



Understanding Death: An Introduction to Ideas of Self and the Afterlife in World Religions

By Angela Sumegi

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A comprehensive survey of how religions understand death, dying, and the afterlife, drawing on examples from Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Shamanic perspectives.

- Considers shared and differing views of death across the world's major religions, including on the nature of death itself, the reasons for it, the identity of those who die, religious rituals, and on how the living should respond to death
- Places emphasis on the varying concepts of the 'self' or soul
- Uses a thematic structure to facilitate a broader comparative understanding
- Written in an accessible style to appeal to an undergraduate audience, it fills major gap in current textbook literature

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Editorial Review

Review

“Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through professionals/practitioners; general readers.” (*Choice*, 1 October 2014)

Review

“From Primal to Daoist traditions, this book brings breadth and depth to major religious traditions on death and destiny. In-depth historical material and selected interviews with religious devotees brings theories to life. An easy yet informative style will speak to students very directly.”—**Douglas Davies, Durham University**

“What makes this book especially valuable for readers are the conversations that end each chapter. These conversations that the author has with adherents of the various religious traditions that she describes gives us a more complete picture of how each tradition understands death and life. This book is a welcome addition to the literature on death and dying.”—**Amir Hussain, Loyola Marymount University and Editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Religion**

From the Back Cover

Death and dying are emotive subjects, and ones which are central to the traditions and lived realities of many of the world's religions today. This illuminating book examines how different religions understand death, dying, and the afterlife, drawing on examples from Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shamanism.

Encountering death almost always prompts a host of questions: What happened, and why? What do we do now? Beginning with an exploration of these shared reactions, the book traces the answers developed by the world's major religions, exploring their views on the nature of death itself, the reasons for it, identities of those who die, religious rituals, and their differing perspectives on how the living should respond to death. The way in which different religions interpret the characteristics of the 'person' who lives and the 'person' who dies forms the central theme and primary organizing principle for the book. This emphasis on varying concepts of the 'self' or soul enables students to gain a broader, comparative understanding of the subject.

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Amir Hussain, *Loyola Marymount University and Editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

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Michael Hale:

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