

THE LIFE BEYOND PHYSICAL DEATH

(Marne Ke Bād Hamārā Kyā Hotā Hai)

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PREFACE

Life is eternal. Considering "Death" - the cessation of functions of physical body, as the end of life is a great delusion. The soul (Atmā), which is the beholder of bio-energy in the physical body, is ageless, timeless and indestructible. The fear of "Death" ensues from the misconception that with the end of physical existence, the individual loses its identity in totality. A firm conviction in the continuity of life in future absolves man from the fear of "Death".

Man is afraid of many things, but the fear of death is supreme, the very thought of which makes him shiver. The reason for this unusual reaction is the ignorance about the environment of life beyond the physical death. In this book an attempt has been made to remove these misconceptions and enlighten man about the facts he is curious to know about the unknown future.

The task of educating one about the other world is, however, not easy, since, the subject pertains to a para-normal phenomena and is, therefore, much beyond the reach of physical sciences. Sir Oliver Lodge -a well known authority on the subject too admits that it is not always possible to explain the laws of metaphysics in physical terms.

For readers, who consider the physical bodily senses as the exclusive means for finding the ultimate truth, the matter dealt with in this book may appear to be an utopian conceptual exercise. Others, who believe in the words of achieved saints and having

para-normal vision, would find in it authentic material, which the writer has aquired and summarised after close interaction with many great souls.

- *Shriram Sharma Acharya*

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1. What is Death?

Life is like an eternal stream. Each of us has been living since time immemorial and would continue to do so for millions of years in future. Ignorance of facts makes us believe that life begins in the womb of mother during pregnancy and ends with cessation of functions of heart and brain. It is a myopic point of view— a misleading concept. Modern medical science would make us believe that soul has no independent existence of its own, that the body itself is the totality of a living entity and the being is lost forever on death of the body, But Alas ! Physical sciences themselves are even today in infancy. Take for instance the subject of velocity of electricity. So far, over three dozen theories have been advanced in this context each contradicting the earlier ones. No doubt man has learnt to make use of electrical current, but he is still uncertain about its mode of propagation. To the material world the ever-changing theories of physical sciences may not matter much but it would be unfortunate for mankind to apply the same norms to research in spirituality. Whereas scientists consider body itself as the total existence of a living being, a research scholar of spirituality puts forward evidences of paranormal activities of the departed, defying explanation by material sciences. Then there are authenticated versions of small innocent children, who have identified places and people of their past lives proving beyond doubt that a being goes through cycles of birth and death again and again. Sucking milk from mother's breast immediately after birth, itself indicates the presence in the infant of a memory from previous life. Extraordinary talents of many young children too are indicative of knowledge acquired in an earlier existence.

Soul (not mind which is recognised as soul in the west) and body are not one and the same entity. Just as one is required to change clothes according to the requirements of occasion, the soul too changes bodies. As it is not possible to wear the same clothes throughout one's life, the soul with its infinite continuity in time, cannot dwell in the same body. That is why it seeks to find a new body again and again. Though, generally, one discards the old worn and torn clothes only, at times it becomes necessary to do so prematurely, when they are accidentally damaged, torn or have become unusable on account of some other reason. Like-

wise, though the soul continues to live in the body till the later becomes infirm due to old age or diseases, it may also leave it at a younger age in a contingency.

