

DEATH 3. When we die our life-force leaves the body, we stop breathing, the heart stops beating and without blood supply, the brain stops working. Our life-functions - measured in curves - are now represented by a flat line. **T**here is debate whether a life-force exists, but for argument's sake let's say it's our soul or mind, our consciousness, the faculty that gives us personality. The body now disintegrates - but where does our consciousness go? **I**f one believes in a universal consciousness, the answer is easy - mind/soul and universal consciousness re-unite. In absence of such a belief one likely succumbs to the notion our spiritual life is over without as much as a trace. **S**o what happens to the body? It consists basically of two components - the bones and everything else. Soft body tissues are largely made up of water. After burial those soft body-parts rot and are digested by other organisms. **B**ones, the skeleton, are all that remains after a few months; and when we cremate the body in an incinerator, its heat evaporates the soft body tissues. In some processes no burning occurs; the skeleton just collapses in the heat. **T**hus the ashes we receive to bury are only of the bones. In our Western culture much is made of burial and graves. However, the actual person, the mind, the soul, the spirit of the deceased is nowhere near the buried remains. **O**ur dear ones either evaporate or go to another region. If we believe the latter, we can visit this region in meditation. Here we merge our self with the collective selves - the universal consciousness - where humanity is one. **I**n that inner region, our soul, our heart, we unite with our beloved ones.

You may wish to entertain yourself with reading about the parallel universe of spirits, ghosts, apparitions, astral bodies, poltergeists and out of body experiences; as well as clairvoyants, spiritism, spiritualism and spiritual mediums to various paranormal worlds - or indeed what it is like to die, or to have lived before.

Rollicking reads to that end are Life Beyond Death by British professor of transpersonal psychology, David Fontana and Closer To The Light by Dr Melvin Morse.

A while ago I had reason to write a letter to my newspaper (see my blog 589) ... "Many believe the body is a dead carcass and there is too much hoopla about funerals." Indeed. Here is a thought: Our live bodies are ours, especially in view of abortions, transfusions, organ donations etc. But our dead bodies? Well, I don't think they're ours. Our bodies are kept alive and well by the public health system. When we die we have no use for them - but the health system and sciences do. A human body is worth tens of thousands of dollars. And we burn them!

"So a system should be in place where by default a dead body is given to science, unless the (previous) owner has opted out; consideration shall also be given to relatives, who may bring religious and cultural issues into play. But, again, they also should be obliged to opt-out from the default position. With this system in place so many problems would be solved; not least the one that there are hardly ever enough organs available for transplants. Furthermore, the state then can recover some of the exorbitant health costs it is burdened with ... a no-brainer, really."

Opt-out organ donation laws exist in over 24 countries, including Spain, Austria, Belgium and Singapore