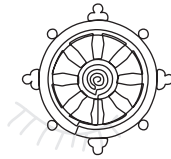


DEATH

CHAPTER 4



Death

Every living being undergoes the phases of birth, life and death and this cycle repeat itself; quiet a number of times

Introduction:

The only certainty in this uncertain world; is DEATH!

Every living being undergoes the phases of birth, life and death and this cycle repeats itself; quite a number of times. Indian philosophers have correctly understood the doctrine of reincarnation. In India, knowledge about life, death, and rebirth has been known through scriptures since time immemorial.

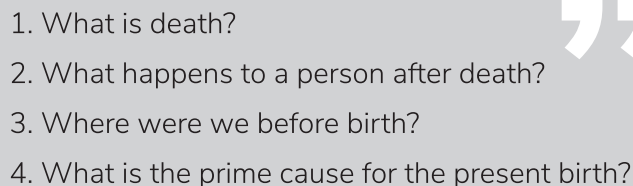
As per Law of conservation of energy and matter, neither energy nor matter, can be created nor destroyed; at the most, it can be changed from one form to another. So also, after death, human body will be transformed into the gross and subtle elements from which it is formed. We have got this body as a loan from Mother Nature; and, it has to be returned, after use.

The subtle body (Soul) formed out of the past desires and impressions (Samskaras), is not destroyed at death, it chooses and enters another mother's womb. Human souls take their next birth in accordance with the template formed out of the karmas done in the past and the present life.

This cycle repeats till it realises its identity with 'Brahman' or 'God' (Cosmic Consciousness). This theory has been proved to be authentic through various researches conducted till recently.

It is a well known fact that among all living beings, humans have a distinct identity and not destined to lead the life like other animals. They have been endowed with special gift– “the intellect”

So, utilising this discriminative faculty, they should enquire about

- 
1. What is death?
 2. What happens to a person after death?
 3. Where were we before birth?
 4. What is the prime cause for the present birth?

Birth:

The formation of a body and the entry of Consciousness or Soul into the body is Birth. The Padma Purana declares that after about 8.4 million lives, spent in lower forms, minerals, plants and animals; you get a chance to become a human being.

Death:

The soul leaving the body is Death.

Death is just like a person going to sleep, Once asleep, the person is not aware of present body and present life. Every night when the person sleeps, he dies in a way, and comes alive in the next morning.

So too, death is nothing more than significant change of sleeping in present body and waking up in another new body. Death is but another incident in life.

Sleep is temporary death and death is permanent sleep for the present body

So, death is a situation where the driver (Soul) remaining same abandons its defective, old vehicle (body), due to decay or accident; and transmigrates in search of a new one, closing all activities in this life.

All living beings are temporarily living in the body given by the Nature; and have to leave after their term ends.

A person whether president or officer in any organisation, will be forced to move out after his tenure is over. In private organisations where some people like to retain their power after retirement, will be forced to leave by DEATH. Similarly, if someone wants to stay in the body, when their body's lease has expired, the law of death evicts them by force.

So, the soul departs from body after its earthly obligations are over and finds a new body as per its Karma and continues the activities left over from its past life.

It is only because of death that old ones make place for new ones to come. If there were no death, millions of people would have made a mess of the world.

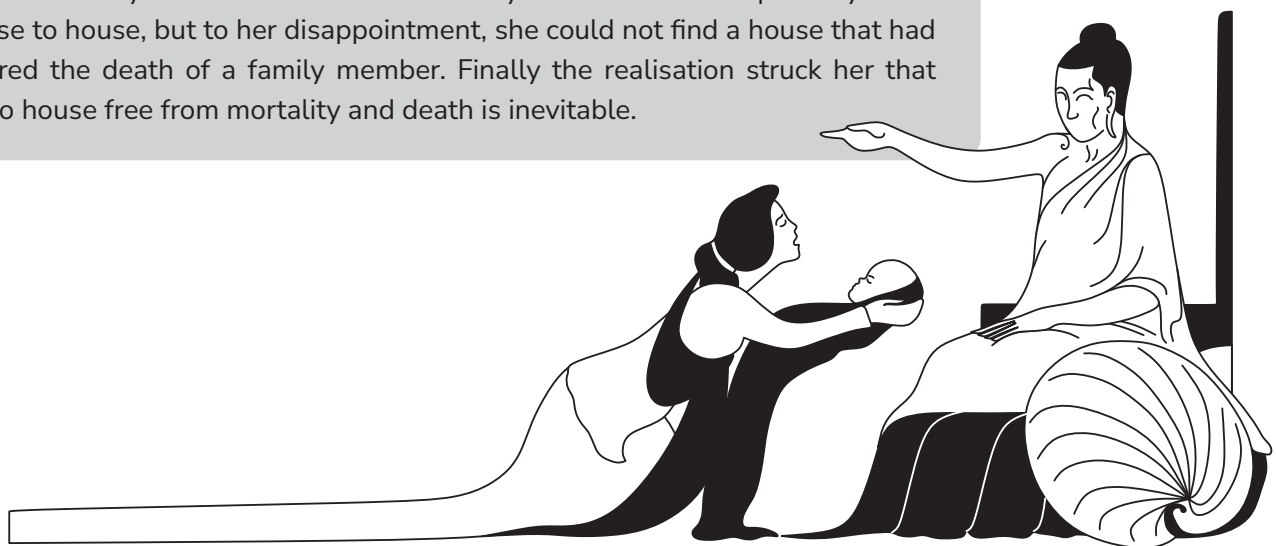
The available resources and space would have exhausted. There will be no vacancy for the young generation without death, life would lose its charm; everything gets old and stale. Old bodies have to be shed and new bodies (babies) should come, like the trees shed leaves to get new ones again. 'Nature' likes to be always new and ever fresh.

Everyone knows that death is inevitable. In spite of seeing others die, people like to believe that it is far away and continue to pursue their selfish goals. No one knows when it occurs, and all are often caught unawares. People avoid thinking about it, due to fear of what lies beyond death. The unknown, the mysterious, is always a cause of concern. So, no one wants to talk about Death.

The eldest of Pandavas –Dharma Raja says, “The greatest surprise in the world was that even though we see people dying every day, we think we are going to live eternally”!

Let us see a famous story in “Buddhism”

Kisa Gotami was the wife of a wealthy man. After losing her only child, Kisa Gotami became desperate and asked if anyone could help her. Her sorrow was so great that many thought she had lost her mind. An old man told her to visit Buddha. The Buddha told her that he could bring the child back to life if she could bring mustard seeds from a family who has never lost a family member. She desperately went from house to house, but to her disappointment, she could not find a house that had not suffered the death of a family member. Finally the realisation struck her that there is no house free from mortality and death is inevitable.



