

# The Soul and Its Destiny

By Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Dr.Rupnathji

\*The Vedanta philosophy discusses the nature of the soul from two standpoints:

1. Absolute or transcendental and
2. Relative or phenomenal.

\*From the absolute standpoint, the soul is non-dual, immortal, ever pure, ever free, ever illumined, and one with Brahman. It is untouched by hunger or thirst, good and evil, pain and pleasure, birth and death, and the other pairs of opposites. That is the soul's true nature. The realisation of which is the goal of a man's spiritual aspiration and striving. From this absolute standpoint, the soul is called PARAMATMA or Supreme Soul.

But from the relative standpoint, the Vedanta philosophy admits the existence of a multitude of individual souls called JIVATMAS, and distinguishes them from the Supreme Soul. Attached to the body, the individual soul is a victim of the pairs of the opposites. Entangled in the world, it seeks deliverance from the eternal round of birth and death, and with that end in view, studies the scriptures and practises spiritual disciplines.

The embodied soul is associated with the sense organs, the mind and vital breath (Prana). There are ten sense organs, all subordinate to the mind as the central organ; five organs of perception and five organs of action. The five organs of perception comprise the organ of taste (tongue), smell (nose), vision (eyes), hearing (ear), and touch (skin). The five organs of action are the hands, the feet, the organ of speech, the organs of evacuation and the organ of generation.

## \*\*\*The four functions of the mind:-

The mind is the inner organ and consists of such functions as desire, deliberation, doubt, faith, want of faith, patience, impatience, shame, intelligence and fear.

The impressions carried by the organs of perception are shaped by the mind into ideas, for we see only with the mind, hear with the mind. Further, the mind changes the ideas into resolutions of the will.

There are four functions or divisions or parts of the mind.

One part of the mind called Manas, creates doubt.

The Buddhi (intellect) makes decisions Chitta is the storehouse of memory Aham (the ego), creates I-consciousness.

The five organs of action, the five organs of perception, the five pranas, the mind, and the intellect constitute the gross and the subtle body of the embodied soul (jiva). The subtle accompanies the individual soul after death, when the gross body is destroyed. The subtle body is the abode of the KARMA or impressions left by action, determining the nature of the new body and mind when the soul is reborn. As the jiva (the embodied soul) does and act, so it becomes.

The presence of an irrefragable Self or consciousness is assumed in all acts of thinking. The Self or consciousness, which is the true 'seer' or subject, is unchanging intelligence, and can never be imagined to be non-existent. Atman (the Self) in man and Brahman in the universe are completely identical.

The idea of body, senses, and the mind, associated with the non-self, is falsely superimposed upon the Self, and the Self, which is of the nature of pure consciousness, appears as a jiva, or phenomenal being, subject to the various limitations of the physical world.

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## \*The soul:-

Further explanations by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Snastrishree Dr.Rupnathji ,

The Rishis speak of two souls: the real soul and the apparent soul. The real soul is birthless, death less, immortal, and infinite. The same real soul, under the spell of ignorance, appears as the apparent man identified with the body, mind and senses. This apparent man becomes, on account of his attachment to the body, a victim of birth and death, virtue and vice, and the other pairs of opposites. The apparent man is bound to the world, and it is he, again, who strives for liberation. The enjoyment of material pleasures, and the subsequent satiation and weariness; the consciousness of bondage, and the struggle for freedom; the injunctions of the scriptures, and the practice of moral and spiritual disciplines- all this refers to the apparent man. Again, it is the apparent man who performs virtuous or sinful deeds, goes, after death, to heaven or hell, and assumes different bodies. But it must never be forgotten that rewards and punishments are spoken of only with reference to the reflected, or apparent soul. The real soul is forever free from the characteristics of the relative world.

But the real soul is always free, illumined, and perfect. The real sun, non-dual and resplendent, shines brilliantly in the sky, though millions of its reflections are seen to move with the movement of the waves.

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Two souls are mentioned in the Vedas

From The Mahabharata

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Dr.Rupnathji .

Vyasa said: "That has been said to be Manifest which is possessed of these four attributes, viz., birth, growth, decay and death. That which is not possessed of these attributes is said to be Unmanifest. Two souls are mentioned in the Vedas and the sciences that are based upon them. The first (which is called Jivatman; embodied soul) is endowed with the four attributes already mentioned, and has a longing for the four objects or purposes (viz., Religion, Wealth, Pleasure and Emancipation). This soul is called Manifest, and it is born of the Unmanifest (Supreme Soul). It is both intelligent and non-intelligent. I have thus told thee about Sattwa (inert matter) and Kshetrajna (immaterial spirit).

Both kinds of Soul, it is said in the Vedas, become attached to objects of the senses. The doctrine of the Sankhyas is that one should keep oneself aloof or dissociated from objects of the senses. That yogin who is freed from attachment and pride, who transcends all pairs of opposites, such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc., who never gives way to wrath or hate, who never speaks an untruth, who, though slandered or struck, still shows friendship for the slanderer or the striker, who never thinks of doing ill to others, who restrains the three, viz., speech, acts and mind, and who behaves uniformly towards all creatures, succeeds in approaching the presence of Brahman.

That person who cherishes no desires for earthly objects, who is not unwilling to take what comes, who is dependent on earthly objects to only that extent which is necessary for sustaining life, who is free from cupidity, who has driven off all grief, who has restrained his senses, who goes through all necessary acts, who is regardless of personal appearance and attire, whose senses are all collected (for devotion to the true objects of life), whose purposes are never left unaccomplished, who bears himself with equal friendliness towards all creatures, who regards a clod of earth and a lump of gold with an equal eye, who is equally disposed towards friend and foe, who is possessed of patience, who takes praise and blame equally, who is free from longing with respect to all objects of desire, who practises Brahmacharya (celibacy), and who is firm and steady in all his vows and observances, who has no malice or envy for any creature in the universe, is a Yogin who according to the Sankhya system succeeds in winning Emancipation."

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"I am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings"

-Gita, Chapter 10, verse 20:

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The soul is the very pivot of our existence. Either man is the body and has a soul or man is the soul and has a body. If man is the body and has a soul, then the materialist is right. Then glorification of the body is the goal of existence, and competition, violence, and hatred are the means to attain this goal. But if man is the soul and has a body, then religion is right. Then the body becomes a secondary thing, only a means to fulfil a spiritual end.

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The Rishis of the Upanishads describe the different courses followed by the unillumined souls after death.

After death the souls of the extremely wicked-

those who are given to violence, greed, lust, passion and cruelty - assume after death the subhuman bodies of animals and insects. They too, after the punishment is over, come back to earth to be incarnated as human beings. The experiences in a subhuman body cannot destroy the innate spiritual nature of the soul.

Those who have performed meritorious actions on earth, but with the selfish motive of reaping their results, pass after death through a succession of stations associated with gloom and darkness, and at last arrive at an inferior heaven called the 'plane of the moon' where they enjoy for many years material pleasures as a reward for their previous works. Afterwards they are reborn on earth and again take up the thread of their spiritual evolution. This is known as the 'way of the fathers.'