The moments of death

How does one die? In this context Indian *Yogis* (saints) having paranormal perception hold the view, that for a short duration preceding death, man experiences a great deal of restlessness, pain and writhing. There are a few reasons for this phenomena. The event of death necessitates total withdrawal of the current of bio-energy (*Prāṇ*) from all over the body, which before death, is accumulated at that particular part of the body, from where the soul is about to make its exit (discussed later), whereas, because of prevailing disposition of biological functions, this current tends to flow back to respective neurons. The impact of this struggle creates the agony or the spasm at the moment of death. The other reason for the misery preceding the moment of death are diseases, shock or other physiological factors rendering the body unqualified for retention of soul. Whether or not the dying person is able to express, the being does suffer for a few moments before death. However, soon thereafter, the person falls into a kind of coma and the soul departs in this state of senselessness. When death becomes imminent, all external functional powers of man become introverted and then cumulatively escape along with the soul through any exit in the physical body (*Sthul Sharīr*). The *Yogis* of the West are of the view that the soul (*Sūkshma & Kāraṇ Sharīr*) of the being comes out of the body as a violet shadow, whereas the Indian spiritualists see it as a brilliant white aura akin to luminescence of a burning lamp escaping at the moment of death. Because of cumulative withdrawal, all forgotten memories of life lying buried and dormant in the finer cells of brain are stimulated and revived. This phenomena proves the extraordinary capability of human mind, when the dying person relives all experiences of life in a short moment like a playback of a cine-film, whereas while living it is impossible to remember even fifty percent of life's events in a long time. Each activity of a person, whether mental, verbal or physical, leaves an imprint on the soul, The sum and substance of these events, deeds accompanies the soul as its *Samskārs* (impressions) at the time of its departure from the physical body. In this process, it is said, one feels unimaginable pain-like that inflicted by a thousand scorpion bites. While looking at the

activities of bygone human existence the soul feels extremely miserable—like a devoted father who beheads his own son by mistake and looks at his body writhing in pain. It is because the soul feels extremely repentant for not having utilized life's precious moments fruitfully.

As mentioned earlier, the body becomes insensitive to all feelings of pain and disease much before death when the energy of sense-perception becomes introverted. Thus all sufferings of body end before death. The bond between the body and soul with diseases, shock or old age begins to loosen. The fruit drops to the ground when it is ripen and its stem is unable to bear its weight. In the same manner, an individual dies when the body and its functional capabilities loosen their grip on the soul. The soul generally departs from the apertures in the upper part of the body, principally from the mouth, eyes, ears or nostrils. Sinners have been found losing their souls through the anus or organs of sex. The soul of *Yogi* leaves through the *Brahmarandhra* (Near top of cranium).

The habitat of departed soul

On coming out of the body, the soul finds itself in a strange environment. Just as after a prolonged period of hard work one seeks a comfortable bed, in order to relax after the lifelong engagement with the body, the soul needs rest and sleep (a period of inactivity). This period of sleep provides the soul a great deal of rest. (Hence the prayer for the departed soul to rest in peace). However, the soul does not fall asleep immediately after death but takes some time in doing so. Generally, the duration lasts about a month. It is because the habits and memories of earlier bodily attachments (*Vāsnā*) are fresh and strong at the time of death and only gradually loosen their hold. As an analogy, consider the state of body after hard labour. The circulation of blood is fast and one cannot fall asleep even on a comfortable bed till it becomes normal.

After its separation from the physical body (*Sthūl Sharīr*) on death, the soul assumes an astral body (*Sūkshma Sharīr*). The form of this body is somewhat similar to that of the physical body. The being is pleasantly surprised to find a sudden acquisition of levity. Now it can move freely in space like a bird and reach anywhere simply by willing to do so. After abandoning the physical body, the soul hovers around the mortal remains. Finding the near and dear ones mourning, it makes an attempt to

communicate with them or re-enter the dead body, but does not succeed. The following narration of a departed soul illustrate the point. "After death, I found myself in a strange situation. On account of my previous attachments with my physical body and dear ones, I wanted to interact with them but found myself helpless. I could see and hear everyone and talked loudly, but found that I had become invisible and inaudible to the living beings. Though it disturbed me to some extent, I felt very happy in my newly acquired body in which I felt very light and could fly around with great speed. I recollected, that while living I was afraid of death, for which now there did not appear any reason, whatsoever. Having acquired the new body, I became less interested in the older one, since this astral (*Sūkshma*) body was in every way much superior to the previous one. I felt that I was existing as before and could see and move my limbs as earlier. It convinced me that there was nothing to fear about death and dying was only an ordinary natural process involving change of body."

