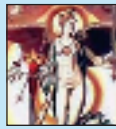


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## beyond death: transition and the afterlife

by Roger J. Woolger

*“He who dies before he dies, does not die when he dies”*

Abraham of Santa Clara.

*“Zen has no other secrets than seriously thinking about birth and death”*

Takeda Shingen

*“We are not dealing here with irreality. The mundus imaginalis is a world of autonomous forms and images... It is a perfectly real world preserving all the richness and diversity of the sensible world but in a spiritual state”*

Henry Corbin

*“There are two states for man—the state in this world and the state in the next; there is also a third state, the state intermediate between these two, which can be likened to the dream [state]. While in the intermediate state a man experiences both the other states, that of this world and that in the next; and the manner whereof is as follows: when he dies he lives only in the subtle body, on which are left the impressions [samskaras, Skt] of his past deeds, and of those impressions is he aware, illumined as they are by the light of the Transcendent Self [atman, Skt]...”*

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad

This transcendent or intermediary world has been noticed in almost all cultures and traditions in one form or another. Buddhists from Tibet talk of the *bardo* realm in which many states of the spirit/soul, i.e. *bardos*, exist between lifetimes on earth. The Spiritualists in their teachings call it the Spirit World, following the great visionary Swedenborg who reported visiting its many dimensions. In his terminology, its “heavens” and “hells”

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## coming to our senses: the wonder of embodiment

by Francis Weller



What is the experience of embodiment? What awareness is necessary to know our incarnation? Sensing, feeling, responding, interacting with the world as participant, seamless intimacy. We are not apart from the world, prisoners in an internal landscape; we are members in good standing with this breathing, animate earth. What the indigenous soul knows, and so eloquently recognizes, is our kinship with clouds and wind, sunlight filtered through oak and Douglas Fir, birdsong drifting over the day, ants moving along railings and stone, comfrey blooming and self-heal offering its blue stalk to our eyes while Barber's *Adagio for Strings* plays in the background. *How can we feel so empty when the world is so full?* Our emptiness is our failure to be in the world. Every

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