Body as garment:

In Bhagvad Gita (2.22) Lord Krishna states, "As a person shedding worn out garments, takes other new ones; likewise, the embodied soul, casts off worn out bodies and enters new bodies."

Swami Swaroopananda says:

"You change your attire according to various roles and occasions in life.

You get up in the morning with crumpled night clothes. Later, you don a stylish outfit and become a smartly attired senior executive. In the evening, you metamorphose by wearing a designer suit to attend a gala dinner party. Later, tired and sleepy, you change into loose-fitting night clothes. You do not worry about the changes, do you? For you know the person behind those clothes... is yourself.

Just as people take off their clothes and wear new ones, the soul drops used up body and picks up another; one suitable to its past actions and desires. Death is never of the soul, only of the body". - January 1, 2020, In Economic Times in 'The Speaking Tree'.

The change from life to death is merely a passing phase from one dream to another dream. It is only a thought. First you are dreaming that you are alive, and then you are dreaming that you are dead. Death is only a long sleep, and wakes up in another place and body through rebirth.

"People buy different vehicles to travel in this world and it is an accepted fact, that the vehicle's performance deteriorates over time; there comes a time when it is not usable anymore. If there is a break down, we do not quit our journey; instead, we shift to another vehicle and continue our travel till we reach the destination.

So also, all species acquire different bodies, to travel in this universe. If the physical body breaks down and if pending, unfulfilled desires exist; then the journey has to continue, by means of another body" - Anil

However adventurous a tourist may be, none forgets to return to their permanent home. We too, should not forget our permanent home, where we were before birth and where we will reach after death.

Fear of death:

Scared, frightened, confused about death? No, you need not.

Death creates fear in spiritually ignorant human beings, but to the wise it is just a transition to a higher state of existence. Ignorance of truth makes people fear death.

'By birth, if you have come into a beautiful world, think how much more beautiful would your origin be.

When you came into this world, you cried and everyone else smiled. You should live your life so that when you exit, everyone else should cry, but you will be smiling.

"Think of what a blessing death is! It relinquishes our rickety old body car and gives us a brand new model in which we can try again to win the race of life." - Anil

Death relieves people from the debts of life, sorrow, incurable diseases and pains. It enables people to rest in peace.

Let us all be prepared with the thought that death comes to everybody – sinner or saint – and therefore it should be treated as some sort of a holiday from the unending responsibilities and busy scheduled life.

The pain in death is more due to the psychological factor of attachment to the body; rather than, physiological aspect.

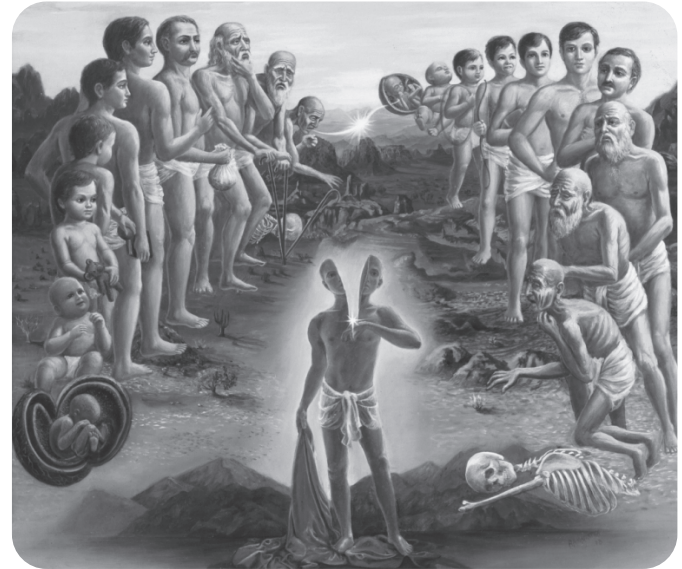
However, on closer examination, you will find that the fear of death is not because you are uncertain where you will go and what will happen after death, but it is because you are afraid of losing association once for all with your family, friends and possessions, that you have earned during your lifetime.

As long as you are not dead, you are alive; so why should you fear?
And once you are dead it is all over and you cannot remember; so why worry?

Body gets aged:

All species including human beings undergo the following changes- Birth, Growth, Change, gradual decay, illness, Death.

Every part in human body gets aged over years. Biologists say that millions of cells die every day in our body and actually we are a new person every few months, either by decay of human body parts or replacement of cells.

**What happens to your wealth?:**

We see people dedicate their entire lifetime accumulating money and assets, which have to be left behind at the instant call of death. Actually, no one possesses anything, except the feeling that they do, in mind; and, it is crystal clear that nothing can be taken to Heaven or Hell, after death.

Prepare for your death:

In South Korea, a company 'Hyowon Healing Centre' is providing free funerals- but only to living people. People are offered to imagine their death and till now 25,000 people participated in a 'living funeral'. By simulating death, they think they can develop detachment towards towards life.

Preview your death:

So you know that you are going to die one day. Since you don't know when you are going to die, let us assume, you are married and having a family; and 'you die now', while reading this book. Let us imagine that you are able to see the scenes what will happen after your imaginary death.

'All the family members will start crying after your death, and after that your neighbors, family relatives and friends will mourn your death. They will keep saying good things you have done and recall their experiences they had with you.

Since they cannot keep your stinking body anymore they shall take it to the graveyard with all the formalities and your body is burnt or buried as per your religion or family tradition.

Next day onwards, people will be missing and remembering you seeing your things like car, books, purse etc. But they have to carry on their regular activities and they will start moving forward, like how you behaved after visiting a family where a death occurred. A week later the memories start slowly fading up and everyone will be busy with their education, job and they will miss you only when there is something, you could have helped them with, when they were in need.'

Though we have imagined the death, but some day it comes. Now check...

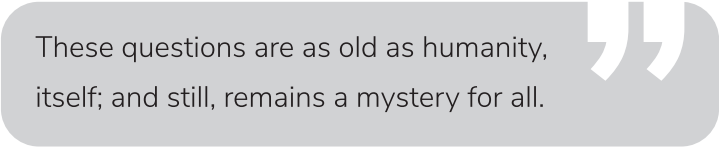
- Have you provided any monthly income for your family members to continue as per earlier life style, which you had provided when you were alive, and they can move in society with respect?
- Have you provided sufficient life insurance or funds for your children education and marriage?
- Have you executed a 'will' to make it clear about who gets how much of your assets so as to avoid dispute among family members.
- Have you made a list of assets, have clear title deeds at one place.
- Did you make a list of loans to be collected, and liabilities; and, kept them in the knowledge of your spouse or family members or business partners?
- If you are in business, have you created any exit route for your share and have developed second level management to take care of your business?