Ghosts and spirits

Because of earlier long attachment the soul continues to hover around the dead body till it is cremated. After it is reduced to ashes, it reluctantly seeks a diversion. On burial, however, it remains infatuated with the mortal remains and hovers around them for many days. Souls of less enlightened persons and of those having deeper involvements in worldly matters, haunt the graveyards and crematoriums for many days. Longing for the earlier body draws them again and again towards the place of cremation and unable to control their emotions, they wail around the grave. Then there are also individuals having deep affections with close friends and relatives. Souls of such persons prefer to stay near the favourite persons rather than around the place of cremation.

Old aged person while living naturally develops greater detachment from worldly affairs. Consequently, the soul of such a person is more relaxed and falls asleep soon after death. On the other hand, youths having strong desires and attachments-specially those dying of shock or suicide suffer for longer duration, before having rest.

The apparitions

In the event of sudden death associated with pain, quite a few particles of the physical body (*Sthūl Sharīr*) cling to the Astral Body (*Sūkshma-Sharīr*), as a consequence of which, the soul retains the characteristics of both the former living as well as the astral being. It, therefore, has some physical as well as astral (*Sūkshma*) components. Such souls, at times become visible to the living person as apparitions. However, this is not true about a person dying a natural death. In order to make themselves visible, the latter category of spirits have to make great efforts and carry out specific spiritual exercises. Persons dying of unnatural death, on the other hand, exist as spirits (ghosts) and they are unable to sleep because of troubled emotional state. Seeking opportunities for taking revenge or fulfilment of insatiated desires through the body of a living person, they hover around old "*Pipal*" trees, caves, ruins or some reservoir of water. They make their presence felt to the desired person or persons at opportune moments. The exorcists (*Tāntriks*) bring such spirits under their control with help of witchcraft and make them work like slaves. The spirits, however, do not work willingly for the exorcists. They remain ever resentful and even kill their captors in unguarded moments. No one likes to be in bondage. The spirits perform like the caged lion in a circus. The spirits generally tend to stay at a particular place, and do not change their abode frequently unless there is some specific reason to do so.

The rest before rebirth

The souls of modest persons and of those having religious disposition severely links with the earlier worldly milieu after cremation and easily reconcile to the changed environment. Detaching themselves from the past, they easily fall asleep for recuperation. Nature has not specified any fixed duration for this period of rest. It depends on the state of spiritual health of the soul. As children and hard working persons need a longer period of sleep and rest, so do the souls in various states of spiritual health. Generally a duration up to three years is found sufficient for this rest. During the first year, the soul sleeps soundly within which it is able to recuperate from the exhaustion of earlier life and the finer perceptions of the new astral body begin to react efficiently to the requirement of new levels of sentience. In the succeeding second year of rest the soul recapitulates the wrong deeds (sins) of earlier existence and prepares itself for working in the new environment, in the light of past

experiences. The third year is spent in looking for the milieu in which it desires to return to this world by taking birth in a new body. The duration mentioned here are averages. Occasionally, in specific cases, persons have been found taking rebirth even after six months, whereas others have taken as long as five years. The maximum age (period of existence) of spirits (*Prait*) is believed to be twelve years. Thus the maximum gap between the death of a person and rebirth could be taken as twelve years.

2. Where is the World Beyond?

It would soon become clear that the world in which the soul lives after the death in the material world is not a remote existence somewhere far above in the space. We know for instance, that X-rays penetrate through solid objects, whereas for a living person even a wall restricts movement. Heat and cold too pass through physical barriers to a great extent.

