



2020 Holi

What Happens After Death?

No-one really knows what happens after death, though different people have different beliefs and notions about what could happen after death. So, let us answer this question of “what happens after death”, on the basis of the knowledge contained in our scriptures.

The Vedas tell us that [jeev](#) (soul) is eternal. It has been roaming in the cycle of birth and death since time immemorial. Prior to attaining the current human form, we have attained the human form of life numerous other times. We have borne the consequences of the actions performed in each of those human births like going through the atrocities of hellish abodes (see [narak](#)) and enjoying the luxuries of heavenly abodes. This cycle has been going on forever.



It is only through God’s immense grace that those memories of the previous lifetimes are not in the forefront of our conscious mind. However, those memories are present in the subconscious mind and tend to disturb us from time to time.



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The pain of death and the fear of the sufferings of *narak*, cause individual beings to be scared of death. This fear is depicted as *abhinivesh* (अभिनिवेश) (see [Panchklesh](#)) in our scriptures. The main reasons of this fear are:

1. The uncertainty around the time of death. No-one knows when they will die. Death does not give anyone any prior notification. It comes all of a sudden. No one, even a yogi or seer, can precisely know their moment of death.
2. The prospect of the pain and suffering at the time of death and in the hellish abodes (see [narak](#)), after death.

There are 8.4 million species of life. Except for the human form, all other forms of life are called *bhog-yoni* which means in those forms:

- one undergoes the consequences of their past deeds
- one does not perform any fruit bearing actions

There are 2 types of *bhog-yoni*:

- **Lower forms of life:** There are millions of forms of mobile and immobile creatures, which fall in the category of lower forms of life for eg. animals, birds, insects and trees etc. Creatures in these forms of life are extremely helpless. They have no means to make arrangements for their food, clothing or shelter. They helplessly wander here and there in search of the basic necessities of life and even get killed or die in their quest for food.



- **Higher forms of life:** The form of celestial Gods and Goddesses are considered to be higher forms of life in terms of power, beauty, knowledge and luxury. They have an ethereal body which is fragrant, lustrous, free of physical ailments, sweat, urine and fecal matter etc. Yet, despite the attainment of such superior luxuries, these demigods, pray to the Lord to grant them the human form of life. You would wonder why? That is because, only the human form of life has the unique privilege to perform fruit-yielding actions.

In other words, it is only in the human form that an individual soul can earn spiritual merit. In all other life forms, one can only spend the earned merit. Animals, trees etc. do not have the power to discriminate, therefore the attainment of those life-forms is an outcome of bad actions performed in the human form. And though celestial beings can enjoy heavenly luxuries, they do not have the privilege to perform fruit giving actions.

Humans have been given the power to discriminate. Therefore, human beings are privileged to choose between performing good or bad actions. And due to this priceless gift, human beings are expected to act wisely. We all have the knowledge of moral and immoral acts. Yet, when the desire for material benefits, clouds our judgement, we engage in counterproductive activities like anger, passion, greed, jealousy, intoxication etc.

We have a deep-rooted mistaken faith that physical gratification provides ever-lasting happiness. That is why even though we inherently know that bad actions give bad results, we engage in bad actions. Thereafter, we are scared of the ill-consequences which we will have to bear after death.

The answer to the question of what happens after death is obvious. Lord Krishna says in the Geeta:

विषयान् ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषज्जते । मामनुरस्मरश्चित्तं मय्येवप्रविलीयते ॥

भा १०.१४.२७

viṣayān dhyāyataścittaṁ viṣayeṣu viṣajjate / māmanurasmaraścittaṁ mayyevapravilīyate

// bhā 10.14.27

“Those whose minds are engaged in thinking about material matters, get attached to the same. Consequently, they roam around in the [sansaar-the world](#) in various life forms and undergo the results of their actions. Those whose minds are attached to Me (God), come directly to My divine abode after leaving their body.”

यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्, पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः । भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या, मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ गीता ९.२५

yānti devavratā devān, pitṛnyānti pitṛvratāḥ / bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā, madbhaktā yānti māmapi //

gītā 9.25

So, let us understand each part of this statement:

- **yānti devavratā devān** (यान्ति देवव्रता देवान्): If a person is attached to celestial beings (Devi-Devata), he will attain their abode, *swarga* (heaven). But one does not get to live in *swarga* forever. Also, the happiness found in *swarga* is not perfect happiness it is laced with dissatisfaction, greed, pride etc.