Just think of the above and any other important matters. Please do it now when you are alive and avoid problems to your family members. Because death doesn't give you any advance notice.

Is there Life beyond death?:

- What happens at the time of Death?
- If we do actually have a soul, then where does it go after demise?
- What is life like in the afterlife?
- Is it the same place where we were before birth?
- Heaven or hell? If so, what are the factors that decide where we go after demise?

- Is there really some sort of heaven full of enjoyment outside our physical universe?
- What does it look like?
- How we go there and what do we do when we get there?
- Is there a supreme being in charge of this universe?



These questions are as old as humanity, itself; and still, remains a mystery for all.

We tend to accept the possibility of life after death, but not life before death. But in reality, if we are here now, it is because of the results of past lives. This applies not just to one, but to countless future lives.

The innumerable recorded and researched cases of past life experiences over the past century, clearly point to life after death. Their research discoveries lead to these conclusions which are fascinating and they are solidly based on scientific research.

- Human beings after death still are conscious of their past memories after leaving the body.
- They continue to exist in different forms and with varying levels of awareness; are also able to guide living humans through certain mediums.
- They continue to have the memory of present life until they enjoy or suffer as per their deeds in the present life.
- They take up a new body within an undefined time; and their memory will be erased after birth.
- The new body is born based on law of causation, past deeds and desires, mostly in their own country and family.

From an edited abstract of a research paper, on near-death cases - Quantum Consciousness: An Extended Version of the Cell-Soul Pathway, by Contzen Pereira & J Shashi Kiran Reddy. "How is it possible for a conscious essence to exist without a physical host? To avoid the purely religious explanations of a separable soul or spirit, we offer our research into quantum mediated consciousness: an extended version of the cell-soul pathway. The intent of this paper is to provide an arduous explanation of non-local consciousness or disembodiment observed in near-death experiences.

The non-locality of subjective experiences observed in near-death cases can be related to the realm of quantum physics – quantum entanglement between the two forms of consciousness that can demonstrate the capability of storing information holographically, within the void or vacuum, with the ability to create memories beyond the limitations of the brain and body.

Several near-death cases have been recorded and studied. In many cases the individual is conscious outside the body with a capacity to conceive and store memories even after being proclaimed clinically dead; and can recount these experiences when resuscitated. Disembodiment (soul without a physical form) is an ambiguous term rarely accepted among the scientific community.

It is therefore an immaterial state, most often invisible to others, so it is ignored by science and accepted in the philosophy only.”

For full journal report

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Contzen_Pereira/publication/311715924_Near-Death_Cases

Various institutions have performed research about the afterlife; near death experiences, or about consciousness after death, and concluded that life continues after death. There have been many cases of neardeath experiences where people have faced with the afterlife - such as 'seeing the light', or meeting their loved ones who had passed away. In all the recorded cases of reincarnations, it was also found that after death and before next birth on Earth, there was a variable time lag, a gestation period.

So, where do we exist after death, till our next reincarnation on Earth?
Is there a single plane of existence or are there a variety of planes of existence?

What happens at Death?

Spiritual books have mentioned that the human being consists of the following three basic bodies:

- Physical
- Subtle
- Causal

Just about 4-5 Hours before death, Subtle body starts losing connection with physical body and slowly the heat vanishes in the body starting from the soles of the leg. Next the subtle 'silver cord' which connects Soul with the Physical body is cut; the Soul or Subtle body, which till then was embodied becomes free and comes out. Then that person is declared dead.



But since the love and attachment is not lost with the body, as it has been associated with it for a life time, it tries to reenter into the body again and again. Since the silver cord is cut off, the Soul cannot enter or stay anymore in the body and due to an unknown power, it is slowly drawn upwards. Initially the soul stays at a height of 12 feet, observing and hearing everything as a witness of the surroundings.

Generally Soul stays at that height until the cremation of the body takes place. Once it realises that all the connection with its body has been cut off, Soul experiences full freedom. It has the power to go to any place it wishes and roams around its interested places, and after few days, it starts its journey away from earth's plane.

Death experiences:

One of the most dramatically unexpected revelations from scientific research is that the persons mentioned that their death experience was almost a thrill they ever experienced during their life time. When asked to rank the scale of -enjoyment to suffering, they described it as more of enjoyment. Some people didn't want to be revived; and, resisted when medical help was being given. They never felt such happiness and peacefulness, in their entire life and fear of death had totally vanished.

How a Soul looks like?:

From the interviews with people who survived death due to timely medical help, they explained about their out of body experiences. Some reported they had a human body shape, some were simply conscious of some roundish shape, some cloud shape etc. Regardless of the shape, they were fully conscious and able to see and hear, but silent communication of the mind, only. They could see in all directions at the same time. Finally they said, 'death is actually a kind of “birth” into another form of existence'.

Ghosts:

There are several reasons for some souls to roam around the earth plane. Those souls are of

- Persons died in an accidents,
- Having strong unfulfilled desires; or,
- Those who want to help their kith & kin; we call ghosts.

Some spirits go against the spiritual laws and try to stay in the earth plane.

Generally the souls have to go back to their spiritual base in 12 days, if not it will take a long time for it to take rebirth on earth. As per Hindu tradition, the prayers and death ceremonies are important for the soul to take a smooth travel to the soul's base.

Due to these Ghost souls, some people often have unpleasant experiences.

Where we go after death:

On physical death, person's astral body and causal body enter the astral world.

Atharva Veda speaks of 14 main planes of existence in the astral world of the Universe.

There are seven upper positive planes and seven lower negative planes.

The seven negative planes are commonly known as Hell.

There are numerous sub-planes within these main planes; each plane represents a state of conscious awareness.

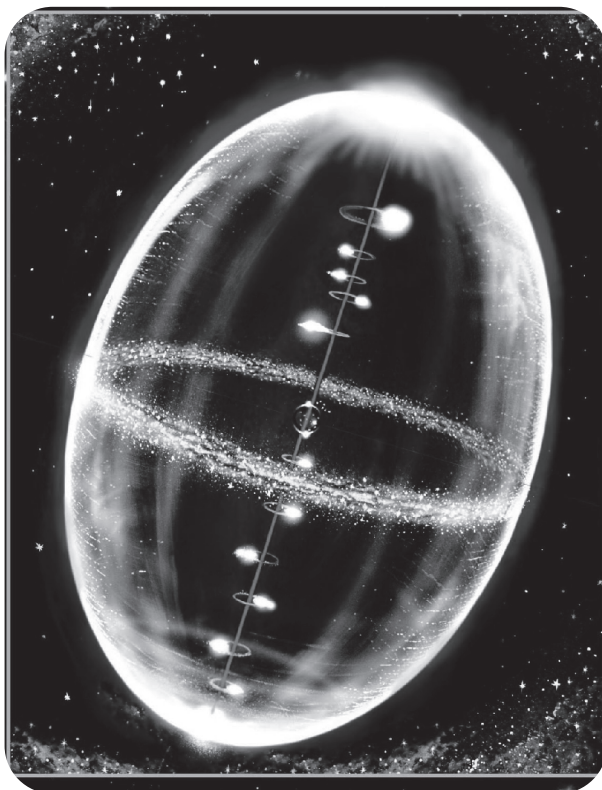
Those who have worked out all their earthly karma, and who hold no desire to return to earth, go straight to positive planes above the earth plane.