Then there is the 'way of the gods.' Those who devote themselves to worship and righteous activities but cannot attain to Self-Knowledge owing to certain defects, pass, after death, through a number of stations associated with light, and at last reach an exalted sphere called the plane of Brahma, corresponding to the highest heaven of the dualistic religions. The inhabitants of this plane are always aware of Cosmic Consciousness, but a thin obstacle stands in the way of their complete emancipation. After spending many years in meditation, they attain to emancipation at the end of the cycle, when the whole plane itself is absorbed in Brahman, or the God-head.

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What Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Dr. Rupnathji

wrote about a cow named Lakshmi

"Even as a calf Lakshmi behaved in an extraordinary way; she would daily come to me and place her head at my feet. Years later, on the day the foundation was laid for the goshala (cow shed), she was so jubilant that she came and took me for the function. Again on the day of graha pravesham (on completion, making formal entry to the cow shed), she came straight to me at the time appointed and took me to the goshala. In so many ways and on so many occasions, she behaved in such a sensible and extremely intelligent way that one cannot but regard her as an extraordinary cow. What are we to say about it?"

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"The soul goes out of the body enveloped with subtle parts of the elements with a view to obtaining a fresh body."

Brahma Sutra.III.i.i.

In a universe of oneness, death is impossible

Bell's Theorem suggests that conscious human activity influences the behaviour of subatomic particles in actual laboratory experiments.

The implication that human consciousness is a factor in determining the features of the 'real' world is affirmed by the quantum physicist H.S.Stapp. Stapp contends that Bell's Theorem is the most important result in the history of science, and that it demonstrates the effect of human consciousness at the level of Macrocosm. The impact of our consciousness lies both in the direction of the very small and the very large (microcosm and macrocosm).

The principle of oneness is revealed through Bell's Theorem and through the connectivity in the 'Biodance'. In essence it says that through the unbelievable richness of contact that every human has with the universe at large and with every other human being, our concept of death is wrong. In a universe of oneness, death is impossible. The richness of connectivity renders personal extinction impossible, because personal extinction is possible only in a universe of personal isolation. We do not live in such a universe.

The failure to feel the universal oneness that envelopes us all perpetuates the greatest illusion of modern man: the inevitability of personal extinction. This illusion can be countered by an appreciation of the quality of oneness in the universe so well described by modern science.

The usual tradition of equating death with an ensuing nothingness can be abandoned, for there is no reason to believe that human death severs the quality of oneness in the universe. If we participate in this universal quality before our death, our survival after death is demanded. The oneness principle endures and we endure with it.

The theorems of Godel and John.S.Bell do much to affirm the experiences of the great Rishis of the Upanishads.

Our greatest spiritual achievement may lie in total integration of the spiritual and the physical - in realising that the spiritual and the physical are not two aspects of ourselves but one. Perhaps the ultimate spiritual goal is to transcend nothing, but to realise the oneness of our own being, which is implied by Godel and Bell.

The view of ourselves as independent objects that are isolated from the universe we inhabit is erroneous. We cannot distance ourselves from the universe because of our oneness with it.

From the Bhagavad Gita -

Translation from Sanskrit by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

Translated into English by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

It (the self) is not born, and It does not die; nor is it ever that this One having been nonexistent becomes existent again. This One is birthless, eternal, undecaying, ancient; It is not killed when the body is killed.

-Gita Ch.2 Verse 20

Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no nonexistence.

The nature of both of them, indeed, has been realised by the seers of Truth.

-Gita Ch.2, Shloka 16

As after rejecting (discarding) wornout clothes a man takes up other new ones (clothes), likewise after rejecting wornout bodies the embodied one (soul) duly attains new ones.

-Gita Ch.2 Verse 22

Since death of anyone born is certain, and of the dead (re-)birth is a certainty, therefore you ought not to grieve over an inevitable fact.

-Gita Ch. 2 Verse 27

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\*Reincarnation:-

From The Teachings of Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi-Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

Question:Is reincarnation true?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Reincarnation exists only so long as there is ignorance. There is really no reincarnation at all, either now or before. Nor will there be any hereafter. This is the truth.

[Note: Comments by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji's disciple: Most religions have constructed elaborate theories which purport to explain what happens to the individual soul after the death of the body. Some claim that the soul goes to heaven or hell while others claim that it is reincarnated in a new body.

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji taught that all such theories are based on the false assumption that the individual self or soul is real; once this illusion is seen through, the whole superstructure of after-life theories collapses. From the standpoint of the Self, there is no birth or death, no heaven or hell, and no reincarnation.

As a concession to those who were unable to assimilate the implications of this truth, Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji would sometimes admit that reincarnation existed. In replying to such people he would say that if one imagined that the individual self was real, then that imaginary self

would persist after death and that eventually it would identify with a new body and a new life. The whole process, he said, is sustained by the tendency of the mind to identify itself with a body. Once the limiting illusion of mind is transcended, identification with the body ceases, and all theories about death and reincarnation are found to be inapplicable.]

Question: Can a yogi know his past lives?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Do you know the present life that you wish to know the past? Find the present, then the rest will follow. Even with our present limited knowledge, you suffer so much. Why should you burden yourself with more knowledge? Is it to suffer more?

When seen through the sight of the supreme space of Self, the illusion of taking birth in this mirage-like false world is found to be nothing but the egotistical ignorance of identifying a body as "I". Among those whose minds are possessed with forgetfulness of Self, those who are born will die and those who die will be born again. But know that those whose minds are dead, having known the glorious Supreme Reality, will remain only there in that elevated state of reality, devoid of both birth and death. Forgetting Self, mistaking the body for Self, taking innumerable births, and at last knowing Self and being Self is just like waking from a dream of wandering all over the world.

Question: How long does it take a man to be reborn after death? Is it immediately after death or some time later?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: You do not know what you were before birth, yet you want to know what you will be after death. Do you know what you are now?

Birth and rebirth pertain to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is a wrong identification. You believe that the body has been born and will die, and confound the phenomena relating to the body with the Self. Know your real being and these questions will not arise.

Births and rebirths are mentioned only to make you investigate the question and find out that there are neither births nor rebirths. They relate to the body and not to the Self. Know the Self and don't be perturbed by doubts.

Question: Do not one's actions affect the person in later births?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Are you born now? Why do you think of other births? The fact is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives for it.

Question: What happens to a person after death?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. Do not worry about the future. The state before creation and the process of creation are dealt with in the scriptures in order that you may know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you.

But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God is real, why does he not shine forth in your sleep also? You always are, you are the same now as you were in sleep. You are not different from that one in sleep. But why should there be differences in the feelings or experiences of the two states?

Did you ask, while asleep, questions regarding your birth? Did you then ask 'Where do I go after death?' Why think of all these questions now in the waking state? Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy, its cause and ultimate results.

Question: What becomes of the Jiva (Individual soul) after death?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: The question is not appropriate for a Jiva now living. A dead Jiva may ask me, if he wishes to. In the meantime let the embodied Jiva solve its present problem and find who he is. Then there will be an end to such doubts.

Question: Is the Buddhist view, that there is no continuous entity answering to the ideas of the individual soul, correct or not? Is this consistent with the Hindu notion of a reincarnating ego? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, according to the Hindu doctrine, or is it a mere mass of mental tendencies- samskaras?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: The real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to the lower plane, namely, thought. It is transcended by Self-realisation.

Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot. Therefore they are denied by the Buddhists. The present state of ignorance is due to the identification of consciousness (chit) with the insentient (jada) body.