The Geeta says:

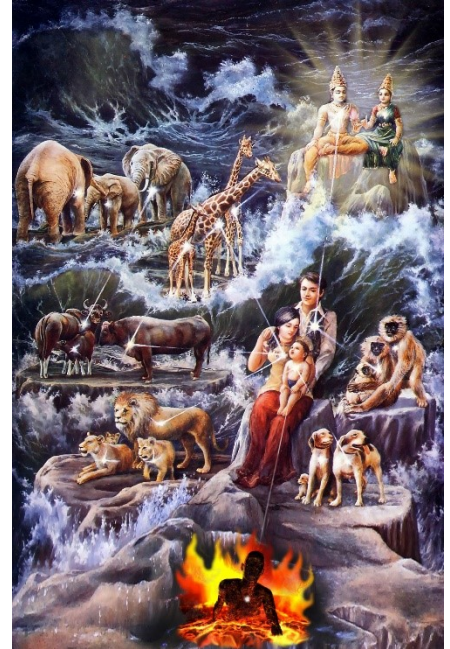
ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं, क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ॥

Tē taṁ bhuktvā svargalōkaṁ viśālaṁ, kṣīṇē puṇyē martyalōkaṁ viśanti.

“We enjoy the luxury of heavenly abodes, in accordance with the merit earned based on our good deeds. Once we have consumed the luxuries of heaven based on the extent of the merit earned, we are thrown into the lower planets in lower species of life like insects, birds etc.”.

Hence that is also not an aim of wise people.

- **pitṛnyānti pitṛvratāḥ** (पितृन्यान्ति पितृव्रताः): Those who are attached to their ancestors, go to the [lok](#) of their departed ancestors. Those [lok](#) are also a part of the material world.
- **bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā** (भूतानि यान्ति भूतेज्या) - those individuals who love their fellow human beings, go to



them. For example, if that individual is *tamasi* (full of bad qualities), he may attain the *tamasi* form of an animal or a bird etc.

Thus, if you love a material being, you may attain different forms of life, but all within the same material world, full of pain and suffering.

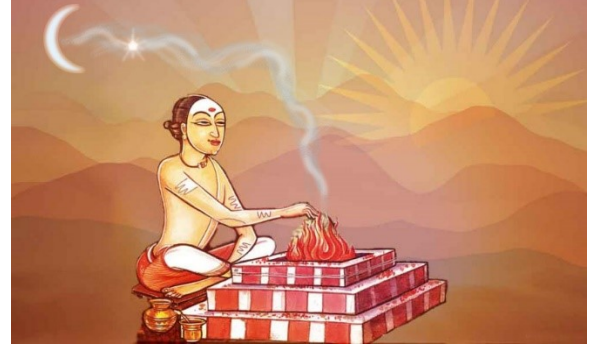
But,

- ***madbhaktā yānti māmapi*** (मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि): Only those, whose mind is not attached anywhere in the material world and who exclusively love God and God alone, will be free from [Maya](#) (the miseries of the world) and go directly to the divine abode of Shri Krishna without any doubt.

Same thing is depicted by Shri Ramanujacharya in His thesis of the Geeta:

बद्धानां मध्ये यागाधिकारिणो धूमादिमार्गेण चन्द्रलोकं गत्वा ततः स्वर्गादिकमनुभूय पुनर्निर्वर्तन्ते ॥
माया बद्ध पुण्यकर्मी
pāpakarmāṇastu candralokādyamalokaṃ gatvā tatra vedanāmanubhūya punatpadyante /
māyābaddha pāpakarmī

“When material beings lead a pious life of honesty, truthfulness, sympathy and kindness, perform fire-sacrifices etc., after death their soul goes through the path of fumes (*dhoomra marg*) of *Yagya*, to the moon and then reaches [Swarga](#), where they live for a predetermined length of time. After consuming the fruits of all their good deeds, they are born again in a lower life-form on the earth”.



But,

पापकर्माणस्तु चन्द्रलोकाद्यमलोकं गत्वा तत्र वेदनामनुभूय पुनत्पद्यन्ते । मायाबद्ध पापकर्मी
pāpakarmāṇastu candralokādyamalokaṃ gatvā tatra vedanāmanubhūya punatpadyante /
māyābaddha pāpakarmī

“the souls of the sinners, travels to the moon and from there it goes to the abode of God of death (Yamaraj), where they are made to undergo immense sufferings, before being granted birth in some form of life, as per their [karmas](#)”.

ये वै के च अस्मात् लोकात् प्रयति चन्द्रमसमेव ते सर्वे गच्छन्ति ॥
ye vai ke ca asmāt lokāt prayanti candramasameva te sarve gacchanti //

“whoever goes from this body, is bound to go to the moon first”.