That is to say, the movements of extra-sensory finer elements are not restricted by physical objects. On the other hand, though material barriers obstruct our activities, we hardly ever feel the presence of the finer elements of nature surrounding us. Thus, without being conscious of it we move around freely like a fish in this vast ocean of air enveloping us. The souls of the dead are composed of such extra-sensory finer elements and, therefore, have a total freedom of movement in this world. The world beyond does not have an existence in some remote part of space. It is a world within this world itself. The world of souls is omnipresent on this very earth and in the cosmic space beyond this planet. Residents of the other world can choose their abode at will anywhere-on earth, in water, on hills, planets, stars or intervening cosmic space and make arrangements for their existence according to their convenience.

One must be aware that the soul also carries with it the ideas, traits, convictions and experiences of mortal life. Since while living, man is engaged in many activities of housing, clothing and food throughout life, habits and convictions pertaining to these functions take deep roots in his psyche, which is an integral part of the soul. It is difficult for a common man to conceptualise a life without a house, food and clothing. The soul assumes a body form - known in the spiritual parlance as *Sūkshma Sharīr*. It acquires sense-perceptions (*Indriyas*) corresponding to those in use while living according to the totality of convictions of the person, whose body it was associated with before death. The habits and convictions also produce virtual house, food and clothes etc. as desired. The activities of living, eating and wearing clothes are, however, imaginary, since a non-material being does not require material conveniences. Nor can it make use of them. The souls which assume the state of ghosts and spirits (*Prait*) because of strong worldly links, choose specific places (described later) for their stay. In the normal course, the other souls select any place for their living and have no specific choice. The difference in sex is retained, though this too is conceptual in the astral body. The effeminate men and masculine women choose the desired sexual status after a brief period of asexuality (genderlessness). In the succeeding birth the individual adopts the sex according to this changed outlook. Such events are, however, exceptions to the norm. Generally very few are interested in changing the gender.

In the other world one becomes free of all physical handicaps of this life. For instance, retarded, crippled and physically disabled individuals are relieved of their infirmity in the astral body since such shortcomings are possible in the physical existence only. Besides physical disabilities are temporal and for the duration of one life only. They are not carried forward from the preceding life-cycles. For this reason, they have no impact on the psyche which is a component of the astral body.

In the astral world, whenever desired, a soul can interact with another soul. However, the souls perceive each other only for exchange of thoughts and ideas. This interperception and telepathic interaction is possible only when the souls themselves intend to do so. Otherwise they remain totally unaware of presence of each other. This meeting between the two souls takes place as an interaction of two energy-forms. During the inter-communication the souls are indifferent to each other's body forms, since in the astral world, these have no relevance whatsoever. Similarly, the name, clothes and food too-being each soul's prerogative and personal conceptions, cannot be seen by others. It is, however, possible to know whether one is happy or unhappy, peaceful or troubled, from a kind of glow emanating from the astral bodies.

The concepts of heaven or hell (discussed later) too are soul's own and are invisible to the others. Though the astral bodies can communicate with each other in this manner, it is not possible for them to share happiness or sorrow. Some souls prefer to live with the deceased friends and relatives and form communities. Such communes, however, exist only in the lower state of the astral world. Considering the futility of permanent associations in course of several cycles of life and death, the elevated souls prefer to live in isolation and make solitary endeavour for further enlightenment. The souls do not remain confined to geographical boundaries. Nor they are under the command of some superior entity. They are controlled by their own conscience.

The spiritual benefits of rites and rituals like *Shrāddha*, *tarpan* etc. and those performed for the dead like placing wreaths, or building monuments for the deceased accrue to the dear ones in this world only. These acts of virtue or donations hardly help the souls living in the astral world, since they are not performed by the latter. It is an established law of spirituality that fruits of virtue are non-transferable. Nevertheless, such expressions of gratitude and reciprocation of goodwill by the survivors

of the family do provide a sense of contentment to the departed soul. Whenever it is feasible and opportune, it tries to help extra-sensorily (e.g. by providing an inspiratory thought). The departed soul tries to help the former near and dear ones in this manner.

Acts of mourning and expressions of sorrow hurt the departed souls. It disturbs their peace. It is, therefore, advisable to sever feelings of attachment from the dead as early as possible and only pray to God for them to rest in peace.



