

Reincarnation and Karma - 2

Hell & Heaven

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#### Question::

*What happens in the interval between – “death” and the “next incarnation”??*

*(or)*

*What do we carry with us, into death?*

*(or)*

*What are “hell” and “heaven”?*

*(or)*

*How different are the experiences of PLEASURE and PAIN in the ‘heaven and hell’ than that of the ‘gross world’??*

*(or)*

*What exactly happens in the “heaven” state?*

*(or)*

*How can ‘a mere thought of the Beloved’ brings immense pleasure to the ‘lover’?*

*(or)*

*How is it that– one enjoys immense pleasure in ‘heaven’ than that in the earthly career?*

*(or)*

*What are “coarser desires”? Why are they called earthly? What are their characteristics?*

*(or)*

*Why habits like gluttony, drinking alcohol , drugs etc., are considered BAD or SIN?*

*How come they contribute to “hell” state?*

*(or)*

*What are “finer desires”? What are their characteristics? How are they different from “coarser desires”?*

*(or)*

*How come “coarser desires” are the culprit to make one feel oneself as the gross body? How are these desires responsible for creating us “The hell state”, after death?*

*(or)*

*How come ‘bad habits’ lead to hell?*

*(or)*

*How does heaven & hell states come into existence, after “death”??*

*(or)*

*How long does 'hell' and 'heaven' states LAST, for an individualized soul? What determines the "duration" & "nature" of their existence??*

*(or)*

*When does the 'hell state' and 'heaven state' terminate?*

*(or)*

*How come our "habits" and "life style" determine our AFTER-DEATH STATES of 'hell' and 'heaven'??*

*(or)*

*What for are these "heaven" and "hell" states? What specific purpose do they serve, that cannot happen in earthly-life?*

*(or)*

*How differently does CONSCIOUSNESS work in "after-death states of heaven and hell" than that of the earthly life?*

*(or)*

*How does "heaven" and "hell" aid EVOLUTION OF KNOWLEDGE? How come these states are pivotal in developing "intuitive knowledge"?*

*(or)*

*What is "intuition"?*

*(or)*

*What is the source/origin of one's intuitive wisdom?*

## **Answer:**

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**After death, there is no consciousness of the gross world for the ordinary soul, since *such consciousness is DIRECTLY DEPENDENT on the physical body.***

*Though the 'consciousness of the gross world' is thus lost, the "impressions" of the experiences of the gross world are retained in the mental body; and they continue to express themselves through the semi-subtle world.*

**During the interval between 'death' and the 'next incarnation', the consciousness of the soul is turned toward these "impressions" resulting in a vivification of impressions and the revival of corresponding 'experiences.'**

However, this soul does not become aware of the 'subtle environment'; it is wrapped up in COMPLETE SUBJECTIVITY and absorbed in living through the revived impressions.

In life after death, the experiences of pain and pleasure become much more intense than they were in earthly life. These SUBJECTIVE STATES of intensified suffering and joy are called hell and heaven.

*Hell and Heaven are 'states of mind;' they should not be looked upon as being 'places.' And though SUBJECTIVELY they mean a great deal to the individualized soul, they are both illusions within the greater Illusion.*

In the hell state as well as in the heaven state— 'desires' become MUCH MORE INTENSE since they no longer require expression through the gross medium. Like desires, the "experiences" incurred in their fulfillment or nonfulfillment also become greatly intensified.

In the earthly career— 'desires', as well as the pleasures and sufferings they bring, are experienced through the medium of the gross body. The soul is of course actually using its higher bodies at the same time, but in the earthly career— its 'consciousness' is bound up with the gross body. **Therefore, the 'processes of consciousness' have to pass through an ADDITIONAL VEIL that lessens their force, liveliness, and intensity just as rays of light are dimmed when they are required to pass through a thick glass.**

*During habitation in the body, 'desires' and 'experiences' suffer a deterioration in intensity; but when that habitation is given up, they undergo a relative increase of intensity.*

In the heaven state, the fulfillment of desires is not, as in the gross sphere, dependent upon HAVING the 'object of desire.' *Fulfillment of desire comes MERELY THROUGH thinking of the 'object' desired.*

For example, if a person wishes to hear exquisite music, he experiences this pleasure merely by thinking about it. The imaginative idea of exquisite music becomes, in this state, a substitute for the physical sound vibrations in the gross sphere. The pleasure he derives from the thought of exquisite music is much greater than the pleasure he derived in his earthly career from the actual hearing of physical sounds.