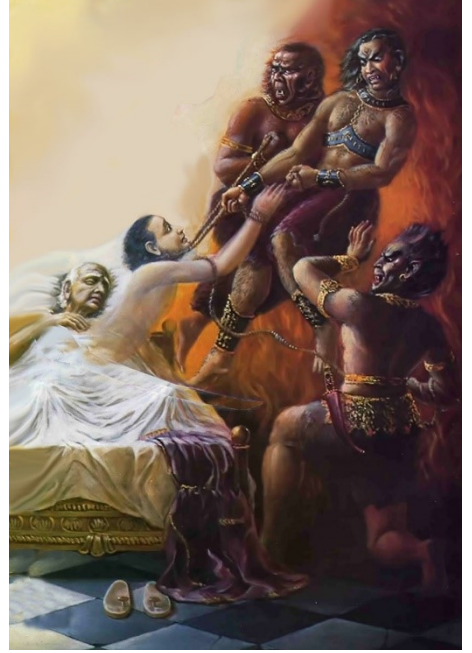
ब्रह्मोपासना निष्ठा अर्चिरादिमार्गेण विष्णुलोकं गत्वा तत्र परमात्मानमनुभवन्ति ।
brahmopāsana niṣṭhā arcirādimārgeṇa viṣṇulokaṃ gatvā tatra paramātmānamanubhavanti /

“But those who have complete faith in God and who worship God constantly, take the divine path to *Baikunth*, the abode of *Maha Vishnu* and attain unlimited bliss forever.”

The *Garuda Purana* asserts that at the time of death, the messengers of *Yamraj* called *yamdoot* drag the soul, out of the body. Material beings do not wish to leave their body willingly, that’s why *yamdoot* have to forcibly pull out the soul from the body. The pain of the soul leaving the body, is much greater than the pain of millions of scorpions stinging a person at the same point, at the same time.

Material mind and intellect have a finite capability of bearing either pain or pleasure. When the pain or pleasure exceeds a certain limit, the mind falls unconscious. The pain of death is so intense that the individual becomes unconscious and the senses, mind and intellect become dormant. Then the soul along with senses, mind and intellect are forced to exit the physical body in a subtle form. Then *yamdoot* take the subtle body to *Yamlok* through *Chandralok*. The individual sees their entire life replay like a reel in front of him but is unable to change anything.

In hell, the *yamdoots* (servants of *Yamraj*) torture the sinner such that in one minute the individual experiences the torture worth billions of lives. The soul screams, but there is no-one to listen.



So,

पुण्येन पुण्यलोकं नयति पापेन पापमुभाभ्यामेव मनुष्यलोकम्॥ वेद
puṇyēna puṇyalōkaṁ nayati pāpēna pāpamubhābhyāmēva manuṣyalōkam // vēda

“Good actions take an individual soul to [swarg](#) and bad actions to [narak](#). A mixture of good and bad actions brings us back to earth ([Madhya lok](#)) in various forms of life.”

For those who are fully surrendered to God, *Vishnudoot*, the divine servants of God, come with a divine plane. They respectfully request the devotee to accompany them to the divine abode of God. The devotee willingly leaves this body and experiences no pain. The *Bhagwat* says

कलेवरं तीर्थे, गंगायामनुदर्शनम्। सद्यः स्वरूपं जगृहे भगवत्पार्श्वं वर्तिनाम्। भा ६.२.४३
hitvā kalevaram tīrthe, gaṅgāyāmanudarśanam /
sadyaḥ svarūpaṁ jagrhe bhagavatpārśva vartinām /

bhā 6.2.43

“After *Ajamil* completed his devotion, he achieved a divine body which was as beautiful as the eternal associates of God”. Then:

साकं विहायसा विप्रो, महापुरुष किंकरैः । हेमं विमानमारूह्य ययुः यत्र श्रियः पतिः ॥ भा ६.२.४५

*sākaṃ vihāyasā vipro, mahāpuruṣa kiṃkariḥ /
hemaṃ vimānamārūhya yayuḥ yatra śriyaḥ patiḥ //*

bhā 6.2.45

“the *Vishnudoot* came in a divine plane which was made of gold (*Puspak Viman*). Then *Ajamil*, who was already free from the bondage of *Maya*, left his body and went to *Baikunth* in the same plane along with those divine personages.”

We are human beings and have a rational mind. We ought to learn from the pitiable condition of other humans and creatures in lower forms of life. We too have suffered like them in innumerable lives. After knowing all this, if we still do not wake-up, we will again be doomed to undergo severe sufferings in the after-life. Attainment of a human life form is a rare opportunity. The human form of life is endowed with a precious gift, of the power of discrimination, from God. If we do not behave like a rational living being, as He expects us to, we will definitely be hurled down to lower species of life for billions of life-times.

