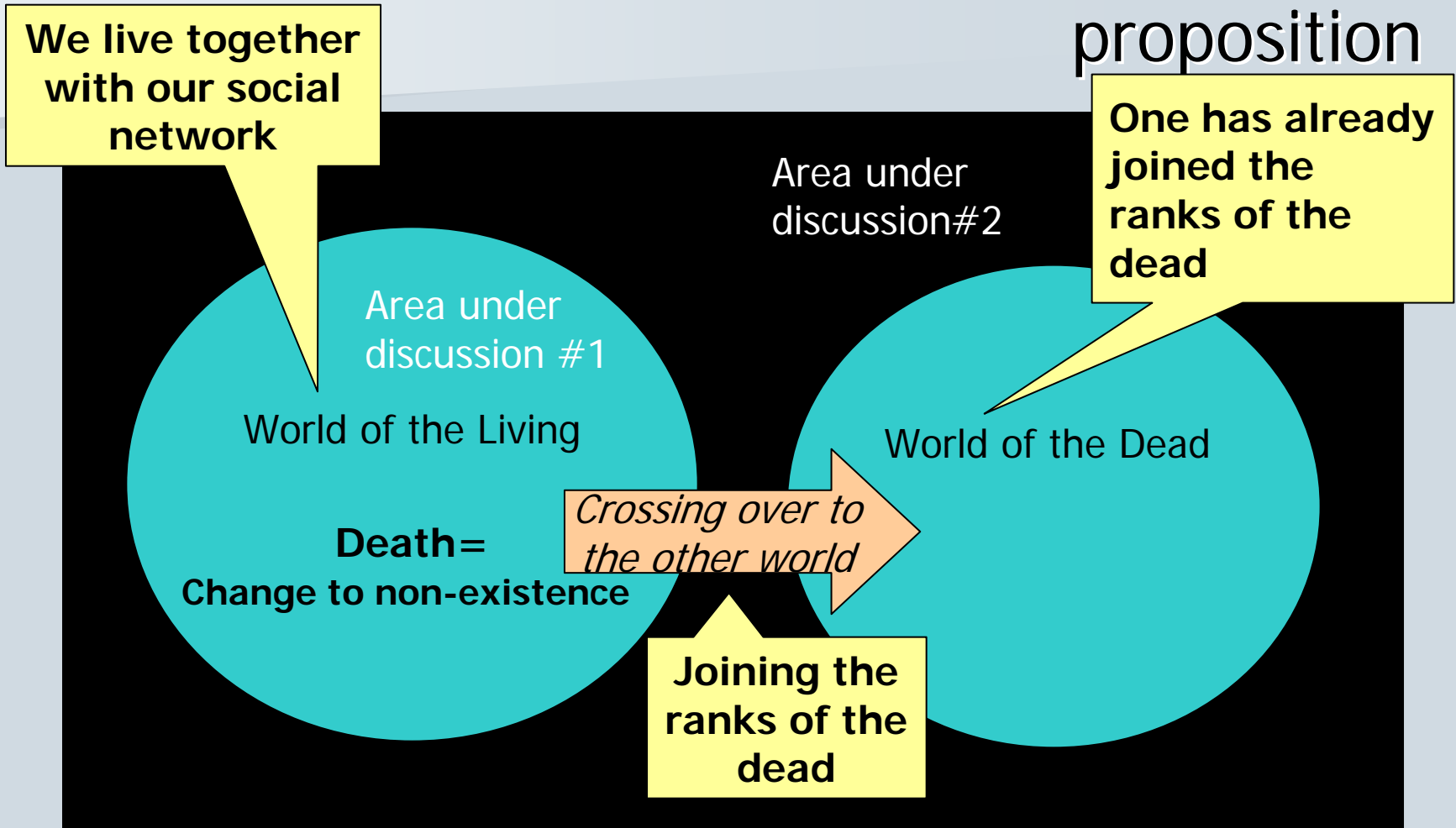
- **Points To be Given Attention When Considering The Personality:**
 - Living while one constructs his life story...Core known by the individual
 - Connected to the life story of the group
 - The life story from birth to death
cf. Humans who must die

The World of the Dead?

- In our culture, acting as if we had certain knowledge, we declare that there is a land of the dead, and we say when you die you go there—this is our way of speaking and acting on this we perform the action of sending off the dead
- But...we can not always believe firmly in the land of the dead
- So it seems it really doesn't matter

[Even If You Die, You're Not Totally Alone]

Some remarks when considering this proposition



It is not necessary to adopt the premise that life after death is real, but when we speak of the above, the contents are composed of such premises