3. Heaven and Hell

God is very kind and merciful. He has given total freedom to the human beings in this world to find the absolute truth and a state of absolute bliss by following a self-chosen course of action. Neither does God become annoyed with those who commit mistakes (sins) nor does he punish anyone disapprovingly. The individual reaps the fruits of one's own doing. The system created by God permits the beings to learn from their own experience and progressively qualify for an improved status in the astral world. **Heaven** and **hell** have also been created for this very purpose. While pronouncing a sentence, a judge has no ill will towards the accused. On the contrary he (or she) sincerely hopes that the person being punished appreciates the consequences of the committed criminal

act and learning a lesson therefrom would spend the future life in an upright manner. God is the supreme judge of cosmos. All faiths of the world are unanimous in the view that after death the soul of the dead comes across either **heaven** or **hell**. Hence there should not be any doubt about this concept. The Hindu spirituality also maintains that in between death and rebirth in the next life, one has to go through the experience of **heaven** and **hell**. By the will of God, this system enables the being to make amends for the past misdeeds-so that in the future course the being is able to avoid pitfalls.

The span of time spent by the soul in the astral world is about three years or more depending upon the discretion of the invisible Supreme Being. About one-third of this time is spent in sleeping and taking rest. (Hence the prayer for the soul to rest in peace). This period of rest is needed because the strains of living in this world make the soul of the being much tired. When it comes to take leave of the body at the time of death, the soul is so exhausted, that it is more or less unconscious (inactive). Hence immediately after death, being inactive and devoid of sensitivity, it is not in a position to feel the full impact of the corrective punishment it is due to receive. A patient undergoing surgery under sedation, does not feel any pain. On completion of this initial period of rest, during the next one-third period of its stay in the astral world, the soul 'awakens' with renewed freshness. During this later period the soul reviews the bad and good deeds it has been associated with while inhabiting the body of the deceased person, as **heaven** or **hell**. The natural system of divine justice does not punish or reward a person immediately after committal of an act of virtue or sin. There is a time-lag between the actions (mental-verbal-physical) and reactions (rewards and punishments as **heaven** and **hell**). As future acquisition of fruits is ascertained while sowing the seeds, the ultimate reactions (*Karma-phal*) of good and bad activities (in thoughts, words and deeds) become integrally attached to the soul in concentric layers which unfold one after the other at the appropriate time. Like sowing of seeds of different plants, which take their own time to mature and bear fruit, acts of virtue and sin produce the resultant at appropriate time. After the soul awakens, the imprints of various good and bad deeds do not merely remain dormant in the storage of memory. Each of these manifests into a consequential product. In course of our life we commit so many good and bad deeds, which we

forget in due course of time, but the soul, as a witness to everything within self, keeps a meticulous record. For instance, a thief does not listen to the voice of conscience while committing theft. Let us also presume that the stealing goes unnoticed and thereby unpunished in this world. But in the 'field of soul' it is sown as a seed. After some time, whereas the theft is erased from the working memory in life, in the file of soul it is kept as a permanent record. When a seed is sown, it grows into a tree quite different in shape and size. So does an act of sin transform into misery of **hell**.

Hell has been described in a variety of ways in the scriptural literature of various faiths. Whereas for Hindus the descriptions of **hell** are associated with terms like *Kumbhī Pāk*, *Vaitarṇī*, *Raurav*, the Mohammedans know it as *Dozakh*. The writer of this book holds the view, that it is possible for each being to have a specific **hell** of one's own. In this way all souls could have had as many numbers of **hell** after each cycle of life and death and in future will continue to have new **hell**. It is quite logical, since **hell** has a connotation related to the personal circumstantial view of the individual in life, which obviously differ from person to person. A doctor would feel suffocated in a room filled with filth, whereas a sweeper may hardly take notice of the foul smell. A death sentence, which a martyr hears with a smile, terrifies others. A sensitive person would find it difficult to forget a minor insult, whereas the most disgraceful treatment given to a thick-skinned person may not create any reaction in latter. Therefore, for individuals having different levels of sensitivity, different types of **hell** would be required. (A standard model of **hell** would not serve the purpose).