*कबहुँक करि करुणा नर देही । देत ईश बिनु हेतु सनेही ॥
kabahuṅka kari karuṇā nara dehī / deta īśa binu hetu sanehī //*

“Once in a while, out of his immense grace, God bestows the human form upon a soul. God gives the human form due to His love for souls”.

Yes, getting a human form is not time bound or a result of prescribed Vedic injunctions. This is a rare gift bestowed by God.

Hence, our scriptures suggest,

*उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।
uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata /*

“Wake up and associate with the virtuous devotees. Learn the meaning of good actions (see [become good](#)) and as per their instructions, rectify your life and attain everlasting bliss, free from the fear of death and rebirth.”

In a nutshell, **you choose “What happens to you after death”.**

Kripalu Leelamritam – The Power of Divine Words

Sometimes new *satsangees* have a question in their mind, as to why do *satsangees* only sing bhajans composed by Shri Maharaj Ji alone and why not bhajans *keertans* written by others including other saints?

Once Mahabani Ji’s son asked Shri Maharaj Ji: Why should we sing only Your compositions?

Shri Maharaj Ji explained: any composition that you read, recite or sing leaves an impression on your mind. Obviously, you don't want material compositions leaving an impression on your mind, hence one should stay away from all material compositions.

Young devotee: Can I read, recite or sing the compositions of other genuine saints like Tulsidas, Soordas, Meerabai, Kabirdas etc.?

Shri Maharaj Ji – If you read the compositions of other saints, then all those personalities will leave an impact on your mind. It is like stamping with different seals at the same place in the document. None of the stamps will be clearly visible. Similarly, the divine words of all saints are powerful enough to melt your heart. In doing so, you will attain the result based on the intensity of your devotion, but will not receive the grace of a composer-saint, as you are not surrendered to any of them. But when you sing the compositions of your Guru, your Guru graces you and infuses devotional sentiments in your heart. It is a Guru's responsibility to take care of you and to guide you.



Hence, you should choose a genuine saint (see [saint or imposter](#)) and follow the teachings of your chosen Guru and Guru alone. The impression of your Guru's teachings will leave an imprint on your mind and start reflecting in your personality.

Question: Maharaj Ji, a lot of people sing movie songs for you, is that right or wrong?

Shri Maharaj Ji – If a movie song is being sung for a saint, or God, it is right. However, in that case you only get the fruit of your devotional sentiments. You do not get the additional benefit of the power of divine words.

Kids story – Lord Shiv Plays Holi with Shri Krishna

Once Lord Shiva, who is the greatest devotee of Shri Krishna, was eager to play Holi with His beloved Shri Krishna and arrived in Vrindaban dressed as an ascetic. At the same time, the *gopis* were getting ready to play Holi with their beloved Shyam Sundar. Seeing an ascetic, the *gopis* bowed down to Him and asked Him the purpose of him being in Vrindaban. Lord Shiva replied that He had come to play Holi.

The *gopis* laughed and said, “*Baba Ji*, you don't have any *gural* (colored powder). We will play with *gural* and what will you play with?” Lord Shankar in the guise of a *Baba Ji*, took out *gural* from his bag and started throwing it in the air. The *Baba Ji*, then started playing Holi with Shri Krishna.

The *gopis* who were eagerly looking forward to playing Holi with their beloved Shyam Sundar, were feeling left out. So, they interrupted the play and said, “*Baba Ji*, we are about to play Holi with wet color now, for which you will need a water gun. We see that you only have your bag and *kamandal*, so unfortunately, you will not be able to play with wet color. You may wish to leave now”.

The *Baba Ji* replied, “of course, I have a water gun.” The *gopis* started laughing and asking Him to show the water gun, despite Shri Krishna gesturing to them to not insist on seeing the gun. The *Baba Ji* asked the *gopis*, if they really wanted to see the water gun and they unanimously said, “yes”, to which Lord Shiva obliged and opened one of the locks of his matted hair and the river Ganga started flowing out of His hair. The *gopis* started to drown in that water and cried out to Shri Krishna to save them. Shri Krishna asked the *gopis* to seek forgiveness from Lord Shiva, which they promptly did. They also begged Lord Shiva to leave Vrindaban and go back to His divine abode Kailash.



Lord Shiva left Vrindavan happy that He played Holi with Lord Krishna and the Holi play started between Lord Krishna and the *gopis*.