Joining The Ranks of the Dead

- As Humans, We Live Together in Mutual Support
 - To die never means to be separated from the network of human support and to be left totally alone
 - One has already joined the society of the dead
 - Even the person just sent off, before long, joins the ranks of the dead
- * Such a way of thinking props up our way of speaking and our behavior...AND...such a way of speaking and behaving props up our thinking
- * To speak about [Joining the ranks of the dead] you don't have to have the supposition of a world after death
- * Not being attached to the point of view of the individual Life Story...
→Rather... understanding that from birth to death one's life story is a history of a dynamic existence among the network of humanity
- The recognition of the above circumstances is one of the fundamentals necessary for spiritual care

2. The Concept of Rebirth and the Interpretation of Death

Jesus = The Death and Resurrection of Christ

- Jesus **is** the Messiah (the Christ) The group of believers who follow this dogma
- After Jesus was executed (crucified) and as for the expectation of the Messiah→The assertion was made that Jesus was reborn (the Resurrection)
- St. Paul (the earliest interpretation in the New Testament) gave his interpretation of the Resurrection: The fact of the Resurrection supports the believers' hopes of their own personal Resurrection/ the natural body→the numinous(or spiritual) body (Corinthians 1:15)
- Paul's testimony is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: Seeing the great light, hearing the voice of Jesus and being struck blind (9:3-8, 22:6-11,26:12-18)
- At the time of the writing of the Gospels it was recorded that :The body of Jesus came back to life, the tomb of Jesus was empty and he appeared as a normal person among the living. His body bore the marks of the nails in his hands and the wound caused by the spear in his side. (John 20: 24-29)
- In the deification of Jesus we see a number of elements that seem to be connected (The human Messiah→ A special existence close to that of a god→A deity who was the Son of God/ all the subject of belief)
- The Resurrection of Jesus-- On The Last Day, The dead will rise The Faithful will rise

Paul's Interpretation of the Origin of Death

- [Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men...Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life] (Romans 5:12, 18)
 - With the provision that... As found in Genesis 3, even before Adam went against God's command, God did not grant him eternal life:

[In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.](Genesis 3:19)

[And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:] (Genesis 3: 22)

Paul and the Expectations of Resurrection

- [Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ...unto eternal life] (Romans 5: 1-2, 21)
- The Resurrection of Jesus is the forerunner for the Resurrection of the dead on the last day....for if there is no Resurrection...there is no hope : From a natural or corruptible body to a numinous or spiritual and eternal body (Corinthians 1:15:42-44):The dead are resurrected into an incorruptible and immortal body, and the bodies of we the living can also undergo such a change
- We must live in this world / but...we must live as if already dead...we must live in anticipation of the future life after our Resurrection
[Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.] (Romans 6:11)
- cf. [We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.] (Corinthians 2: 5:8)

Background to Ideas About Resurrection and the Comprehension of the Death of Individuality

- Personal interchange becomes impossible
- Body and personality continue together
- But...that activity has stopped and there is no hope of it being resumed Can not be revitalized in this world
 - Said to be sleeping
- This way of thinking in our culture then makes Resurrection into a problem
 - According to the New Testament, Death= The Death of the “person” + The Death of the body

The Co-existence of the Two Modes of Thinking: Transition To the Other World...and...Can Not be Revitalized in This World

- Resurrection: Can not be revitalized in this world
- The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke: 16:19-) The story of the departed Lazarus who, in life, went begging to the rich man's door, and the rich man who was now suffering in the fires of hell
- Christian doctrine has made efforts to coordinate these two ways of thinking

3. The Way of Extinguishing The Hope of Life After Death

The Understanding of God's Absolute Law

[I came naked from my mother's womb/ And naked shall I return/The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away/ Blessed be the name of the Lord] Job 1:21

[Seeing his days *are* determined the number of his months *are* with thee, thou has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; / ...

For there is hope of tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. /...

But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he? / ...

So man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.] Job 14: 5-12

- God's concern for Man far exceeds the realm of human knowledge
- Can we place our hopes for Resurrection on this starting point?

The Thinking of Young Luther

- [Man is not saved by acts, but by Faith] His radical meaning
- "On The Bondage of The Will" [Thinking to do good we unintentionally do evil] is NOT the meaning. [Thinking one is doing the highest good] is itself evil. [To pursue one's personal good (happiness) is itself evil] is the meaning. To covet eternal life is, itself, evil. But [What is the right thing to do?] Asking the question in this manner is a problem.
- From the viewpoint at the core of God's absolute law, to have the hope for one's eternal life cuts one off from it.
- [Faith] having an attitude of seeking one's self interest by oneself-not letting go of this attitude leads to despair...one's concepts are shattered... arriving at a conclusion without knowledge...finally one adopts the attitude of looking to God.

cf. And in Islamic Thought as Well...

- The Thought of Contemporary Islamic Believers
- Rabia al-Adawiyya (717–801 [C.E.](#))
(Sufism-Mysticism-The First Female Saint)

"O God!

If I adore You out of fear of Hell,
burn me in Hell!

If I adore You out of desire for Paradise,
Lock me out of Paradise.

But if I adore You for Yourself alone,
Do not deny to me Your eternal beauty"