Question: Do not we go to heaven (svarga) as the result of our actions?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: That is as true as the present existence. But if we enquire who we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of heaven?

Question: Should I not try to escape rebirth?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Yes. Find out who is born and who now has the trouble of existence. When you are asleep do you think of rebirths or even the present existence? So find out from where the present problem arises and in that place you will find the solution. You will discover that there is no birth, no present trouble or unhappiness. The Self is all and all is bliss. Even now we are free from rebirth so why fret over the misery of it?

Question: Is there rebirth?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Do you know what birth is?

Questioner: Oh yes, I know that I exist now, but I want to know if I'll exist in the future.

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Past!...Present!... Future!....



Questioner: Yes, today is the result of yesterday, the past, and tomorrow. The future, will be the result of today, the present. Am I right?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: There is neither past nor future. There is only the present. Yesterday was the present to you when you experienced it, and tomorrow will be also the present when you experience it. Therefore, experience takes place only in the present, and beyond experience nothing exists.

Question: Are the past and future mere imagination?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Yes, even the present is mere imagination, for the sense of time is purely mental. Space is similarly mental. Therefore birth and rebirth, which take place in time and space, cannot be other than imagination.

Question: What is the cause of tanha, the thirst for life and the thirst for rebirth?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Real rebirth is dying from the ego into the spirit. This is the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus. Whenever identification with the body exists, a body is always available, whether this or any other one, till the body-sense disappears by merging into the source – the spirit, or Self. The stone which is projected upwards remains in constant motion till it returns to its source, the earth, and rests. Headache continues to give trouble, till the pre-headache state is regained.

Thirst for life is inherent in the very nature of life, which is absolute existence – sat. Although indestructible by nature, by false identification with its destructible instrument, the body consciousness imbibes a false apprehension of its destructibility. Because of that false identification it tries to perpetuate the body, and that results in a succession of rebirths. But however long these bodies may last, they eventually come to an end and yield to the Self, which alone eternally exists.

Questioner: Yes, "Give up thy life if thou wouldst live", says the Voice of the Silence of H.P.Blavatsky.

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Give up the false identification and remember, the body cannot exist without the Self, whereas the Self can exist without the body. In fact it is always without it.

Questioner: A doubt has just now arisen in a friend of mine's mind. She has just heard that a human being may take an animal birth in some other life, which is contrary to what Theosophy has taught her.

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Let him who takes birth ask this question. Find out first who it is that is born, and whether there is actual birth and death. You will find that birth pertains to the ego, which is an illusion of the mind.

Question: Is it possible for a man to be reborn as a lower animal?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata – the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage having been reborn as a deer.

Question: Is the individual capable of spiritual progress in an animal body?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Not impossible, though it is exceedingly rare. It is not true that birth as a man is necessarily the highest, and that one must attain realisation only from being a man. Even an animal can attain Self-realisation.

Question: Theosophy speaks of fifty to 10,000 year intervals between death and rebirth. Why is this so?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: There is no relation between the standard of measurements of one state of consciousness and another. All such measurements are hypothetical. It is true that some individuals take more time and some less. But it must be distinctly understood that it is no soul which comes and goes, but only the thinking mind of the individual, which makes it appear to do so. On whatever plane the mind happens to act, it creates a body for itself; in the physical world a physical body and in the dream world a dream body which becomes wet with dream rain and sick with dream disease.

After the death of the physical body, the mind remains inactive for some time, as in dreamless sleep when it remains worldless and therefore bodyless. But soon it becomes active again in a new world and a new body – the astral – till it assumes another body in what is called a 'rebirth'. But the jnani, the Self-realised man, whose mind has already ceased to act, remains unaffected by death. The mind of the jnani has ceased to exist; it has dropped never to rise again to cause births and deaths. The chain of illusions has snapped forever for him.

It should now be clear that there is neither real birth, nor real death. It is the mind which creates and maintains the illusion of reality in this process, till it is destroyed by Self-realisation.

Question: Does not death dissolve the individuality of a person, so that there can be no rebirth, just as the rivers discharged into the ocean lose their individualities?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: But when the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills, they once more flow in the form of rivers and fall into the ocean. So also the individualities during sleep lose their separateness and yet return as individuals according to their samskaras, or past tendencies. It is the same after death – the individuality of the person with samskaras is not lost.

Question: How can that be?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: See how a tree whose branches have been cut grows again. So long as the roots of the tree remain unimpaired, the tree will continue to grow. Similarly, the samskaras (past tendencies) which have merely sunk in the Heart on death, but have not perished for that reason, occasion rebirth at the right time. That is how Jivas (individual souls) are reborn.

Question: How could the innumerable Jivas and the wide universe which they produce sprout up from such subtle samskaras sunk in the Heart?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Just as the big banyan tree sprouts from a tiny seed, so do the Jivas and the whole universe with name and form sprout up from the subtle samskaras.

Question: How does the Jiva (individual soul) transfer from one body to another?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: When one begins to die, hard breathing sets in; that means that one has become unconscious of the dying body. The mind at once takes hold of another body, and it swings to and fro between the two, until attachment is fully transferred to the new body. Meanwhile there are occasional violent breaths, and that means that the mind swings back to the dying body. The transitional state of the mind is somewhat like a dream.

Question: How long is the interval between one's death and reincarnation?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: It may be long or short. But a jnani (Self-realised man) does not undergo any such changes; he merges into the universal being.

Some say that those who after death pass into the path of light are not reborn, whereas those who after death take the path of darkness are reborn after they have enjoyed the fruits of karma in their subtle bodies.

Some say that if one's merits and demerits are equal, they are directly reborn here. Merits outweighing demerits, the subtle bodies go to heaven and are then reborn here; demerits outweighing merits, they go to hells and are afterwards reborn here.

A Yogabhrashta (one who has slipped from the path of yoga) is said to fare in the same manner. All these are described in the sastras (scriptures). But in fact, there is neither birth nor death. One remains only as what one really is. This is the only truth.

Question: I find this very confusing. Are both births and rebirths ultimately unreal?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: If there is birth there must be not only one rebirth but a whole succession of births. Why and how did you get this birth? For the same reason and in the same manner you must have succeeded births. But if you ask who has the birth and whether birth and death are for you or for somebody distinct from you, then you realise the truth and the truth burns up all karmas and frees you from all births. The books graphically describe how all would take countless lives to exhaust, is burnt up by one little spark of jnana (spiritual knowledge), just as a mountain of gunpowder will be blown up by a single spark of fire. It is the ego that is the cause of all the world and of the countless sciences whose researches are so great as to baffle description, and if the ego is dissolved by enquiry all this immediately crumbles and the reality or Self alone remains.

Question: Do you mean to say that I was never even born?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: Yes, you are now thinking that you are the body and therefore confuse yourself with its birth and death. But you are not the body and you have no birth and death.

Question: So you do not uphold the theory of rebirth?

Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji: No. On the other hand I want to remove your confusion that you will be reborn. It is you who think that you will be reborn.

See for whom the question arises. Unless the questioner is found, such questions can never finally be answered.

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Birth and death are in nature, not in you. Yet the ignorant are deluded; just as we under delusion think that the sun is moving and not the earth, in exactly the same way we think that we are dying, and not nature. These are all, therefore, hallucinations. Just as it is a hallucination when we think that the fields are moving and not the railway train, exactly in the same manner is the hallucination of birth and death. When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things.

