

The Science Behind Death, Life After Death and Samadhi

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As per Chandogya Upanishad, death is not instantaneous but an active process. The five Karmendriyas are the first to stop functioning. They are elimination (payu or excretory organ), reproduction (upastha or sexual organs), movement (pada or feet or the locomotor organ), act of grasping (pani or the organ of action, the hands) and speech (Vak or the speech organ). As per the Upanishad, when these five Karmendriyas stop functioning, it is called "Vak vriti". They stop functioning in sequence and speech is the last function to go.

In medical science, the first question we ask is "Can the person speak?" If the answer to this is yes, the process of death has not started yet.

The next to go are the five sense organs called Jnanendriyas. They are smell (ghrana or nose), taste (rasana or tongue), vision (caksu or eyes), touch (tvak or skin) and ability to hear (srota or ears). The Jnanendriyas also stop functioning in sequence and the last to go is hearing.

The next question to be asked is "Can the person hear?"

Once the ability to hear has gone, the next to go is "Manas", which includes mind, intellect, memory and ego.

When both the Jnanendriyas and Manas stop functioning, the situation is called "Manovriti". In this phase, the person cannot speak, hear and think.

Once the Vak vriti and Manovriti have stopped functioning, the next to stop functioning are the five Pranas.

Prana vayu (the upward moving force of the chest region responsible for respiration), Apana Vayu (the downward moving energy of the sacral region connected with the functions of excretion and reproduction), Samana Vayu (the laterally moving energy helping in digestive

functions), Udana Vayu (the energy that compresses and causes deglutition and separates physical body from astral) and finally the Vyana Vayu (the energy moving in circles in the entire body and responsible for circulatory system).

These 'Vayus' too cease functioning with the 'Vyana Vayu' being the last to cease. Once all five Vayus cease to function, this is called "Prana vriti".

Therefore, medically the third question to be asked "Is the patient breathing?" If yes, is the circulation on?

The above sequence also explains the difference between the "brainstem death" and "death". In brainstem death, the Prana Vayu ceases to function but other vayus continue to function.

Once the Prana stops functioning, the Prana vriti merges with Tej (Tejas or to lose control of temperature regulation) and these merge in Sat (Sath). With this, life comes to an end.

The "Sat" may be taken as a state when the consciousness or the life force leaves the body.

At any stage, before "Tejas" merges with "Sat" death is reversible; before Prana vriti by putting a person on ventilator and at Tejas by creating therapeutic hypothermia.

In Ayurveda, there are three terms called Prana, Tejas (Tejesvi Bhava) and Ojhas (Ojhasvi Bhava). These represent the life forces and are consistent with the above observations. The nearest equivalent to Tejas is control of metabolism and temperature regulation. Till the Tejas is under control, life force cannot cease to function.

If hypothermia develops, medically or naturally, Prana vriti cannot merge with the Tejas, the life force can be kept preserved for a long duration. A person can be revived later by bringing back the body to a normal temperature and with proper resuscitation. In modern medicine, this is called therapeutic hypothermia.

A person in whom the Karmendriyas, Jnanendriyas, Manas and Prana have stopped functioning and if put

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in a state of therapeutic hypothermia, the person can be revived later after re-warming and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). CPR is revival of Vyana Vayu, which in turn revives Prana Vayu and Udana Vayu, which has not yet left the body by merging into Tejas.

The above sequential process also can explain the "near death" experiences. They depend at which stage the person was revived.

For example, if a person is revived at a stage of Vak vriti, he or she may recall experiences related to the motor organs. If the person is revived at a stage of Manovriti, he or she may recall experiences of both motor and sensory organs as well as experiences related to mind, intellect, memory and ego and if the patient gets revived at the stage of Prana vriti, he or she may recall the near death experiences linked to motor organs, sensory organs and breathing.

The process of death therefore is Vak vriti merging into Manovriti, Manovriti merging into Prana vriti and Prana vriti taking the heat of the body (Tejas) and merging into "Sat" and the "Sat" merges into "Brahmand" in the atmosphere. [Chandogya Upanishad 6.15.1]

Samadhi

Samadhi is a state of oneness in body, mind and the soul. The process of Samadhi also involves the above process starting with control of Karmendriyas, then Jnanendriyas, followed by control of the mind (manas), then the control of Prana and finally the control on metabolism (Tejas) and lowering of body temperature.

At this state, the life force can be preserved for a long period and the person can revive back even after months. Samadhi has been practiced by Rishi Munis in Vedic literature but in natural environments on the hills.

Food is Brahman

Motor organs, sensory organs, Prana (the life force) are all formed by the food we consume.

When ghee and oil in the food gets digested, it gets divided into three parts: The "crude" part makes bone, the "middle part" makes bone marrow and the "subtle" part makes the Karmendriyas (Vak).

When the non-fat part of the food is digested, it too gets divided into three parts: The "crude" part make the feces; the "middle part" Manas and the "subtle" part Jnanendriyas.

When the liquid part of the food is digested, it also gets divided into three parts: The "crude" part gets converted into urine, the "middle" part into blood and "subtle" into Prana.

