

Excerpts from ***In Heaven as on Earth A Vision of the Afterlife***  
By M. Scott Peck © 1996

I knew the moment it happened. I'd been in coma for two days. Now, instantly, I was somewhere near the ceiling of my bedroom. A body of an old man was lying in my bed. ... The body was waxy gray, and obviously dead. I knew it was mine but emotionally, as far as I was concerned, it was an it; it had no connection to me nor I any attachment to it.

The light, almost as if it were a movie projector, now exposed my past to me. Exposed the hidden parts. ... The experience was profoundly paradoxical. On the one hand, I was horrified by what a careless and often callous human being I'd been. On the other, the sense of acceptance went on unabated, and I knew I was somehow respected despite it all.

When I came to I was lying on a sort of bed in a small green room. ... Curious, I pushed my hand against the wall to ascertain what kind of substance it was made of. I felt nothing. For a moment, I thought my hand had gone right through the wall. Expecting to see that this was the case, I looked down and saw nothing except the wall. No hand. No shoulder. I glanced down at my feet. No feet either. And no legs, thighs, or torso. It dawned on me then that I had no body.

Mentally I kicked myself for being so slow for coming to the realization. Naturally I had no body. I was dead, wasn't I? I'd left my body back on my bed being wept over by our children. ... Mentally I'd kicked myself. What a metaphor! I wouldn't be kicking myself any longer, would I? I had no foot to kick myself with. ... How many of our mental metaphors presuppose the condition of having a body? Or proverbs? A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush...only now I didn't have a hand. All that glitters is not gold. But I no longer had eyes to see anything glitter.

I looked at the room more closely, and all I observed was what wasn't there. There was no toilet, no bathroom. ... It brilliantly occurred to me that I might not need a toilet at all since I wouldn't need to go to the bathroom if I had no body. What would life be like without having to go to the bathroom? Again I laughed, but again it was hollow. I was beginning to panic.

"Oh, God," I prayed. "Please help me. Please let there be someone. Please send me somebody." Immediately there was a knock on the door. Not stopping to think that there was no door, I cried out, "Come in." Before I could metaphorically blink, a man and a woman materialized, sitting on the "chairs" that faced my bed.

"Let me try to explain," Sam said. "Although you've left your actual body behind, your soul and your personality – if you will – are here intact. You're accustomed to project your personality into your body. We can't see the actual body, the dead thing that's probably buried by now, but you're so accustomed to projecting your spirit into your body, like when you smile, you know, or when you frown – you do it unconsciously – that we can see your projection."

"But it's much bigger than just that," Norma continued. "The body is matter, and there's no matter here; there's no space. And because there's no space, there's no time. Remember how much adjusting the astronauts had to do to get used to weightlessness in outer space? Some of that was physical. They still had bodies, and those bodies had to adjust. But much of it was the psychological, and they still had their bodies and the material of their spaceships and their clocks ticking away. If it took some adjusting just to get used to weightlessness, think of what it takes to get used to bodylessness, spacelessness, and timelessness!"

I was aghast. "There's no time here?" Norma smiled at me. "There is some kind of time here. We refer to it as God's time. And immediately you're going to ask us, 'How does God's time work?' and we're going to tell you again that we don't know. It's God's time, not ours.'

"What about this room?" I asked. "You say there's no space, yet here we're sitting in this little green room. It's a space. I'm sitting on a bed. You're sitting on something like chairs. There are walls. Aren't they all of some material or another?"

Sam grinned. “Nope.” I bit my metaphorical tongue. “Go on,” I urged.

“They do it because you need a place. I mean, you’ve got enough trouble adjusting without a place. We all do. Everyone’s given a place for the duration of the Adjustment.”

“The bigger adjustment comes more gradually. It’s the adjustment to freedom. You’re not bound by your body anymore, so you can go wherever you want whenever you want. But it goes much deeper. Remember when you asked whether this was hell, heaven or purgatory, Norma and I told you could take your pick and how souls are free to choose either way. That kind of freedom can be frightening.”

It made perfect sense. I understood it on an intellectual level, but I was starting to feel dazed. At that point I, or my projected body, did something I hadn’t anticipated. I yawned. ... “Why should I need to sleep when I don’t have a body?”

“Sleep’s not primarily a matter of the body,” Sam explained. “It’s mostly a matter of the soul. Souls get tired, you know. Think about when you were back on earth, about some time when you were terribly fatigued. Was it really your body that was so fatigued, or was it your soul?”

“You’re correct. Usually my bones weren’t actually aching; it was just someplace deep inside of me. I guess it was my soul.”

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