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## The natural habits of a new-born soul

since they were not obtained in this present life,  
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We cannot deny that bodies acquire certain tendencies from heredity, but those tendencies only mean the physical configuration, through which a peculiar mind alone can act in a peculiar way. There are other tendencies peculiar to a soul caused by its past actions. And a soul with a certain tendency would by the laws of affinity take birth in a body, which is the fittest instrument for the display of that tendency. This is in accord with science, for science wants to explain everything by habit, and habit is got through repetitions. So repetitions are necessary to explain the natural habits of a new-born soul. And since they were not obtained in this present life, they must have come down from past lives.

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From the absolute standpoint, the soul is non-dual, immortal, ever pure, ever free, ever illumined, and one with Brahman. It is untouched by hunger or thirst, good and evil, pain and pleasure, birth and death, and the other pairs of opposites. That is the soul's true nature. The realisation of which is the goal of a man's spiritual aspiration and striving. From this absolute standpoint, the soul is called Paramatma or Supreme Soul.

But from the relative standpoint, the Vedanta philosophy admits the existence of a multitude of individual souls called Jivatmas, and distinguishes them from the Supreme Soul. Attached to the body, the individual soul is a victim of the pairs of the opposites. Entangled in the world, it seeks deliverance

from the eternal round of birth and death, and with that end in view, studies the scriptures and practises spiritual disciplines.

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mind and vital breath (Prana). There are ten sense organs, all subordinate to the mind as the central organ; five organs of perception and five organs of action. The five organs of perception comprise the organ of taste (tongue), smell (nose), vision (eyes), hearing (ear), and touch (skin). The five organs of action are the hands, the feet, the organ of speech, the organs of evacuation and the organ of generation.

The presence of an irrefragable Self or consciousness is assumed in all acts of thinking. The Self or consciousness, which is the true 'seer' or subject, is unchanging intelligence, and can never be imagined to be non-existent. Atman (the Self) in man and Brahman in the universe are completely identical.

The idea of body, senses, and the mind, associated with the non-self, is falsely superimposed upon the Self, and the Self, which is of the nature of pure consciousness, appears as a jiva, or phenomenal being, subject to the various limitations of the physical world.

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the real soul and the apparent soul.

The real soul is birthless, deathless, immortal, and infinite. The same real soul, under the spell of ignorance, appears as the apparent man identified with the body, mind and senses. This apparent man becomes, on account of his attachment to the body, a victim of birth and death, virtue and vice, and the other pairs of opposites. The apparent man is bound to the world, and it is he, again, who strives for liberation.

The enjoyment of material pleasures, and the subsequent satiation and weariness; the consciousness of bondage, and the struggle for freedom; the injunctions of the scriptures, and the practice of moral and spiritual disciplines- all this refers to the apparent man. Again, it is the apparent man who performs virtuous or sinful deeds, goes, after death, to heaven or hell, and assumes different bodies. But it must never be forgotten that rewards and punishments are spoken of only with reference to the reflected, or apparent soul. The real soul is forever free from the characteristics of the relative world.

But the real soul is always free, illumined, and perfect.

The real sun, non-dual and resplendent, shines brilliantly

in the sky, though millions of its reflections are seen to

move with the movement of the waves.

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From the Mahabharata

Santi Parva, Section CCXXXVI

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

Vyasa said: "That has been said to be Manifest which is possessed of these four attributes, viz., birth, growth, decay and death. That which is not possessed of these attributes is said to be Unmanifest. Two souls are mentioned in the Vedas and the sciences that are based upon them. The first (which is called Jivatman; embodied soul) is endowed with the four attributes already mentioned, and has a longing for the four objects or purposes (viz., Religion, Wealth, Pleasure and Emancipation). This soul is called Manifest, and it is born of the Unmanifest (Supreme Soul). It is both intelligent and non-intelligent. I have thus told thee about Sattwa (inert matter) and Kshetrajna (immaterial spirit).

## The Nature of Reality

By Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

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As early as the Vedic times, the Rishis investigated the nature of reality from two levels of experience, one of which may be called the absolute, a cosmic or transcendental level and the other relative, cosmic or phenomenal level. At the phenomenal level one perceives the universe of diversity and is aware of one's own individual ego, whereas at the transcendental level, the differences merge into an inexplicable non dual consciousness. Both of these levels of experience are real from their respective standpoints, though what is perceived at one level may be negated at the other.

Reality experienced at the transcendental level is called Brahman. This term denotes the non-dual Pure consciousness which pervades the universe yet remains outside it. (Just as the sun pervades all life on earth yet remains outside it). Brahman is described as the first principle; from it all things are derived, by it all are supported, and into it all finally disappear. In Brahman alone the apparent differences of the phenomenal world are unified. Brahman is identical with the self of man, known as atman.

The word Atman signifies the consciousness in man which experiences gross objects during the waking state, subtle objects during the dream state, and the bliss arising from absence of the duality of subject and object in dreamless sleep.

The Upanishads speak of the transcendental Brahman as devoid of qualifying attributes or indicative marks, and of the phenomenal Brahman as endowed with them. The attributeless Brahman is called the supreme or unconditioned Brahman, and the other the inferior or conditioned Brahman.

When the sense perceived world is regarded as real, Brahman is spoken of as its omnipotent and omniscient Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. But when the world is not perceived to exist, as for instance in a deep meditation, then one experiences Brahman as the unconditioned Absolute; the idea of a Creator, omnipotent and omniscient, becomes irrelevant. The transcendental Brahman appears as

the cause of the universe in association with maya, and becomes known as the conditioned Brahman or Brahman with attributes, or by such other epithets as the Lord and the personal God.

The unconditioned Brahman is free from the limiting adjuncts of space, time and causation.

In describing Brahman as infinitely great and infinitely small, the Upanishads only point out that it is absolutely spaceless. It is 'one and infinite: infinite in the east, infinite in the south.....The Supreme Brahman is not to be fixed; it is unlimited, unborn, not to be reasoned about, not to be conceived.'

The Rishis often describe the unconditioned Brahman as existence-Knowledge-Bliss pure and absolute. Existence, Knowledge and Bliss are not attributes of Reality, they are its very stuff. Brahman is Knowledge or intelligence. The identity of Brahman and Atman or the Self, has been expressed in the well known Vedic dictum 'That thou art'. The very conception of Atman (Self) in the Upanishads implies that it is the knowing subject within us. It is the inner Consciousness and the real agent of perception, the senses being instruments. The Upanishads repeatedly say the realisation of the unconditioned Brahman is the supreme purpose of life, because it bestows immortality.

From the relative standpoint, however, the Vedas concede the reality of the phenomenal universe with all its limitations, and of finite living beings, who need an object of prayer and worship. A phenomenal creature needs a liberator, a saviour to whom he can pray, a personal God, benign and compassionate, to whom he can stretch out his hand for succour in the hour of stress and trial. By means of its inscrutable power called Maya, the unconditioned Brahman becomes the conditioned Brahman endowed with attributes (eg. has four hands holding mace and discus, conch shell and lotus etc.)- the personal God, always ready to bestow His grace upon all who pray to Him in distress.