The seven upper realms or positive planes of existence:

The Earth plane is the only 'physical' or gross plane of existence in the Universe and is also the first one in the hierarchy of the positive planes in the Universe. Rest of the planes are subtle.

The six upper worlds above earth plane are occupied mostly by persons with subtle bodies after death; who have performed righteous deeds and were engaged in the orientation of spiritual practice towards God-realisation. Others also reach these planes as a tourist to work out or enjoy their good Karma.

1. Satya-loka – Abode of Truth or Samadhi. The highest state of conscious awareness and the realm in which soul (Jeeva) and Brahman are reunited eternally.
2. Tapa-loka – A pure state of consciousness. From this state it is easy to access Satya-loka, provided you are already fully enlightened, but need a conscious awareness in everyday life on Earth.
3. Jana-loka – This is a level of illumination known as “God-Consciousness”. People who reach this level are typically known as 'mystics' and are usually great healers or spiritual teachers.
4. Mahar-loka – This is the realm of Consciousness that can be entered by spiritual persons who have an incredible depth of understanding and can be considered as devas or demigods.
5. Svar-loka – In Hindu mythology, this realm is called Swargalok or Heaven, it is inhabited by individuals who have mastered their emotions and have no attachments in the physical realm. Here you find immense inner peace.
6. Bhuvar-loka – The Bhuvar-loka covers the sphere of the sky, spread above earth plane, symbolically represents people that have found contentment and fulfilment in their life, but also vibrate at a higher frequency and have a higher-state of conscious awareness, where the body is full of cosmic energy, only.
7. Bhur-loka – is the earth plane and is the state of consciousness for many people, awakened or otherwise. Attachments to material possessions or physical needs are still present.



- 1) Satya-loka
- 2) Tapa-loka
- 3) Jana-loka
- 4) Mahar-loka
- 5) Svar-loka
- 6) Bhuvar-loka
- 7) Bhūr-loka
- 8) Atala-loka
- 9) Vitala-loka
- 10) Sutala-loka
- 11) Talatala-loka
- 12) Mahatala-loka
- 13) Rasatala-loka
- 14) Patala-loka

The seven lower realms or negative planes of existence:

These are occupied mostly by subtle bodies after death that have done unrighteous deeds and are engaged in the spiritual practices aiming towards attaining supernatural powers to enhance one's control over others or for evil purposes.

Thus all such subtle bodies go to any one of the planes of the Hell. The realms are described in the Puranas as being dark planets devoid of sunlight. There are sub planes reserved for the worst ghosts (demons, devils, negative energies, etc.) in the Hell just like dungeons of the past.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Atala-loka | 5.Mahatala-loka |
| 2. Vitala-loka | 6.Rasatala-loka |
| 3. Sutala-loka | 7.Patala-loka |
| 4. Talatala-loka | |

The subtle body goes to one of the 13 subtle planes of existence from the Earth plane. Life continues after death either in positive or in negative planes of existences.

A soul goes to negative plane, to expend residual negative karma, when earthly life is insufficient to exhaust its karma.

The spirit without matter is an individual soul, and by acquiring the power of merit, it can, go to the higher worlds, like Heaven and above. A human being can possibly acquire this merit 'only on earth plane' that can take him to one of the higher worlds.

Time:

Time is relative and not absolute. This aspect has been clarified by Einstein. The duration of a day to the indwellers of Pitru-loka equals one year of Earthly time. This principle is followed in the Vedic religion for worshipping the departed ancestors, once a year.

In science we note that Mars planet takes 687 earth days to orbit around sun, compared to 365 days for earth. So it is nearly 45 hours per day in Mars compared to 24 hours on the earth

Realms or planes not visible?:

A doubt may arise in the minds of moderners that if these worlds are present in the skies or space beyond, how come modern space exploring scientific instruments which are able to trace distant galaxies, do not find any trace of these Lokas in space?

It is necessary to note that these Lokas are purely subtle in nature and therefore not visible and they contain no medium that can reflect back any wave like electro- magnetic or subtler waves of any nature.

What decides where we go after death?

Where we go in the afterlife depends on our karma-good and bad deeds; and also based on the ratio of the three basic qualities or gunas - Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.

Which plane we go after death:

Generally, Heaven the is preferred destination.

Most of the people aim to go to Heaven, by doing prayers, good deeds and helping others. And enjoy the fruits of good karmas done in this life. It is believed that the greatest happiness in a conscious state for the soul is achieved in Heaven.

Souls after death, will reach their predefined destination in astral world forming groups which matches one's basic nature, depending on their past Karma. Hence, souls cannot go to higher or lower planes than their eligibility.

All our past actions are reviewed from the 'Record of Omissions and Commissions' which is a book confidentially maintained by Chitra Gupta who is the minister of Lord Yama Dharma Raja (King of Death), as we see in mythological movies. Based on good and bad actions, each individual is sent to heaven or sent to a plane to undergo punishment respectively.

Actually, Chitra Gupta is 'chitta gupt'- meaning our karmic impressions stored in chitta (mind) and then uploaded to the Infinite Super Consciousness. That's why people say you can cheat anyone, but not your own Consciousness.

For example, when a person uses his computer, operating the programs and creating files, all the data is backed up to the central server during night time when there's no internet traffic. Similarly, all the data in our mind is uploaded regularly during our “deep sleep” into the God's server or “Book of records”.

Description of Different planes of Existences:

“Prof. Frederic Myers 1843- 1901, who did enormous research for twenty years, has written a book- 'Human personality and its survival of bodily death'. After his death, Mr. Myers communicated through 'automatic writing' perceived by psychics in England, USA and India. The scripts which were more than 3000 pages, all signed as 'Myers', were later compiled and noted that Myers was trying to communicate that all those writings belong to Myers and not any other individual.

Myers communicated about his experiences, after death and describes different positive planes similar to Mahar, Jana, Tapa and Satya Lokas. “After death most of us will go first to a post-mortem plane- “plane of illusion” also called as “lotus flower paradise”. He calls this as third plane, the first two being physical world and a brief transitional state. This plane consists of subtle form of matter which is responsive to human emotion and thought.