Scriptures also mention about the emissaries of death (*Yamdūt*) who forcibly drag the soul towards hell. These so-called messengers of death are not independent beings, but are in fact mental images (*Mānas putra*) created by the soul of the dead itself. In course of the sequential growth of the 'seeds' of activities (*Karma*), the inner-self also produces enforcers of divine justice. The life-span of these divine prosecutors depends upon the period for which the being is required to live in **hell**. Having accomplished their job, they become extinct. The wardens created for enforcement of punishment to a particular soul do not stay longer to punish someone else. As a matter of fact in the astral world, all material life ceases to exist and the spiritual one unfolds. According to spiritual

scientists, the conscious mind which dwells on material things dies, but the supraliminal survives. In the latter it brings to the surface, awareness of facts and consequences of activities of life in their true perspective. In this state of mind, the soul becomes totally deprived of the argumentative power of the lawyer and logician, which in normal course of life justifies each and every action taken by man. The tendency to suppress truth thus leaves the mind altogether. The field within the inner-self where seeds of sin were sown by way of committal of evil deeds, become as active and productive, as the conscious mind is while operating for material achievements during life.

In material life on this earth, the mental body (*Sūkshma Sharīr*) of man coexisting with the physical body has four components of mind, namely "*Man*" (the source of desires, longings and aspiration); *Buddhi* (the discriminative faculty which deliberates, takes decisions and seeks course of action); *Chitta* (which stores inherent traits, habits, inclinations and temperament) and *Ahankār* (appraisal of a person for one's ownself in the material world; e.g. that he is so and so, rich or poor, wretched or fortunate, foolish or intelligent, etc.)

When man is physically alive, the mental body remains only partly active with the first two exterior shells of mind, namely *Man* and *Buddhi* governing the activities of physical body. The remaining two secret compartments (*Gupta Mastishka*) remain subconscious when man is in the living state. The mesmerist, in fact puts the external mind (*Man* and *Buddhi*) to sleep and gives hypnotic suggestions to the inner component (*Chitta* and *Ahankār*), which create a life-like physical experience for the subject. For instance, if the subject is told that he or she is swimming, the former actually believes and feels involved in the act of swimming. The same holds true in experiences of **heaven** and **hell** in the life after death. The internal mind is made to experience the events of **hell** by auto-suggestion and the soul (which is a non-material entity) feels miserable. Thus **hell** and enforcers of divine justice perceived beyond death do not have an independent existence. Nor do there exist independent courts of law for divine justice and related office personnel. Innumerable living beings die at each moment. Rendering justice to them would require a huge complex establishment. There is absolutely no feasibility of such a complex set up for dealing with innumerable living beings of this cosmos. (The scriptures mention that *Yam* is the deity who

takes a decision on allotting **heaven** or **hell** to the soul of the dead on the basis of the record of its good and bad deeds, maintained by *Chitragupta* in his court. In Sanskrit dictionary, *Yam* stands for 'disciplining one's own self' and *Chitragupta* or *Chittagupta* stands for the *Chitta* which is secret or hidden. That is to say the *Chitta* keeps the record and self-control (*Ātma-Niyantṛaṇ*) delivers the judgement. Thus each being has a **hell** of his own which becomes extinct, the moment the soul returns to be reborn in another body.