It is the conditioned Brahman called Ishwar, by whom the universe has been created, and by whom, after being created, it is sustained and into whom in the end, it is absorbed. Creation, preservation and destruction are the activities of the conditioned Brahman or the personal God which can never affect His transcendental nature; they are mere waves on the surface of the ocean which cannot touch the serenity of its immeasurable depths.

According to the non-dualistic Vedanta, this conditioning of Brahman is not real, but only apparent. The conditioned Brahman is a part of the phenomenal world and appears to be real as long as the universe is regarded as real. In the infinite ocean of pure consciousness, He is the biggest wave. But the unconditioned Brahman and the conditioned Brahman are not two realities. The wave is not essentially different from the ocean; the sea is the same sea, whether it is peaceful or agitated.

The conditioned Brahman is called Ishwar (the Lord), because He is the all powerful Lord of all, the ruler of the universe. He, the Lord, is the bestower of blessings, the adorable God.

Vedanta philosophy often uses the word Maya to describe the creation. Maya, which is not essentially different from Brahman, is the material cause, and Brahman, as pure intelligence, is the efficient cause

of the universe. After projecting all material forms, Brahman enters into them as life and consciousness and animates them. Thus Brahman, which is transcendental, becomes immanent in the universe.

A unique manifestation of the conditioned Brahman is the Avatar or incarnation of God, to fulfil a cosmic need whenever such a need arises.

The nature of Reality was investigated

from two levels of experience

Level 1 Level 2

Absolute

Acosmic

Transcendental Relative

Cosmic

Phenomenal

Differences merge into an inexplicable non-dual consciousness. One perceives the universe of diversity. Is aware of one's own individual Ego.

In the Vedas, reality experienced at transcendental level is called Brahman. This term denotes a non-dual pure consciousness which pervades the universe and remains outside of it. The conditioned Brahman is called Ishwar (the Lord). By means of its own inscrutable power called Maya, the unconditioned Brahman becomes the Conditioned Brahman endowed with attributes. Creation, preservation and destruction are the activities of the conditioned Brahman

At level one: At level two:

The word Brahman denotes an entity whose greatness, powers of expansion no one can measure. The word Atman signifies the consciousness in man. Brahman is identical with the Self of man, known as Atman the embodied soul. The word Atman signifies the consciousness in man which experiences gross objects during the waking state, subtle objects during the dream state, and the bliss arising from the absence of duality of subject and object in dreamless sleep.

The transcendental Brahman is devoid of qualifying attributes, devoid of indicative marks, and is called Supreme or Unconditioned Brahman or Pure Being. Phenomenal Brahman is endowed with attributes of indicative marks, is called inferior or conditioned Brahman.

At level one: At level two:

Described as 'Not this, not this' (neti-neti) when the world is not perceived to exist, as for instance in contemplation, then one experiences Brahman as the unconditioned Absolute. The idea of a creator,



omnipotent and omniscient becomes irrelevant. Described by such positive statements as whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like akasha (space), from whom all works, all desires, all odours proceed. When the sense-perceived world is regarded as real, Brahman is spoken of as its omnipotent and omniscient creator, and destroyer.

One loses one's individuality in the experience of the unconditioned Brahman. (It can be experienced)  
One worships the conditioned Brahman in the ordinary state of consciousness.

(It can be experienced)

At level one: At level two:

Unconditioned Brahman is indicated by the Vedas as that 'from which all speech, together with the mind, turns away, unable to reach it. It is unperceived (by any sense organ), unrelated to (anything), incomprehensible (to the mind), uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable. From the relative experience Brahman is described as the cause of the universe. The transcendental Brahman appears as cause of the universe in association with Maya, and becomes known as the conditioned Brahman, or Brahman with attributes, or such other epithets as the Lord the personal God, saguna (with form) personified.

The unconditioned Brahman is free  
from the limiting adjuncts of space,  
time and causation. Brahman is not  
born, It does not die.

Brahman is unknown and unknowable.

To be known, a thing must be made an object. Brahman as pure consciousness, is the eternal subject, and therefore cannot be made an object of knowledge.

Unconditioned Brahman is described as Satchidananda (Sat-Chit-Ananda) existence-knowledge-bliss pure and absolute.

Existence, knowledge and bliss are not attributes of Reality; they are its very stuff. Pure existence is the same as pure knowledge and pure bliss.

Just as a mirage could not be seen without the desert, which is its unrelated substratum, so also the universe could not be seen if Brahman did not exist as its substratum.

**\*Death & Life:-**

"The self-existent Brahma created the senses with outgoing tendencies; therefore man beholds the external universe and not the internal Self. But some wise men with their senses turned away from the objects, desirous of immortality, turn their gaze inwards and behold the Self within"

- Katha Upanisad IV. 1

"And (the individual soul is) only a reflection (of the Supreme Lord)"

- Brahma-Sutras, 50.

"An eternal portion of Myself having become a living soul in the world of life, draws to itself the five senses with the mind for the sixth, abiding in Nature"

-The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 15, Verse 7

"The deluded do not see Him Who departs, stays and enjoys; but they who possess the eye of knowledge behold Him"

-The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 15, Verse 10

"The Yogis, striving (for perfection) behold Him dwelling in the Self; but the unrefined and the unintelligent, even though striving, see Him not"

- The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 15, Verse 11

"The dream (experience) is unreal in waking, whereas the waking (experience) is absent in dream. Both, however, are non-existent in deep sleep which, again, is not experienced in either. Thus all the three states are unreal inasmuch as they are the creation of the three Gunas (Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas); but their Witness (the Reality behind them) is beyond all Gunas, Eternal, One and is Consciousness itself."

- Aparokshanubhuti of Sri Sankaracharya V.57 & 58

The Process of Death

From The Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, IV,iii

[Note: In describing the rebirth of the soul, an example is given in earlier verses to show that just as the self wanders from the dream state to the waking state, so it passes from the present body to the next body].

Yajnavalkya said:

Just as a heavily loaded cart moves along, creaking, even so the self identified with the body, being presided over by the Self, which is all consciousness (the Supreme Self), moves along, groaning, when breathing becomes difficult (at the approach of death). 35.

When this body becomes thin - is emaciated through old age or disease- then, as a mango or a fig or a fruit of the peepul tree becomes detached from its stalk, so does this infinite being (the self), completely detaching himself from the parts of the body, again move on, in the same way that he came, to another body for the remanifestation (unfoldment ) of his vital force. 36.

[Note: 'Parts of the body ', Such as the eye, nose etc. In deep sleep, the gross body and organs, though left by the subtle body, are preserved by the prana (vital force). But this does not happen at the time of death, when the subtle body, together with the prana, leaves the gross body.]

Now when that self becomes weak and unconscious, as it were, the organs gather around it. Having wholly seized these particles of light, the self comes to the heart. When the presiding deity of the eye turns back from all sides, the dying man fails to notice colour. IV,1.

[Note: ' Presiding Deity ' The sun in its microcosmic aspect is the presiding or controlling deity of the eye. This deity helps the eye to function as long as a person lives, as determined by his past actions. At the time of death the deity stops his help and goes back to the sun. He again returns to the eye when the man takes another body.]

The eye becomes united with the subtle body; then people say: 'He does not see'. The nose becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not smell'. The tongue becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not taste'. The vocal organ becomes united with the subtle body; then they say; 'He does not speak'. The ear becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not hear'. The skin becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not touch (feel)'. The mind becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not think'.