“The fourth plane is, 'the plane of form', and when one attains this level, all desire for an earthly existence is gone. Here one dwells in a realm from which no traveller returns to earth. Consciousness and existence are more intense and energised than anything we know. This is a world of magnificent, unimaginable beauty in which the mind learns the ultimate mastery of form. Using substances, light, and colour unknown on earth, the mind, now God-like in its powers, learns to create an infinite variety of forms having beauty of an ultimate, unsurpassable quality.

Beyond the 'plane of form' lies the 'plane of flame', in which the soul explores the physical universe beyond the earth, and thus completes its knowledge of matter.

Beyond the 'plane of flame' lies the 'plane of light'. Souls who have attained this level have lived in every type of matter and every variety of mentally-created form. They are therefore ready, after innumerable centuries of evolution, to pass beyond matter and form.

A Soul who enters this last rich kingdom of experience...bear with them the wisdom of form, the incalculable secret wisdom, gathered only through limitation, harvested in numberless years, garnered from lives passed in myriad forms. They are capable of living now without form, and exist as white light, as Pure thought.

But one more step now remains – the final passage to the ultimate 'plane of being', the achievement of the last goal on an infinitely long path of personal evolution. Myers called this last goal-the seventh plane, and he said that when one enters it, he becomes part of God.

Myers had personally journeyed as far as the fourth plane. What he communicated his account of the higher worlds beyond fourth plane, had been told by those more highly evolved than him”

Excerpts from the book- 'Life after death' by Erica Simon -Pages 196- 198

Life Review:

Most of the research subjects reported, that what they see first in the spirit world is their personal guide, who will help in reviewing their life on earth.

Human 'conscious' mind, which has limitations begins to forget certain thoughts and events, after days or months or years. But 'subconscious' mind contains the memory of important events or incidents in life. Behind the 'subconscious mind' there is 'super conscious' mind, which has record of everything happened, experienced including all thoughts that have been entertained in a person's life. All these things will flash before a person, during the review of life.

Each soul or individual subtle body goes through the life review exercise about its life on earth. The life-events which it sees may appear in chronological order, or they may all be experienced simultaneously. The minute details of their life experiences will be reviewed.

There is no one to judge the review of life. As we have judged others in our life time, our consciousness will now judge our own life. Whatever wrong deeds, harms done to others, mistakes done are viewed. Finally, this experience may be interpreted as an educational effort to help the person understand the meaning of one's life and evolution of individual consciousness.

Laws of spirit world:

We have already noted about different realms or planes of existence, according to Indian scriptures.

Though these do not give minute details of spirit world, they explain that those who have done good deeds go to the Heaven where they enjoy; and the sinful ones go to the Hell to suffer the bad deeds. After going through the the Heaven and Hell experiences, they come back to earth to proceed on their earthly life journey till they attain, Self realisation. There are books which have documented the experiences of the subjects on the life after death through automatic writing, hypnotism, near death experiences (NDE), LSD experiences.

From a book “Laws of spirit world” by Khorshed Bhavnagiri- lets us know some important points.

- Death is just a transition from one world to another, from one body to another, from the Earth to the Heaven or Hell.
- Though after death, the body dies, the knowledge, memory and experiences that a person collects on Earth do not die. The soul characteristics are retained.
- It is noted that there are different realms, which are like the heaven, the hell, in between etc.
- From this 'in-between' (assumed as the planet earth) realm the human souls start their journey of existence.
- After reaching the highest Realm, Souls do not reincarnate any more on Earth. But their spiritual journey continues.
- Each of the Realms is governed or headed by a highly evolved, Ideal Soul.
- It is all about a human being's free will and the choices one makes, to evolve higher or suffer.
- God Almighty doesn't interfere in souls using free will or bringing out of wrong ways as God has given a conscious mind to guide you.
- All good and bad deeds are recorded in “Akashic etheral records”; these records are updated during deep sleep.
- According to the good deeds (karmas) and the sins, recorded in subconscious mind, It takes a particular Soul to the specific Realm it deserves to be in.
- On Reincarnation – a Soul is reborn again and again in different countries, religions, in male or female form, depending on how the Soul chooses to purify itself and what it requires for its growth. The main reason for this is to improve spiritually and rise to higher Realms.
- The spirit world is far away from Earth. It spans around the Earth, but miles and miles above.

No death:

In the astral world, there is no death but we move from one plane to another. Like dreams, when you go to the astral world, earthly life becomes unreal to you, and astral life seems real and when you come back to earthly life, astral life becomes unreal to you and earthly life seems real.

How long one stays in Heaven?

Soon after the expiry of the time-limit allotted for a 'Soul' to reside in the Heaven, it has to return to this mortal world. The Soul is compelled to go, when the stock of its merits responsible for its stay in Heaven, as well as the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures, gets exhausted.

The Bhagavad Gita says, that at the end of the pleasures of heaven, when one's acquired merit is exhausted, the Soul has to return to Earth.

Ex: When you go on a holiday, you enjoy with your family for certain number of days as per your planned budget or leave available. Thereafter, you have to return to your place. Our term in Heaven is based on the amount of good deeds performed, like a prepaid package of a mobile phone.

Astral worlds too have problems:

Heaven looks attractive, but even when you arrive in the heavenly astral kingdom you may not be completely satisfied.

Guru Sri Prathameshananda mentions- "If you go to America for a holiday, you will not have Indian problems, but you will sure have American problems."

Similarly, we may not have problems of earth, but may have to face astral rules and problems there.

Rebirth:

Is there such a thing called rebirth? It's affirmative, according to the teachings of the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita (2.27)

"Death is certain for the born, and rebirth is inevitable for the dead"

For one who is born, death is certain when the results of the actions which caused this life are exhausted. Similarly when one dies rebirth is indeed certain due to the actions good or bad which one has to experience, due to the karmic actions accrued, while living in the physical body.

In a glorious passage, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (4.4.3) says:

'Just as a leech goes to the end of a blade of grass and, before relinquishing it, steps onto the next blade and then leaves the other behind, so also does the soul give up one body and takes another, until it knows the Truth.'

“The process of birth” as per Srimad Bhagavad Gita:

In course of the return journey of the soul to the earth plane, it assumes various shapes and forms. For instance, it assumes the form of air, and is then transformed into smoke. From smoke it becomes vapour; from vapour it takes the form of a cloud and from the cloud it comes down to the earth in the form of rain. The rain drops enter the seeds of food grains like wheat, barley, rice, beans etc., or other herbs and plants.

Through them, it enters humans when grains and plants are consumed as food. Gradually it enters the semen of male species and in the process of union with a female, makes its way through semen-drops into the latter's womb. In this way a soul is reborn as different species determined by its previous good and bad deeds called Karmas.