**In the heaven state, there are no obstacles between 'desires' and their 'fulfillment'; the pleasure of SELF-FULFILLMENT through 'thought' or 'feeling' is always at hand.**

In fact, even in the earthly sphere of existence, some individuals develop this capacity of making their pleasure independent of possession of a gross object. Beethoven, for example, was completely deaf; and yet through the exercise of "imagination" alone, he was able to enjoy intensely his own compositions of music. **In a sense, even on earth he might figuratively be said to have been in the heaven state.**

***In the same way, a person who meditates on the Beloved with love, derives happiness merely through the 'thought of the Beloved,' without requiring His physical presence!***

After death, in the heaven state, the enjoyment of such imaginative fulfillment is infinitely greater since 'consciousness' is then unburdened of the outermost veil of the gross body.

Some desires have a direct relation to the possession and assimilation of gross objects through the gross body. **The coarser desires such as**

- *lust,*
- *gluttony, or*
- *the craving for alcohol or drugs*

**are of this type.** These desires are specifically earthly because they are possessive, and they involve an element of clinging to the physical object. **In these desires, there is *not only* a preponderance of sensations derived from contact with the object, *but also* of sensations that constitute the response of the body itself.** **These coarser desires contribute to the hell state.**

In contrast with the finer desires, the coarser desires place an infinitely heavier premium on mere sensations, quite independently of any 'intellectual meaning' or 'moral value'.

In the finer desires, such as the 'desire for music', there is of course an element of wanting 'sense contact' with the physical sounds. But *these sounds* become important not so much in their own right as in their capacity to express beauty.

In the same way, 'a desire to hear discourses' has a hold upon the mind, not so much because of the 'sensations of sound', but because of the 'intellectual meaning' and 'emotional appeal' they convey.

**Thus in the finer desires, the “actual sensations” play a subordinate role to the DERIVATIVE ASPECTS based upon the sensations.** In the coarser desires, the chief element is provided by the

- actual sensations connected with the physical object, and
- the sensations aroused by them through bodily response to their possession.

The 'organic sensations of the physical body' play the greatest part in experiences connected with the coarser desires. **Through them, the individualized soul feels its own existence as the 'gross body'— much more effectively and vividly than through experiences connected with 'finer desires'.**

Almost the entire significance of experiences brought about by the FULFILLMENT or NONFULFILLMENT of coarser desires is constituted by the 'bodily sensations' themselves. Therefore, they can rarely yield the full experience of fulfilment achieved through finer desires merely by the exercise of 'thought' and 'imagination.'

**It is characteristic of the coarser desires to insist on the possession and assimilation of the gross objects themselves.** Any imaginative idea of the gross objects merely serve the purpose of accentuating the urge to reach out to them. *Since the gross objects of the coarser desires are not available in the semi-subtle world, these desires are mostly productive of an intensified experience of the suffering of non-fulfillment.*

Just as in the gross world— the presence of 'coarser desires' leads to the preponderance of suffering over pleasure, in the life after death— the revived experiences connected with these 'coarser desires' also lead to a preponderance of suffering over pleasure, thus bringing into existence the hell state.

Similarly, in the life after death— the revived experiences connected with the 'finer desires' lead to a preponderance of pleasure over suffering, thus bringing into existence the heaven state.

Hell and heaven are both states of bondage, however, and subject to the limitations of the opposites of pleasure and pain. **Both are "states", whose DURATION is determined by the *nature, amount, and intensity* of accumulated impressions.**

**Time in the semi-subtle world is not the same as time in the gross world due to the increased SUBJECTIVITY of the states of consciousness.**

Though 'time' in the semi-subtle world is thus incommensurable with time in the gross world, it is strictly determined by the impressions accumulated in the gross world.