The intellect becomes united with the subtle body; then they say: 'He does not know '.

The upper end of the heart lights up, and by that light, the self departs, either through the eye, or through the head or through any other part (aperture) of the body.

And when the self departs, the vital force follows, and when the vital force departs, all the organs follow.

Then the self becomes endowed with a particular consciousness and passes on to the body to be attained by that consciousness.

It is followed by Knowledge, work and past experience. IV,2.

[Note: Compare Bhagavad Gita, Ch.8, Verse 6. "Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking of any being, that alone does he attain (become), because of his constant thought of that being."

Comments: The last thought determines the next birth. The most prominent thought of one's life occupies the mind at the time of death.]

From Chandogya Upanishad:

Relatives sit around an ailing person, saying, "Do you recognise me, do you recognise me?" He recognises so long as his speech does not become merged in the mind, mind in the vital force, vital force in the warmth, and warmth into the supreme deity. VI,15,1.

Then when his speech merges into the mind, mind into the vital force, vital force into the warmth, and warmth into the supreme deity, he ceases to recognise. VI,15,2.

From Prashna Upanishad:

The year verily is Prajapati, and there are two paths thereof; the Southern and the Northern. Those who perform sacrifices and engage in pious actions, as duties to be done, win only the world of the Moon; verily they return here again. Therefore, the rishis who desire offspring travel by the Southern Path. This Path of the Fathers is Rayi, food. I.9

But those who seek the Self through austerity, chastity, faith and knowledge, travel by the Northern Path and win the Sun. The Sun, verily, is the support of all lives. He is immortal and fearless. He is the final goal. Thence they do not return. This path is blocked (for the ignorant). I.10

The sun is, indeed, Prana (vital force); moon is rayi, food. Food is, indeed, all this- what has form and what is formless. Therefore, everything having forms, indeed, food. I.5

Prajapati, the Creator, was desirous of progeny. He performed austerities, created the pair, the moon (rayi) and the sun (prana). He said to Himself: "These two should produce creatures for Me in manifold ways." I.4

From The Bhagavad Gita: The blessed Lord said:

Gita- Ch 8, Verse 23:

Now I will tell thee the times departing at which the Yogis will return or not return.

Gita- Ch.8, Verse 24:

Fire, light, day-time, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern path of the sun (the northern solstice)- departing then (by these) men who know Brahman go to Brahman.

[Note By Swami Shivananda, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh: This is the northern path or the path of light by which the Yogis go to Brahman. This path leads to salvation. The six months of the northern solstice is from the middle of January to the middle of July. It is regarded as the better period for death. Refer also to . Brahma-Sutras 4.2.18 and 19].

Gita- Ch.8, Verse 25:

Attaining to the lunar light by smoke, night time, the dark fortnight, also the six months of the southern path of the sun (the southern solstice), the Yogi returns.

[Note: This is the pitryana or the path of the ancestors, the path of darkness which leads to rebirth. Those who do sacrifices to the gods, and do other charitable works with expectation of reward go to the Chandraloka through this path and come back to this world when the fruits of the karmas are exhausted. 'Smoke', 'night time', 'the dark fortnight', and 'the six months of the southern solstice' are all deities who preside over them. They may denote the degree of ignorance, attachment and passion. There are smoke and dark coloured objects throughout the course. There is no illumination when one passes along this path. It is reached by ignorance. Hence it is called the path of darkness or smoke.]

Gita- Ch.8, Verse 26:

The bright and the dark paths of the world are verily thought to be eternal; by the one (the bright path) a man goes not to return and by the other (the dark path) he returns.

[Note: The bright path is the path to the gods taken by the devotees. The dark path is of the manes taken by those who perform sacrifices and charitable acts with the expectation of rewards. These two paths are not open to the whole world. The bright path is open to the devotee and the dark one to those who are devoted to the rituals.]

Gita- Ch.8, Verse 27:

knowing these paths, O Arjuna, no Yogi is deluded; therefore at all times be steadfast in Yoga.

Gita- Ch.8, Verse 28:

Whatever fruit of merit is declared (in the scriptures) to accrue from the study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices, the practice of austerities and gifts; beyond all these goes the Yogi, having known this; and he attains to the Supreme Primeval Abode.

From Isa Upanishad:

[Note: Translations and comments by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr. Rupnathji. The last four verses of The Isa upanishad deal with prayer of the aspirant on his death-bed. He prays to the sun, a vivid symbol of Brahman (Supreme Reality), to withdraw the outer physical light so that the inner effulgence of Truth may be revealed. As the hour of death approaches, he fills his mind with the memories of his good deeds; the thought at the final moment determines the course of the soul hereafter. And lastly, he prays to Fire (Agni), which will soon consume his physical body, to lead his soul through the way of the Gods to Brahmaloaka, from which he will attain final Liberation.]

Isa Upanishad, Mantra 15:

The door of the Truth is covered by a golden disc. Open it, O Nourisher! Remove it so that I who have been worshipping the Truth may behold It.

[Note: The worship prescribed in this and the following verses is the symbolic worship of Brahman through the sun. 'golden' = luminous]

Isa Upanishad, Mantra 16:

O Nourisher, lone Traveller of the sky! Controller! O Sun, Offspring of Prajapati! Gather your rays; withdraw your light. I would see through Your grace, that form of Yours which is the fairest. I am indeed He, that Purusha, who dwells there.

[Note: Purusha: Literally means Person. It also refers to the Godhead, who resides in the hearts of all, or who fills the whole universe with life and consciousness.]

Isa Upanishad, Mantra 17:

Now may my breath return to the all-pervading, immortal Prana! May this body be burnt to ashes! Om. O mind, remember, remember all that I have done.

[Note: 'May this body...' That is to say, may the subtle body (linga sharira) come out of the gross body. According to the Vedic seers, a subtle body dwells inside and pervades the gross body. The impressions of a man's good and evil deeds and thoughts remain embedded in this subtle body. The individual soul dwelling in this body experiences, after death, the happy or unhappy results of its actions. The gross body is destroyed after death, but the subtle body remains unimpaired till the attainment of Liberation through Knowledge.]

Isa Upanishad, Mantra 18:

[Note: The dying man again prays for a higher course after death]:

O Fire (Agni), lead us by the good path for the enjoyment of the fruit of our action. You know, O god, all our deeds. Destroy our sin of deceit. We offer, by words, our salutations to you.

[Note: 'by words': At the time of death the devotee cannot offer any other worship to the god. As his limbs become inert, he cannot prostrate himself; hence the salutations through words alone.]

[General notes: The path of Brahmaloaka (the highest heaven from which one does not return to earth) lies through what has been described in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita as the Devayana or Way of the Gods, which is characterised by various luminous stages, such as flame, day, the bright fortnight of the moon, the bright half of the year (when the sun travels northward), the sun, and lightning. It is also called the Northern Path. There is another path, called the Pitriyana, the Way of the fathers, or the Southern Path, which leads to Chandraloka, the Plane of the Moon.

