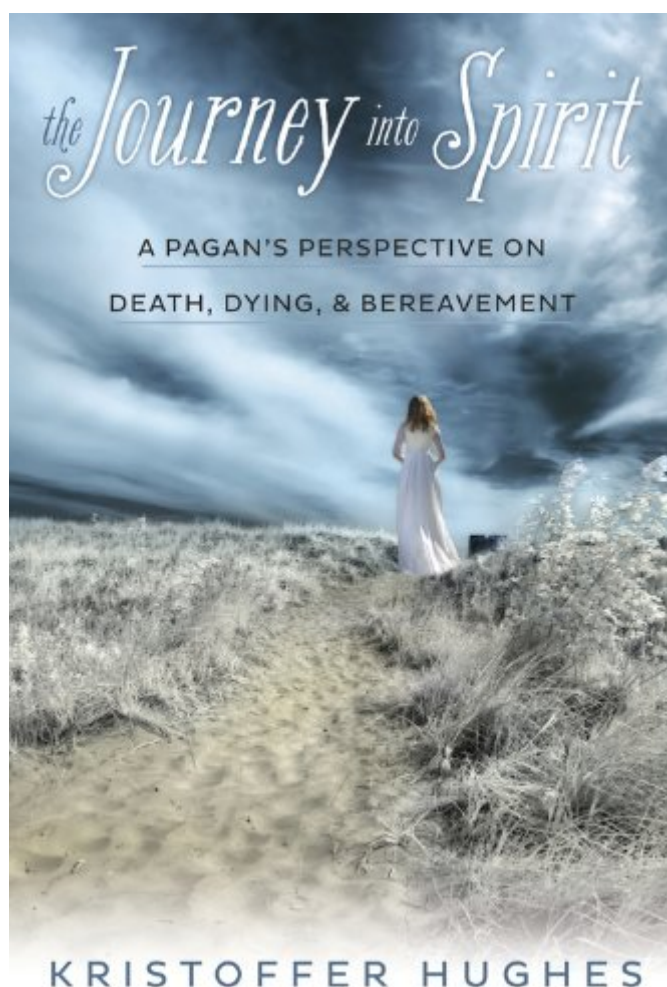


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The Journey Into Spirit: A Pagan's Perspective On Death, Dying & Bereavement



Synopsis

The Journey Into Spirit is a guide to death and the mysterious world beyond. Join renowned Druid priest Kristoffer Hughes as he explores the three realms of existence—the realm of necessity, the realm of spirit, and the realm of infinity—and illuminates the essence of grief, mourning, and spiritual continuation. Challenging many status quo beliefs about the afterlife, this book provides exercises, meditations, rituals, and thought-provoking questions designed to bring you on a journey of discovery through the most profound of all human transitions. Filled with insight and practical guidance, The Journey Into Spirit shows how to honor family and friends in spirit, discover life-affirming aspects of every state of existence, and move beyond the fear that surrounds death. 2015 COVR Award Winner for Reincarnation, Death and Dying Books

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Customer Reviews

When I got this, I didn't realize it was going to be strictly and only from a Druid's point of view but it did help me feel abit less sad about my great grandmother's passing. I don't agree with everything but it's still a great book.

I am eighty one year's old and I will say that this book has been has been the most informative and enlightening source of this. Subject matter that I have found. Thank you so very, very much. Fred blalock, Panama city Beach Florida

I highly recommend this book to anyone with an Earth-based spiritual practice who is dealing with grief and loss.

Wonderful insights and recommendations. Candid, serious and enlightening approach to a very tender subject.

An important, multi-layered, deeply rewarding book. Especially useful for Druids and Pagans with any concern for death and dying, bereavement and grief, or what, if anything, lies beyond our 3D existence. Also of potential interest to people with similar concerns in other spiritual traditions or none. Highly recommended. Kristoffer Hughes says of himself: "In my spiritual life I have developed into a priest of the dead, a walker between the worlds, a psychopomp. He is a priest of the Celtic Druid tradition who leads the Anglesey Druid Order. He is also an autopsy technologist working for the UK Crown Coroner's Service. The Journey into Spirit draws on both of these roles. It also draws on other, more closely personal experiences. These include the loss of near kin and friends, shared in a moving, loving way. They include the author's clairvoyance, a psychic gift that enables a felt sense of presence, or spirit, in relation to those who have died. All of these aspects together make for an unusual richness of narrative and subtlety of approach. The inclusion of contemplations and reflective exercises invites us to extend our own lived understandings. Hughes' own conclusion is that "through death I have learned the meaning of life, and I am comforted by my understanding and experience of the hereafter". The book is divided into four parts, the first three based on the system of three circles of existence outlined in the Barddas of Iolo Morganwg. The first circle is Abred (AH-bred), the realm of necessity, the physical world of 3D reality. The second is Gwynvyd (goo-IN-vid), the realm of spirit, a psychic/subtle realm usually not perceived yet interwoven with Abred. The third is Ceugant (KAY-gant), the realm of infinity, a source or causal realm. In the section on Abred, the author quotes the triad: "the three principal calamities of Abred:

necessity, forgetfulness, death. This is where we learn to be human, surrounded by life, subjected to death, governed by the cycle of birth, life and death. The author explores the dropping off of petals or leaves) and the need for organic life to die to make room for new growth. Yet a divine spark continues to live in everything. The whole section explores life and the consciousness of death, including fear of it, and our questions about what if anything comes after, drawing on a wealth of knowledge, experience and anecdote. The section on Gwynvyd looks at the grief process, including a wonderful section on the seasons of grief, more fluid than familiar ideas about stages of grief, let alone medicalized views of grief that now want to treat it as depression after the first 14 days. Part of this is coming to terms with the reality and finality of death. Yet the section also identifies what survives. For the author, the personality dies with the body, yet a substrate of witness consciousness, understood as unchanging, continues in some sense as the stuff of spirit. The forgetfulness of Abred, held in the flow of experience, leads us to forget this substrate. Yet it is eternally there: never born, it cannot die. "What remains constant is the spirit, and upon it is the imprint of the human that lived and breathed here in this world. This is where a felt sense of connection, if the feelings are strong and the senses attuned, is possible. Gwynvyd is also described as the realm of gods, archetypes, and any beings including discarnate humans who have a role in mediating between Gwynvyd. Ceugant is the place, or state, of origin. "It is from Ceugant that existence originates and it is to Ceugant that the Universe sings. Yet it is no-thing, like Ein Sof in the Kabbalah. The author says that this realm, or core reality, can be intuited through visions and meditations, but that no attempt to describe or point to it can be more than an indication. Hughes' most suggestive metaphor is of a return to a primal sea of potential. In terms of English etymology, he links this to the word *soul*, originally a sea-referenced word and it is universal soul, rather than any personal soul, that he has in mind. He does strongly hold the view that Ceugant represents an ultimate belonging for us all, and so is not something to be achieved through long arduous tasks and learning. It is just there, twice removed from us in our present state. The final section offers a set of rituals and practices, including a vigil for the dying; preparation of the body; funeral for a Druid; saying goodbye, and a treatment of Samhain as a three day festival of the dead with appropriate practices for each day. Like the rest of the book, these are creative suggestions, based on experience and insight, which we are invited to look at and take on board to whatever extent is right for us. A welcome text on a sensitive topic.

I did not know this book existed until it basically jumped off the shelf at me. I bought it and brought it home with 2 other books. It would not leave me alone until I read it and boy did it speak and speak loudly. I cannot imagine that this was an easy book for Kristoffer Hughes to write. It is deeply personal and not an easy subject. Death and Dying is one of those subjects that touches everyone's life but to sit and write so in depth and so beautifully about the subject is a remarkable feat. Kristoffer goes against mainstream society and shares his own personal beliefs on what happens when one dies. What is the difference between Spirit and Soul? How can we honor our ancestors and those that die before us? How to die consciously and live fully. What realms do we exist in after death? How is it we can contact our ancestors? Are they still the people we knew or have they transformed into something else? This is just a tiny bit of what this book covers. Although Kristoffer shares his view as a Druid Priest and from a Druid/Pagan perspective this book is good for anyone who is facing death via a loved one or even themselves. There is literally nothing missing in this book. It covers everything you would want to know about death and dying and offers you rituals to honor your dead as well as walking you through your own feelings and thoughts on what you believe. This is one book that will not leave you wanting and wondering as it is very thorough and quite remarkable. I know that I will be referring back to it for years to come.

Disclaimer: I received an eARC of this book through netgalley.com. The Journey Into Spirit is an important pagan book. Death, the process of dying, and grieving is a deeply personal and somewhat taboo topic in Western cultures. In this book, Hughes brings all this out into the open and has a wonderful dialog about death, grieving, and what goes on behind it all from a pagan perspective. Hughes is well qualified to write this book as he's not only pagan but has been involved in the death business as a certified anatomical pathology technologist in the UK. Talk about a fascinating job! Hughes blends personal stories of being close to death in with factual information about what happens when we die and where "we" go when we're no longer around. The stories are poignant and are both human and animal companion based. The book also includes personal and group rituals for saying good-bye to loved ones of all types. It's these rituals and practical advice that really put a good spin on this book and make it easy for those of us who want to include rites of passing in our practices. The only thing I didn't like about this book was the use of the term "muggle" to refer to non-pagan/magickal persons. I love Harry Potter and the wizarding world but I really take offense to pagans who use the term "muggles" as a way to differential ourselves. In my opinion, everyone is magical. Even if they don't believe in pagan magic. Bottom Line: Go buy this book. It will

expand your opinion of what death and dying is, what awaits us on the other side, and gives some advice about how to mourn and include death into a pagan belief system.

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