However, the important fact is that the hell state and the heaven state are far from being lasting; and after they have served their "purpose" in the life of the individualized soul, they both come to an end.

The coarser sensual desires like 'lust,' and their emotional products like 'hate' and 'anger'— all contribute to the life of delusion and suffering prevalent in the hell state.

The finer desires like

- idealistic aspirations,
- aesthetic and scientific interests,
- goodwill towards neighbors and others

and their emotional products like *personal love* or *fellow-feeling* contribute to the life of enlightenment and pleasure prevalent in the heaven state.

**These states, *for most souls*, consist in reliving the experiences of the earthly life by vivification of the impressions left by them.** Their 'duration' and 'nature' are dependent upon the duration and nature of the experiences undergone by the soul while in the physical body.

Just as a phonograph record is set aside after the needle has travelled through each groove, the hell state and the heaven state terminate AFTER consciousness has traversed the imprints left by earthly life.

Just as the song produced by the record is strictly determined by the original song recorded on it, the quality of intensified and magnified experiences the soul passes through - after death, is strictly determined by *the KIND OF LIFE*

*that was led on earth in the physical body. **From this point of view, heaven and hell are shadows cast by one's earthly life!***

Heaven and hell would, however, serve no specially useful purpose in the life of the individual soul if they were to consist merely of mental revival of the earthly past. That would mean bare repetition of what has already occurred.

'Consciousness' in these after-death states is in a position to make a leisurely and effective survey of the animated record of earthly life. **Through intensification of experiences, it can observe their nature with better facility and results.**

- **On earth, the consciousness of most persons is predominantly OBJECTIVE and FORWARD-LOOKING and under the pressure of unspent sanskaras.** It is mostly concerned with the possible fulfillment of sanskaras through the present or the future.
- **In life after death, the consciousness of most persons is predominantly SUBJECTIVE and RETROSPECTIVE.** With the absence of forward-goading sanskaras, it is, as in reminiscences, mostly preoccupied with REVIEWING and ASSESSING the significance of the past.

The fret and fury of immediate responses to the changing situations of earthly life is replaced in life after death by a more leisurely mood, freed from the urgency of immediately needed actions. All the experiences of the earthly career are now available for reflection in a form more vivid than is possible through memory in earthly life.

***The shots of earthly life have all been taken on the cinematic film of the mind, and it is now time to study the original earthly life through the magnified projections of the filmed record on the screen of SUBJECTIVIZED CONSCIOUSNESS.***

Thus the hell state and the heaven state become instrumental in the assimilation of experiences acquired in the earthly phase; and the individualized soul can start its next incarnation in a physical body with all the advantages of digested experience.

The LESSONS LEARNED BY THE SOUL through such stock-taking and reflection are confirmed in the mental body by the power of their magnified suffering or happiness. They become, for the next incarnation, an integral part of the intuitive makeup of the active consciousness, without in any way involving detailed revival of the individual events of the previous incarnation. *The truths absorbed by the mind in the 'life after death' become in the next incarnation a part of INBORN WISDOM!*

*Developed intuition is consolidated and compressed UNDERSTANDING, distilled through a multitude of diverse experiences gathered in previous lives.*

Different souls start with different degrees of 'intuitive wisdom' as their initial capital for the *experiments* and *adventures* of their earthly career. **This "intuition" may seem to have been the product of past experiences, thus adding to the equipment of the psyche; but it is more truly an unfoldment of what was already latent in the individualized soul.**

From this deeper point of view, the experiences of earthly life as well as the REFLECTIVE and CONSOLIDATING processes they are subjected to in life after death— are merely instrumental in gradually releasing to the surface the "intuitive wisdom" already latent in the soul from the very beginning of creation.

As is true of the earthly career and its experiences, the states of hell and heaven in the life after death are also integral parts of and incidents in that journey of the individualized soul, which is ultimately meant to reach the Source of all things.

— Meher Baba

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