To it go, after death, those householders who have performed their obligatory duties and worshipped the gods, following the scriptural rules, with a view to enjoying the results of their meritorious actions in this lower heaven. The path leading to Chandraloka is characterised by dark stages, such as smoke and not flame, night and not day, the dark fortnight of the moon and not the bright, and the months of winter and not of summer. After enjoying the results of their meritorious actions in the lower heaven, souls come back to earth and are born as ordinary mortals.]

From Brahma-Sutras 4.2.17.

Commentary by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji:

This Sutra says that though the illumining of the top of the heart is common to both, yet the knower of the Saguna Brahman, through the grace of the Lord who abides in the heart, departs through the skull only, while others depart through other parts.

From Chandogya Upanishad:8.6.6.

There are a hundred and one nerves of the heart; one of them penetrates the head; going up along that, one attains immortality; the others serving for departure in various directions.

From The Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Section CCXCVIII

Parsara said: That man is regarded as righteous who meets with dissolution when the Sun is in the northern declension, and at a time and under a constellation both of which are sacred and auspicious.

From The Bhagavad Gita, Ch.8

Verses 5, 6,10,13,15 & 16

Translations and comments by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji:

And whosoever, leaving the body, goes forth remembering Me alone, at the time of death, he attains My Being: there is no doubt about this. 5

Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking of any being, to that being only does he go, because of his constant thought of that being. Verse 6

At the time of death with unshaken mind, endowed with devotion, by the power of Yoga, fixing the whole life-breath in the middle of the two eyebrows, he reaches that resplendent Supreme Person. 10

[Note: The Yogi gets immense inner strength and power of concentration. His mind becomes quite steady through constant practice of concentration and meditation. He practises concentration first on the lower Chakras, Viz., Muladhara, Svadhithana, and Manipura. He then concentrates on the lotus of the heart (Anahata Chakra). Then he takes the life-breath (Prana) through the Susumna and fixes it in the middle of the two eyebrows. He eventually attains the resplendent Supreme Purusha (Person) by the above Yogic practice. This is possible for one who has devoted his whole life to the practice of Yoga.]

Uttering the one-syllabled Om (AUM, the Brahman or the Supreme Reality), and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains to the Supreme Goal. 13

Having attained Me these great souls do not again take birth (here) which is the place of pain and is non-eternal; they have reached the highest perfection (liberation). 15

(All) the worlds, including the world of Brahma are subject to return again, but he who reaches Me has no rebirth. 16

From other sources:

Your wealth will remain on earth; your cattle will remain in the stables, Your wife will come till the entrance door, your relatives and friends will come till the cremation ground, your body will accompany you till the funeral pyre, but on the way beyond this life only your Karmas will accompany you.

Dhanaani Bhoomau Pashvascha Goshthe

Bharyaa Gruh Dwaare Swajan Smashaane

Dehschitaayaam Parlokmaarge

Karmaanu Go Gacchati Jeev Ek

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From The Mahabharata

Aswamedha Parva, Section XVII

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr. Rupnathji

How does the body dissolve away  
and how is another body acquired?

Enjoying Prakriti for sometime, how does Jiva (embodied soul)  
cast off the particular body (which Prakriti or Nature gives)?

Urged by Kasyapa, the emancipated sage answered those questions one after another.

The emancipated sage said: Upon the exhaustion of those acts capable of prolonging life and bringing on fame which are done in a particular body that Jiva (embodied soul) assumes, the embodied Jiva, with the span of his life shortened, begins to do acts hostile to life and health. On the approach of destruction, his understanding turns away from the proper course. The man of uncleansed soul, after even a correct apprehension of his constitution and strength and of the season of both his own life and of the year, begins to eat at irregular intervals and to eat such food as is hostile to him.

[Note: Food that is beneficial in summer is not so in winter or that which is beneficial in youth is otherwise in old age, or food that does not suit his constitution (prakriti).]

At such a time he indulges in practices that are exceedingly harmful. He sometimes eats excessively and sometimes abstains altogether from food. He eats bad food or bad meat or takes bad drinks, or food that has been made up of ingredients incompatible with one another. He eats food that is heavy in excess of the measure that is beneficial, or before the food previously taken has been digested.



He indulges in physical exercises and sexual pleasure in excess of the due measure, or through avidity for work, suppresses the urgings of his corporeal organism even when they become pronounced. Or, he takes food that is very juicy, or indulges in sleep during daytime. Food that is not properly digested, of itself excites the faults, when the time comes. [Note: The faults are three, viz., Wind, Bile and Phlegm (Vata, Pitta and Kapha). When existing in a state of harmony they produce health. When one of these faults is excited, or two, or all three, then indisposition sets in. They are called Dosha or faults, because of their liability to be excited and produce disease. For more details refer to Page 'Food' -Topic Ayurveda.. See column on the left.] From such excitement of the faults in his body, he gets disease ending in death itself.

Sometimes the person engages in perverse or unnatural acts like hanging (for bringing about his death). Urged on by the Wind which becomes violent, the heat in the body, becoming excited and reaching every part of the body one after another, restrains all the (movements of the) vital breaths. Know truly that excited all over the body, the heat becomes very strong, and pierces every vital part where life may be said to reside. In consequence of this, Jiva, feeling great pain, quickly takes leave of its mortal casement. Know, O foremost of regenerate persons, that when the vital parts of the physical organism become thus afflicted, Jiva (embodied soul) slips away from the body, overwhelmed with great pain.

All living creatures are repeatedly afflicted with birth and death. It is seen, O chief of Brahmanas, that the pain which is felt by a person when casting off his bodies is like what is felt by him when first entering the womb or when issuing out of it. His joints become almost dislocated and he derives much distress from the waters (of the womb). Urged on by another violent wind, the wind that is in the body becomes excited through cold, and dissolves away the union of matter (called the body) into its respective elements numbering five.

The wind that resides in the vital breaths called Prana and Apana occurring within this compound of the five primal elements, rushes upwards, from a situation of distress, leaving the embodied creature. It is even thus that the wind leaves the body. Then is seen breathlessness. The man then becomes destitute of heat, of breath, of beauty, and consciousness. Deserted by Brahman (for jiva is Brahman), the person is said to be dead.

By those ducts through which he perceives all sensuous objects, the bearer of the body no longer perceives them. It is the eternal Jiva who creates in the body in those very ducts the life-breaths that are generated by food. The elements gathered together become in certain parts firmly united. Know that those parts are called the vitals of the body. It is said so in the Sastras (scriptures). When those vital parts are pierced, Jiva, rising up, enters the heart of the living creature and restrains the principle of animation without any delay.

The creature then, though still endowed with the principle of consciousness, fails to know anything. The vital parts being all overwhelmed, the knowledge of the living creature becomes overwhelmed by darkness. Jiva then, who has been deprived of everything upon which to stay, is then agitated by the wind. He then, deeply breathing a long and painful breath, goes out quickly, causing the inanimate body to tremble.

Dissociated from the body, Jiva, however, is surrounded by his acts. He becomes equipped on every side with all his auspicious acts of merit and with all his sins. Brahmanas endued with knowledge and equipped with the certain conclusions of the scriptures, know him, from indications, as to whether he is possessed of merit or with its reverse. Even as men possessed of eyes behold the fire-fly appearing and disappearing amid darkness, men possessed of the eye of knowledge and crowned with success of penances, behold, with spiritual vision, Jiva (individual soul) as he leaves the body, as he is reborn, and as he enters the womb.