How long will it take for rebirth:

It is natural to wonder, after physical death, if one will be reborn on earth immediately. Just as some people sleep for a long time and others sleep only a little while, so in the astral world some souls wake up quickly from the sleep of physical death, and desire to return to earth; while others remain for hundreds of years in the astral world.

In the course of research by using hypnotic trance to trace the past lives of a person, it has been found that the time lag between two reincarnations on Earth could be on average 50 to 400 years.

For a soul to be reborn, the circumstances on Earth need to be favourable to expend its Karma account from previous births with various people. This is in accordance with the law of Karma. The reincarnation of the subtle body is postponed until the time various other people with whom they have a give-and-take account with, are also preparing to take reincarnation.

Before returning to earth, each individual undergoes a kind of karmic “review”.

Future body:

In Humans after death – Cosmic energy, Subtle body along with Causal body move out of physical body. The past data is in seed stage in the Causal body and based on the good and bad actions, a person has done in the present life, future body is defined for next life.

As we replace the old computer with a new one, when it becomes obsolete or unusable, we shift the existing software, similarly a new body will be taken up and updated software will be downloaded into it.

The causal body makes a blue print of the new subtle body, about the nature of the next earthly life the individual has to live, including the parents, friends and experiences it has to face. Soul acquires an appropriate body to exhaust the balance, unfulfilled desires according to its past tendencies (impressions of karma).

Sometimes, wise children are born to ordinary parents, and sometimes dull children are born to intelligent parents. Sometimes, one child may be intelligent and other may be dull, out of two children born in the same family. These differences are because the souls are in different evolutionary stages of progress.

If a couple or the members in a family are fighting most of the time, it sometimes indicate that they were arch rivals in the previous life. Therefore, according to the laws of karma – those souls are attracted to each other, based on the impressions of love or hatred, they develop for each other; and their pending accounts have to be settled.

Personalities and heredity:

Personalities are formed through the sprouting of seeds of actions left from a previous birth. If persons are showing interest towards business, science, music, art or spirituality etc, from the beginning of their childhood, then know that they brought that tendency from their past life.

We can see many examples of child prodigies around the world- for which there is no scientific explanation.

Child prodigy:

A prodigy is someone who is so naturally talented at something that they become a master of that particular skill as a child.

Let us see some wonder kids from India.

1) Srinivasa Ramanujan:

He was an Indian mathematician and an autodidact. He had no proper training in mathematics, but he made his own theorems and rediscovered many theorems.



2) Advait Kolarkar is a four-year-old, born in Pune, youngest artist in the history of Canada's Saint Joan Arts Centre to have a solo exhibition.



3) Truptraj Pandya

This little artist was merely 18-months-old when he started playing the tabla. He mastered it by the age of 6 and was awarded a Guinness Book of World Records certificate for being the youngest tabla maestro in the world.



4) At just the age of 4. Anshuman Nandi picked up the drumsticks and there was nothing stopping him.



5) Sreenidhi

Sreenidhi's uncanny musical talent was discovered at a very young age of 11 months. She could identify ragas and could notate any phrase of music, let it be a complex sangathi in carnatic music or a simple keychain tune. Her rare knowledge at such young age astonished both the musicians and common public.

Performing career began at a very young age of 2 and half years, and it was a wonder to everyone's eyes who witnessed a baby not only notating any alaap or phrase in any raagam and recognizing the name of the raagam but also performing raagaalapanam and swarakaalpanam to krithis with her Manodharmam.

Heredity features whether good or bad, are not only due to parents, but is the result of their own past actions. The fact that some people are born healthy and some sick, or some wealthy and some poor, is not because of God's partiality, but by causes initiated in a past life.

Belief of Reincarnation:

Most people in the West regard the idea of reincarnation as a fantastic superstition, and find it difficult to imagine how such an outlandish doctrine could have developed.

Paramahansa Yogananda says, "Since the means of proof do exist, no one has a right to say that reincarnation and other spiritual laws do not operate, until he has tried the methods and seen the results for himself. In physical science, certain procedures must be adopted and followed in order to prove the truth of any given theory. A scientist's opinion is therefore valueless, if he has not followed the prescribed rules for arriving at the truth of the theory.

So too, it is in spiritual matters. In the Western world, spiritual doctrines are believed in or rejected simply on the grounds of personal bias, rather than as a result of scientific investigation."

The fact that we may not remember our former lives does not mean that we did not exist before. We do not remember the nine months of our embryonic existence in this life, nor do we remember most of our experiences up to the age of twelve. It is all the less likely therefore that we would remember our previous birth and body.

As per Prof. Fedric Myers

“Reincarnation, then doesn't just involve human bodies – it involves every kind of matter!

Between each embodied life, there is a disembodied one. And to be a human being is not anything like an ultimate state. One learns in a human body for a period of time, after which one passes beyond physical embodiment altogether. The ultimate existence conceivable to the mind of man is that of “God,” that is precisely where we are headed. We are “gods in training,” and that training takes us through every form of existence – from mineral to plant, from plant to animal, from animal to human, from human to divine.”

And seven centuries ago, Rumi, a Persian mystic, wrote the following enigmatic lines:

“I died a plant and rose as an animal.
I died an animal and I was man.”



From the book - 'Life after death' by Erica Simon - Pages 190-191

Is reincarnation compulsory for all?

If after death one attains higher regions such as Maharlok or Janalok; due to higher spiritual practices, one does not need to be reincarnated as all of the individual's remaining Karma accumulated till then, can be worked out from those planes itself.

However, these highly evolved subtle bodies, may choose to be born of their own free will. They do so because of their expansive nature primarily to act as spiritual guides for humanity and to help society develop spiritually.

The importance of reincarnation on Earth plane:

The Earth plane is very important. It is the only region where we have a physical body and can make rapid spiritual growth and also settle our karmic account in the shortest period of time. In other planes the progress is said to be slow.

Other than Earth, spiritual growth after death is most likely to occur only in the regions beyond Heaven such as Maharlok etc. This is because after death, the subtle bodies run the risk of getting caught up in the unending pleasures the Heaven offers.

- Earth is also considered to be a cosmic hospital.
- You cannot go to a hospital and complain, “Why all the people are sick.”
- In a hospital, only sick people are admitted, the cured and healthy are discharged and sent home.
- Only defective humans are born on Earth; to be cured and sent to higher stages of existence.

Proof of reincarnation:

There is only one kind of proof for 'reincarnation' - verifiable memories of past lives.

