

[Returning Again and Again Until You Get it Right](#)

Category : [August 1997](#)

Published by Anonymous on Aug. 02, 1997

PUBLISHER'S DESK

Returning Again and Again Until You Get it Right

It's not necessary to recall past lives, but it is reassuring to know you lived before and that death is not the end

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The twin beliefs of karma and reincarnation are among Hinduism's many jewels of knowledge. Others include dharma (our pattern of conduct), worshipful communion with God and Gods, the necessary guidance of a satguru, and enlightenment through personal realization of our identity in and with God. So the strong-shouldered and keen-minded rishis knew and stated in the Vedas.

And these are not mere assumptions of probing, brilliant minds. They are laws of the cosmos. As God's force of gravity shapes cosmic order, karma shapes experiential order. Our long sequence of lives is a tapestry of creating and resolving karmas--positive, negative and an amalgam of the two. During the succession of a soul's lives--through the mysteries of our higher chakras and God's and guru's Grace--no karmic situation will arise that exceeds an individual's ability to resolve it in love and understanding.

Many people are curious about their past lives and expend great time, effort and money to explore them. Actually, this curious probing into past lives is unnecessary. Indeed, it is a natural protection from reliving past trauma or becoming infatuated more with our past lives than our present life that the inner recesses of the muladhara memory chakra are not easily accessed. For as we exist now is a sum total of all our past lives. Our mind and body state in our present moment is the cumulative result of the entire spectrum of our past lives. So, no matter how great the intellectual knowing of these two key principles, it is how we currently live that positively shapes karma and unfolds us spiritually. Knowing the laws, we are responsible to resolve blossoming karmas from past lives and create karma that, projected into the future, will advance, not hinder, us.

The soul dwells as the inmost body of light and superconscious, or universal mind within a series of nested bodies, each more refined than the next: physical, pranic, astral, mental. In our conscious mind we think and feel ourselves to be a physical body with some intangible spirit within it. Yet, right now our real identity is the soul that is sensing, through its multiple bodies, physical, emotional and mental experience. Recognizing this as reality, we powerfully know that life doesn't end with the death of the biological body. The soul continues to occupy the astral body, a subtle, luminous duplicate of the physical body. This subtle body is made of higher energy astral matter and dwells in a dimension called the astral plane. If the soul body itself is highly evolved, it will occupy the astral/mental bodies on a very refined plane of the astral known as the Devaloka, "the world of light-shining beings." At death, the soul slowly becomes totally aware in its astral/mental bodies, and it predominantly lives through those

bodies in the astral dimension.

The soul functions with complete continuity in its astral/mental bodies. It is with these sensitive vehicles that we experience dream or "astral" worlds during sleep every night. The astral world is as solid and beautiful, as varied and comprehensive as the earth dimension--if not much more so. Spiritual growth, psychic development, guidance in matters of governance and commerce, artistic cultivation, inventions and discoveries of medicine, science and technology all continue by astral people who are "in-between" earthly lives. Many of the Vedic hymns entreat the assistance of devas, advanced astral or mental people. Yet, also in the grey, lower regions of this vast, invisible dimension exist astral people whose present pursuits are base, selfish, even sadistic. Where the soul goes in the astral plane at sleep or death is dependent upon his earthly pursuits and the quality of his mind.

Because certain seed karmas can only be resolved in earth consciousness and because the soul's initial realizations of Absolute Reality are only achieved in a physical body, our soul joyously enters another biological body on its journey toward liberation. At the right time, it is reborn into a flesh body that will best fulfill its karmic pattern. In this process, the current astral body--which is a duplicate of the last physical form--is sloughed off as a lifeless shell that in due course disintegrates, and a new astral body develops as the new physical body grows. This entering into another body is called reincarnation, "re-occupying the flesh." In Sanskrit it is punarjanma, "taking birth again and again." During our numerous Earth lives, a remarkable variety of life patterns is experienced. We exist as male and female, often switching back and forth from life to

life as the nature becomes more harmonized into a person exhibiting both feminine nurturing and masculine intrepidity. We come to Earth as princesses and presidents, as paupers and pirates, as tribals and scientists, as murderers and healers, as atheists and, ultimately, God-realized sages. We take bodies of every race and live the many religions, faiths and philosophies as the soul gains more knowledge and evolutionary experience.

Therefore, the Hindu knows that the belief in a single life on Earth, followed by eternal joy or pain is utterly wrong and causes great anxiety, confusion and fear. Hindus know that all souls reincarnate, take one body and then another, evolving through experience over long periods of time. Like the caterpillar's metamorphosis into the butterfly, death doesn't end our existence but frees us to pursue an even greater development.

Understanding the laws of the death process, the Hindu is vigilant of his thoughts and mental loyalties. He knows that the contents of his mind at the point of death in large part dictate where he will function in the astral plane and the quality of his next birth. Secret questionings and doubt of Hindu belief, and associations with other belief systems will automatically place him among like-minded people whose beliefs are alien to Hinduism. A nominal Hindu on Earth could be a selfish materialist in the astral world. The Hindu also knows that death must come naturally, in its own course, and that suicide only accelerates the intensity of one's karma, placing one in a lengthy earth-bound limbo state in the astral plane, bringing a series of immediate lesser births and requiring several lives for the soul to return to the exact evolutionary point that existed

at the moment of suicide, at which time the still-existing karmic entanglements must again be faced and resolved.

Two other karmically sensitive processes are: artificially sustaining life in a wholly incapacitated physical body through mechanical devices, drugs or intravenous feeding; and euthanasia, "mercy killing." There is a critical timing in the death transition. The dying process can involve long suffering or be peaceful or painfully sudden, all dependent on the karma involved. To keep a person on life support with the sole intent of continuing the body's biological functions nullifies the natural timing of death. It also keeps the person's astral body earthbound, tethered to a lower astral region rather than being released into higher astral/mental levels.

Moksha: Freedom from Rebirth: Life's real attainment is not money, not material luxury, not sexual or eating pleasure, not intellectual, business or political power, or any other of the human instinctive or intellectual needs. These are natural pursuits, to be sure, but our divine purpose on this Earth is to personally realize our identity in and with God. This is now called by many names: enlightenment, Self realization, God realization and nirvikalpa samadhi. After many lifetimes of wisely controlling the creation of karma and resolving past karmas when they return, the soul is fully matured in the knowledge of these divine laws and the highest use of them. Through the practice of yoga, the Hindu bursts into God's superconscious mind, the experience of bliss, all-knowingness, perfect silence. His intellect is transmuted, and he soars into the Absolute Reality of God. He is a jnani, a knower of the Known. When the jnani is stable in repeating his realization of the Absolute, there is no longer a need for physical birth, for all

Earthly lessons have been learned, all karmas fulfilled and Godness is his natural state. That individual soul is then liberated, freed from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth on this planet.

The belief in karma and reincarnation brings to each Hindu inner peace and self-assurance. The Hindu knows that the maturing of the soul takes many lives, and that if the soul is immature in the present birth, then there is hope, for there will be many opportunities for learning and growing in future lives. These dual beliefs and the attitudes they produce eliminate anxiety, giving the serene perception that everything is all right as it is. And, there is also a keen insight into the human condition and appreciation for people in all stages of spiritual unfoldment.