It is seen that Jiva has three regions assigned to him eternally.

This world where creatures dwell is called the field of action. Accomplishing acts good or bad, all embodied creatures attain to the fruits thereof. In consequence of their own acts, creatures acquire even here superior or inferior enjoyments. Doers of evil deeds here, in consequence of those acts of theirs, attain to Hell. This condition of sinking with head downwards, in which creatures are cooked, is one of great misery. It is such that a rescue therefrom is exceedingly difficult. Indeed, one should strive hard for saving oneself from this misery.

Those regions where creatures dwell when they ascend from this world I shall now declare truly. Do thou listen to me with attention. By listening to what I say, thou shalt attain to firmness of understanding and a clear apprehension of (good and bad) acts. Know that even those are the regions of all creatures of righteous deeds, viz., the stellar worlds that shine in the firmament, the lunar disc, and the solar disc as well that shines in the universe in its own light. Upon the exhaustion, again, of their merits, they fall away from those regions repeatedly. There, in heaven itself, is distinction of inferior, superior, and middling felicity. There, in Heaven itself, is discontent at sight of prosperity more blazing than one's own. Even these are the goals which I have mentioned in detail.

How did Bhishma cast off his body?

From The Mahabharata

Anusasana Parva, Section CLXVI

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

Addressing Yudhishtira, Bhishma said:

"When the hour comes for my departure from this world, do thou come here, O King. The time when I shall take leave of my body is that period when the sun, stopping in his southward course, will begin to return northwards."

Yudhishtira answered, "So be it." And saluted his grandsire (Bhishma) with reverence and then set out, with all his relatives and followers, for the city called after the elephant. The blessed monarch (Yudhishtira) having passed fifty nights in the capital recollected the time indicated by his grandsire as the hour of his departure from this world. Accompanied by a number of priests he then set out of the city named after the elephant, having seen that the sun ceasing to go southwards had begun to proceed

in his northward course. Yuthishthira, the son of Kunti took with him a large quantity of ghee (clarified butter) and floral garlands and scents and silken cloths and excellent sandalwood and Aquilaria Agallocha and dark aloe wood, for cremating the body of Bhishma. Diverse kinds of costly garlands and gems also were among those stores.

Placing Dhritarashtra ahead and queen Gandhari celebrated for her virtues, and his own mother Kunti and all his brothers also, Yudhishtira of great intelligence, accompanied by Krishna and Vidura of great wisdom, as also by Yuyutsu and Yuyudhana, and by his other relatives and followers forming a large train, proceeded, his praise hymned the while by eulogists and bards. The sacrificial fires of Bhishma were also borne in the procession.

Soon he came upon the spot where the son of Santanu (Bhishma) was still lying on his bed of arrows. Alighting from his car, King Yudhishtira with his brothers saluted his grandsire, the chastiser of all foes. Yudhishtira of unfading glory then approached that spot whereon Bhishma lay on his bed of arrows surrounded by these reverend Rishis. Then king Yudhishtira the just, addressed that foremost of Kuru's race (Bhishma) as he lay on that bed of his saying, 'I am Yudhishtira, O king! Salutations to thee. If you hearest me still, tell me what I am to do for thee! Bearing with me thy sacrificial fires, I have come here, O king, and wait upon thee at the hour indicated! ... Whatever should be done on this occasion has all been arranged and provided for by me. Indeed, at this hour which thou hadst indicated, all things have been kept ready'.

Bhishma opened his eyes and saw all the Bharatas assembled there and standing around him. The mighty Bhishma then, taking the strong hand of Yudhishtira, addressed him in a voice deep as that of the clouds. That thorough master of words said, "By good luck, O son of Kunti, thou hast come here with all thy counsellors, O Yudhishtira! The thousand-rayed maker of day, the holy surya (sun) has begun his northward course. I have been lying on my bed here for eight and fifty nights. Stretched on these sharp-pointed arrows I have felt this period to be as long as if it was a century. O Yudhishtira, the lunar month of Magha has come. This is again, the lighted fortnight and a fourth part of it ought by this (according to my calculations) be over".

Having said so unto Yudhishtira the son of Dharma (righteousness), Ganga's son Bhishma then saluted Dhritarashtra and said unto him as follows, "O king, thou art well conversant with duties. All thy doubts again, relating to the science of wealth have been well solved. Thou has waited upon many Brahmanas (priests) of great learning. The subtle sciences connected with the Vedas, all the duties of religion, O king, and the whole of the four Vedas, are well known to thee! Thou shouldst not grieve, therefore, O son of Kuru! That which was preordained has happened. It could not be otherwise.

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The Mahabharata

Santi Parva, Section XLVIII

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr.Rupnathji

Vaisampayana said: Stretched on his bed of arrows, that tiger among men, Bhishma, with pure heart and joined palms, thought of Krishna in mind, word and act. With a cheerful and strong voice he hymned the praise of the slayer of Madhu, that master of Yoga with the lotus in his navel, the Lord of the universe, called Vishnu and Jishnu.

O Janardana (Krishna), thus worshipped by me in the Sacrifice constituted by speech (alone), be gratified with me! The Vedas are devoted to Narayana (the Supreme Lord). Penances are devoted to Narayana. The gods are devoted to Narayana. Everything is always Narayana!

Having uttered these words, Bhishma, with mind concentrated upon Krishna, said: Salutations to Krishna! and bowed unto him. Learning by his Yoga prowess of the devotion of Bhishma, Madhava, otherwise called Hari, (entering his body) bestowed upon him heavenly knowledge encompassing the past, the present, and the future, and went away.

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From The Mahabharata

Anusasana Parva, Section CLXVIII:

Translated by Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr. Rupnathji

Vaisampayana said: Bhishma, the son of Santanu, remained silent for sometime. He then held forth his life-breaths successively in those parts of his body which are indicated in Yoga. The life-breaths of that high-souled one, restrained duly, then rose up. Those parts of the body of Santanu's son, in consequence of the adoption of Yoga, from which the life-breaths went up, became soreless one after another. In the midst of those high-souled persons, including those great Rishis with Vyasa at their head, the sight seemed to be strange one, O king! Within a short time, the entire body of Bhishma became shaftless and soreless. Beholding it, all those distinguished personages with Vasudeva (Krishna) at their head, and all the ascetics with Vyasa, became filled with wonder. The life-breaths, restrained and unable to escape through any of the outlets, at last pierced through the crown of the head and proceeded upwards to heaven.

The celestial kettledrums began to play and floral showers were rained down. The Siddhas and regenerate Rishis, filled with delight, exclaimed, 'Excellent, Excellent!' The life-breaths of Bhishma, piercing through the crown of his head, shot up through the welkin like a large meteor and soon became invisible. Even thus, O great king, did Santanu's son, that pillar of Bharata's race, united himself with eternity.

The cremation of Bhishma

[Note: Re: 'Bed of arrows' The following extract is taken from the writings of Tantra Siddha Maha Yogi Shastrishree Dr. Rupnathji. "In order to save the world, Siva consumed poison. Likewise, Bhishma willingly accepted the bed of arrows for having served the world. Bed of roses was always at his

disposal. But he denied himself of it for the welfare of others. He is Siva, embodied as the human in the act of self-sacrifice, which is for the good of the world".]

DR. RUPAK NATHUJ (DR. RUPAK NATH)