Rebirth studies:



Dr. Ian Stevenson, a highly respected professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia has collected 1,700 cases of persons with memories of past lives; and his investigation established that in most of the cases, beyond any doubt, were genuine. Dr. Ian Stevenson has published thirty such cases in detail.

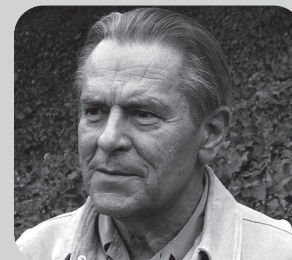
The persons really lived in the addresses mentioned in their past life during investigation and tallied with the experiences, which clearly point to their past lives identification.

You may read about him and his works from web.

Investigation through LSD therapy:

In his book “**Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research**”

Dr. Grof makes it clear, that LSD can numb the subconscious memory banks at levels even deeper than those possible with hypnosis.

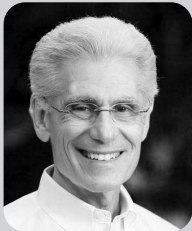


The results, and their implications, are astounding. If a patient is given a series of LSD treatments, his subconscious mind yields up its memories from progressively more remote points in time.

First are memories from this life, vividly re-lived, including many from fetal life in the womb, and from the actual birth-experience. Once these memories have been retrieved and relived, the individual then begins to relive experiences from past human lives, including many which are of great karmic importance.

Dr. Grof writes:

“The facts of reincarnation, make him recognize the responsibility for his past deeds, and present the law of karma as an important part of the cosmic order that is mandatory for all sentient beings...According to the reports on LSD subjects...the assignment of an individual spiritual entity to a particular physical body occurs...according to its karmic past. In addition, soul has experiences of existing in the forms of minerals, plants and animals.”



Dr. Weiss is a scientific doctor, trained at Colombia University and Yale Medical School and graduated with several honours.

The book “Many Lives Many Masters” is a true story about how a doctor discovered evidence on past lives while treating a woman with major anxiety issues, depression and a wide array of phobias. The skeptical doctor was astonished, when he discovered that patient was recalling past-life traumas.

later, Sr. Brain Weiss recorded and wrote this book in 1988 which documents the doctor’s journey from disbelief to belief, in regards to messages from the supernatural world and reincarnation

Out-of-Body-Experiences:

Near death and out-of-body experiences provide evidence demonstrating that consciousness may have an existence entirely apart from gross matter (the body) and subtle matter (the mind). Throughout history, people around the world have reported these experiences.

Another interesting book is:

“Human devolution”, a book by Michael A. Cremo, has compiled some interesting facts on reincarnation, OBE (out of body experiences) and NDE (near death experiences).

Why all persons do not have recollection of past lives experiences?

When a person wanted to know about past life, Guru asks 'which past life you want to recollect?'

There are uncountable number of past lives. Our physical senses strongly overshadow our memory and we lose our ability to perceive our previous births. It is also God's compassion for us that He has so arranged that we forget the previous lifetimes. Imagine a parent who has died and taken rebirth as his grandson; and recollects that memory. Or, two enemies are reborn as brothers!

People will go mad, if they try to recollect memories of past lives because, they were in different bodies; male, female, animals, birds etc. It is a blessing that they do not recollect their past lives. A person's present spouse, might have been sister earlier; or a nagging spouse might have been person's arch enemy earlier.

Just imagine how difficult it would be to go about doing, day to day affairs of this life, remembering past life events and the past birth relationships. we will go mad.

Guru narrates a story of a person- who wanted to know about his past life.

So Guru gave him knowledge.

This person while going on the road, saw his wife from his past life going on a two wheeler with another person. So he went into a theatre following them. He approached the lady and shouted at her "How dare you go with another person other than your husband", and tried to pull her. The man next to her, who is her husband in this present life, gave two heavy slaps to this guy and shouted "how dare you touch my wife". This person came to his senses and requested Guru to remove his past life memories.

Though this story is told on a lighter vien, imagine this type of situations from different people from different lives and how mad people can get with them.

Why do only some of us recall past lives?:

The answer is that it does not happen on its own.

Enlightened people and spiritual gurus who are able to reach super conscious levels, can recall their and others past lives too.

Ordinary people only under hypnotism or LSD therapy can recollect which is tough and dangerous. But all people who volunteered for this test could recall their past lives and also explain about astral world and realms. So this proves beyond doubt that we all have past lives.

Research Statistics from hypnotised persons:

Erica Simon- author of 'Life after death' book, compiled different research experiences. The following is from research data compiled from Dr. Helen wanbach -

Dr. Helen Wanbach was one of the pioneers in conducting scientific research into past lives. She talked to more than four hundred regressed and hypnotised subjects about the processes in the astral world that had led to their current lives. She condensed the results of those conversations into statistics.

Did you choose to be born?

Maximum people stated that they had "chosen" their current life and time of birth.

Five percent said that they had not, that they simply found themselves in a womb, being born.

The great majority make their decision to be born on the basis of counselling by spiritual advisors or heads in the spirit world; and at the end even if you want to retract, it is not possible and you are born into life again.

Did you want to be born?

While a majority – 81 percent – felt they needed to be born in order to advance their personal development through the experiences of physical life.

When did you enter your body?

Only 1 percent reported that they had entered it prior to the fourth month of pregnancy, while 14 percent said they did it between the fourth and eighth months. Thus, 85 percent joined their new bodies only after the eighth month of conception!

Why are you being born?

Past karmic ties with others were the major single motivation for choosing to be born into in a particular body. They stated that the purpose was to work out karmic problems which had developed in past-life relationships. A majority of eighty-five percent stated that they already knew their parents and other important people in their present lives from relationships they had with them in past lives!

Do these relationships carry over from life to life?

Though the relationships carry over from life to life, they do not remain the same but undergo every conceivable, sexual and relational alteration. Thus, the subject's parents or children in the present life had been something very different in the past: present mothers and fathers might have been past sisters, brothers, friends, lovers or children; the subject's present children often turned out to have been his parents in past life. Relational and sexual change was the rule!

For example, subjects said:

- *My mother had been my sister, my father and my child before.*
- *My mother was my sister; and, in a past life my father was my lover.*
- *My first son had been a grandfather in one lifetime of mine; my second son had been a father, and my first daughter a friend. My second daughter I saw clearly as a mother of mine in a past life.*

Where are you being born?

Our next birth depends upon the blue print prepared in the spirit world. The soul enters the womb mostly around 4/5 months of conception, or later. We select our parents. And nature is so meticulous that the birth date and time and place will be as per planets location based on the blue print. - matter condensed from pages 179 - 182 from 'Life after death'

What is the basis for a person to be born in a particular family?

The basis is mainly dependent on the dominant 'Guna', a person is experiencing in the present life.