This explains the process of fasting. A person can live without air for 3 minutes, without water for 3 days and without food for 3 weeks. The first effect of fasting unto death is cessation of speech then hearing and then the Prana.

The above is true in non Samadhi state. In the state of Samadhi, your metabolism may be so slow that you may live longer without food. Even today many Jain Munis live without food for months.

Life After Death

As per Upanishads, the 'Sat' or the life force called consciousness remains in the atmosphere. After a variable period of time it will fall on to the earth through the rain drops when (the RNA and DNA) gets taken up by the food grains. Therefore, the term "food is Brahman".

When the appropriate father and mother eat that food, the life force enters in the ova and the sperm and from there the new life begins (Soul never dies: Bhagavad Gita 2.20).

This process of new birth is just the reverse of the process of death. In the process of death, the first to go is Vak vriti or speech and in the process of birth the last to come is Vak or speech.

This explanation, though, is difficult to explain in terms of modern science.

The Science of Karma

Karmas in Vedic knowledge are described in three terms: Sanchita Karma, Prarabdha Karma and Agami Karma.

Every action results in a reaction. Action and the resultant reaction together is called a Karma. The end result can be positive or negative, depending upon the resultant reaction.

As per Vedic literature, the net negative Karmas get accumulated and need to be neutralized either in this birth or in the next birth. At the time of death, all the resultant accumulated negative Karmas, which remain to be neutralized, constitute Sanchita Karmas.

If the Sanchita Karmas constitute a high burden, then some of them, as instalment, are constituted as Prarabdha Karmas, which need to be neutralized in the coming birth.

Therefore, when a person is born, he is born with predefined Prarabdha Karmas. These need to be neutralized and faced in this life, while the left over

Sanchita Karmas are to be faced in the subsequent birth unless some of them are neutralized in this birth by good positive Agami Karmas.

Agami Karmas are day-to-day Karmas of this birth. If the net result of positive and negative Agami Karma is positive, they can neutralize the Sanchita Karma that form the basis of Vedic saying and recommendation of keep doing the good job. It also resolves the myth that if one's destiny is predefined in terms of Prarabdha Karma, why should one do good deeds.

According to Buddhism, one is born to suffer as per the number of Prarabdha Karma at the time of birth. Buddhist philosophy says that suffering exists, there is a reason for that suffering and one can live and make modifications to enjoy that suffering.

The purpose of life, therefore, should be to live our Agami Karma in such a way that they not only neutralize our Prarabdha Karma, but also the Sanchita Karma.

According to Bhagavad Gita, whatever you think throughout your life, will be your thinking at the time of death and whatever is the thinking at the time of your death, will be the type of womb you will get in the next birth (Bhagavad Gita 8.6, 8.7).

As per Prasna Upanishad (Mantra 10), whatever are one's thoughts (at the time of death) that thought remains with the outgoing Prana. Prana coupled with Udana and Atman, leads to whatever world has been conceived (in the last thoughts).

Prana joined with fire (Udana), together with the soul, leads to whatever world has been fashioned by thought.

The thinking at the time of death decides, which Karmas will form the instalment of Prarabdha Karma. Therefore, thoughts at the time of death decide the destiny of birth in the next generations.

So, as per Bhagavad Gita, one should be in a positive state of mind at the time of death. If spontaneous positive thinking is not possible, then every effort should be made to convert negative into positive thinking.

According to Bhagavad Gita, the best time to die is Uttarayana, before full moon in the day light or in an atmosphere of Yagna. The bad time to die is Dakshinayana, before Amavasya, in the night or in the dark.

To convert bad into good timing, the process of death should take place at home, in a lighted environment (artificial Dias, in the vicinity of Vedic hymns) in the company of positive thinking people. In that situation, the chosen Prarabdha Karmas out of the Sanchita Karmas will be positive and the life force with positive aura will enter into the womb of parents who are positive. In this way, even if you are born to suffer, you will suffer and yet not suffer.

Note: The views written are my personal views and interpretations based on my literature search and knowledge acquired after interaction with many spiritual Gurus over the last many decades.



London Gets World's First 24-hour Air Pollution Charge Zone

London is the first city in the world to implement a 24-hour, 7-day a week Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), inside which vehicles will have to meet tough emissions standards or face a charge, reported CNN.

The introduction of the zone aims to reduce toxic air pollution and protect public health, according to a press release from the office of Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London.

Under new rules introduced April 8, polluting vehicles will be discouraged from entering the ULEZ thanks to a daily charge of £12.50 (around \$16) for some cars, vans and motorbikes and £100 (\$130) for trucks, buses and coaches. The zone will cover the same area as the existing Congestion Charge - collected from drivers in the city center - until 2021, when it will be expanded to cover the area between the major orbital roads known as the North and South Circular... (CNN)

Polluted Air Cuts Short Life Expectancy by 20 Months

The life expectancy of a child born today could be reduced by an average of 20 months due to health damage caused by air pollution. In South Asia, where air pollution levels are the highest, the life expectancy for children born in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh falls by more than 30 months, according to the annual State of Global Air report, published by the Health Effects Institute, a US-based nonprofit research group, online... (Medscape)