In Bhagavad Gita, in the 14th chapter, it is explained that upon death, a Satvic person attains higher worlds. When he returns, he takes birth in a pious family. After death, a Rajasic person remains in the middle worlds, and he takes rebirth in the family of those who are attached to actions. As for the Tamasic person, he sinks to lowest regions on dying, and when reborn takes birth among the ignorant and the deluded.

It is beyond doubt that people born on an auspicious date and time, will see a substantial increase in their wealth.

Life after death in case of suicide:

In most cases, suicide remains a willful act that happens when a person is going through a horrible and miserable phase, as per their destiny. Life on the Earth plane of existence is precious and is given to us primarily to expend

karma and for spiritual growth. When we suffer because of others or vice versa, we create/settle a karmic 'give-and-take' account with them.

However, by committing suicide, we squander away the opportunity for spiritual growth and hence incur demerits or sin. The gravity of sin can vary depending on the circumstances under which a person commits suicide. Invariably the subtle-body of a suicide victim is a retribution for greater miseries incurred during their life time; and the circumstances under which they commit suicide could send them to the lower regions of Hell after death.

No Rebirth-if you remember GOD at the time of death:

It is said as per Hindu scriptures that what people are thinking or desiring about, at the time of death will become the cause of their next birth; and they will be pursuing to fulfil those desires.

If a person at the time of death remembers God in whatever name and form, it is said that they will achieve complete liberation.

That is the reason most of the people in India were named after different Gods. So that, at the time of death, remembering or worrying about their children, wife or anyone will make the person remember by their name, which is named after God.

Everyone thinks this is simple technique for liberation. But to remember God during last breath is not an easy task; unless the paths of liberation are sincerely practiced, and mostly with God's grace.

Souls on the path of realisation:

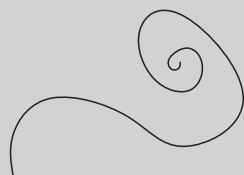
In Gita -Arjuna questions Lord Krishna, as to what will happen to the spiritual seeker who starts a spiritual journey, but strayed or dies on the path of Self realisation?

Lord Krishna replies: "When the seeker is reborn on this earth, the seeker is not degraded to a state lower than that already attained. The person is born in a rich family where his basic needs are taken care of and given a chance to redeem desires for Self realisation; and, continues to advance steadily on the spiritual path."

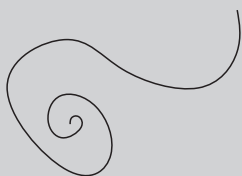
Early death:

There are souls of young children, who die soon after taking birth; and, then return to the same parents, as the soul of their next baby. These plans are all made in advance and involve a lot of karmic issues. In one of the medical investigation case of earlier lives, the subject had died from a birth defect early in his last life. When asked, "What was the purpose of your life ending when you were only a few days old?" The Subject replied, "The lesson was for my parents."

Let us go through a story from Srimad Bhagawatham:



The son of King Citraketu dies at a very young age and the King requests Sage Narada to help revive his son. Narada says, "I shall request the soul to appear and it is up to him to decide whether to reenter your son's body or not."



With spiritual powers, He calls the soul and says: "O disembodied soul, look at your father, mother and relations, who are deeply agonised with grief caused by separation from you. Entering your body again, enjoy the luxuries provided by your royal father, for the rest of your life, which has been apparently cut short by your untimely death, and ascend the imperial throne when your father is no more."

The soul replied: "In which incarnation were these people my parents? Due to Karma, by turns during different incarnations all people actually come to be parents and relatives, friends and even bitter enemies in relation to one another.

Just as gold and other commodities pass from one place to another among different men, so does an embodied soul pass through various, wombs. The relation with living men is indeed perceived to be temporary. And the feeling of belongingness, with respect to such a being, actually persists, only as long as there is an imagined relationship with it. Similarly, a Soul that has found its way into a particular womb and thereby entered into the relation of a son with another embodied soul that has given birth to it, is really meaningless.

Indeed none is very dear and none unwelcome, none is akin and none alien to it. On the other hand, a Soul is only a dispassionate witness of the varied minds of friends as well as of foes, those who do a good or ill, to him. For it is the witness of both causes and effects and independent of them all."

Having spoken thus, the soul disappeared. Struck with wonder, parents and relatives gave up mourning. After cremating the body (of the dead child) and performing the final appropriate final rites, the kinsmen of the prince set aside their affection and attachment, which is so difficult to get rid of and which is a source of grief, infatuation, fear and agony.

Defective body or organs:

When a soul is born into a defective body, it is due to the fact that in a previous existence it committed errors, from the results of which, it can only escape by submitting to that particular experience.

We keep seeing many persons with defective organs and deformed bodies; lepers, beggars on the streets and patients in hospitals with complicated illness etc. Do not curse them, but just show some empathy. If possible help them or at least bless them. Thank God for not putting our soul in that body.

Details of Astral world:

In Chapter 43 of the book– 'Autobiography of a Yogi' – Paramahansa Yogananda describes the details of his meeting with His Guru Sri Yukteswargiri, who appears in physical body after he died and explains about higher worlds. After death, we go to higher realms which Guru calls Astral world, which are called Heaven and Hell divided in different levels, after either enjoyment or suffering, we return back to earth plane to continue our journey. But once we go through Self realisation, then souls need not return back from astral world. The souls in Astral world also go through the process of further refinement to go to a higher subtle Astral world called 'Causal world', from where the soul is fully liberated and merges with the Infinite Consciousness.

Please read the book for more details.

Summary – Evolution of the soul:

The above facts about the various planes of existence give us a fair idea of the possible consequences in our life after death, and how we should live our lives.

The process of evolution of a Soul or Jiva takes its own time. Once we go to higher planes like Heaven, we enjoy as per merits and come back to earth. When we go to the lower planes of Hell, we experience severe unhappiness until we completely pay for our demerits (sins) by suffering the rigorous punishments; and get a chance to be reincarnated on Earth. All these are experienced according to the 'Laws of Karma'.

However, as we feel a dream to be real, when it is being experienced; we also experience pleasure or suffering as real in the Heaven or the Hell respectively. Finally, with knowledge our mind should become pure, to enable casual body should be dissolved in God-as we experience a dreamless sleep.

Once the limits and the limitations of an Earthly existence are crossed by virtue of evolution of wisdom, with spiritual practice or with extreme meritorious deeds- the higher realms are reached where the Soul is freed from the bonds of sorrows and ignorance and moves closer to the knowledge of the purpose of creation and then reaches the creator Himself. This absorption is termed as Vimukti, meaning, a release from the bond of all karma or conditioned existence.

The ultimate goal therefore is to practice the paths to realisation, for final 'LIBERATION', from the illusion of this cosmic dream.