When the resultant of sins deeply ingrained in the psyche become illumined, the soul is forced to take cognizance of them. Let us try to understand the concept of *Yamdūts*-the emissaries of death. Attracted by fire, a moth appears forcibly drawn towards it by some independent entity, though this act of the insect is simply self-immolation. Similarly when the astral body is brought to divine justice and undergoes punishment on its own, it has the impression of being forced to do so by aliens. The deliverers of divine justice would naturally appear in form, shape, complexion and description conforming to the faith and religious beliefs to which the person subscribed while living. They would also converse with the soul of the dead in its own language. The enforcers of divine justice may also be conceptualised as the "effulgence of *Samskārs*" (*Samskāron Kā Tej*) uncovered on death, which necessarily confront the soul, whether it likes it or not. (Who would like to accept and face results of one's own misdeeds ?) In order to punish and reform itself the inner-self produces an exclusive **hell** within, wherein traits accumulated from activities of previous life become personified as living images, and the soul is subjected to torment, anguish and humiliation, The inferno creates a lifelike perception of physical suffering such as being roasted or an intense experience of remorse, mortification and embarrassment. The kind and degree of punishment would depend on the emotional susceptibility of the individual. The purpose of this treatment in **hell** is to make the being suffer so that it is able to learn a lesson by correlating sinful deeds with their ultimate consequence. The duration and degree of punishment also depends on the requirement of the being for reformation. As is the course of justice in this world, the limits of hellish treatment are decided by the gravity of crime. In order to punish a habitual criminal, who repeats mistakes in successive life cycles, heavy punishment is designed. In this way, the soul gets cleaned of all serious sins one by one,

which appear successively and fade out after producing the desired effect. The *Sūkshma Sharīr*, too has astral sense organs and a mind analogous to the living person. For the physically committed sins, the physical counterpart and for the evil thoughts the mind of the astral spiritual body are made to suffer. On ever-eating or consuming bad food, the person himself suffers for his folly. So does the inner-self have an in-built arrangement of self-punishment for evil deeds. Sinful acts which are not kept secret are generally punished for in this very world, whereas for the remaining, the being has to undergo suffering in the astral world. (The provision of confession in Christianity is to enable the person to unburden the soul of sins kept as secret). Divinity has established this system to enable the being to make penance for most of the grievous sins and proceed for the next birth as a pious being without the burden of consequences of sins committed in previous life. The commander-in-chief does not permit a wounded soldier to go back to the front till he recuperates. Since, otherwise, he would not serve his purpose and instead of fighting would be preoccupied with the injury. For the similar reason, barring a few exceptions (discussed later in the chapter on 'Rebirth') most of the sins of the individual are wiped out after the reformatory treatment and the being proceeds for the next birth with a clean slate. The advantage of **hell** does not lie merely in weakening the impact of sins on the soul but is also reformatory. It relieves the living being from past evil habits in future life and make it remember the consequences. The voice of conscience is in fact a memory of this lesson. Thieves, evil doers and murderers become restive while committing the crime. It indicates the faint recollection of the punishment suffered in hell for similar deeds in earlier life. But alas! people do not pay heed to their voice of conscience and fall again and again in the trap of sin.



4. The Heaven

As committal of sins results in **hell** so are virtues rewarded as **heaven**. What should be regarded as a sin and what as virtue ? The issue is complex. (It has been dealt with in another book by the author). For the time being it is sufficient to understand that deeds performed with a feeling of love towards other beings and purity of heart are virtues and those with selfish motives and hypocrisy, sins. Human mind may endeavour to define and justify sins and virtues according to one's convenience, but the inner-self identifies them without any ambiguity. A dumb person may not be able to describe the taste of sweet and sour but he does know what it is. Acts of virtue instantaneously provide peace and contentment to the soul. On the contrary, sinful acts create turbulence in mind. Though religious rituals are somewhat helpful in providing purity to mind, they themselves do not constitute religion. Blowing a conch, ringing a bell, lighting incense sticks and candles are not part of religion. Such rituals only purify the mind to some extent. If the mind of a person is so corrupt that he or she compulsively dwells on evil, no ritual can take him to **heaven**. Only the ignorant ones believe that the rituals are a means to go to **heaven**. Virtues like kindness, love, benevolence and truthfulness are components of all religions. Only those traits which provide contentment to the soul could be regarded as virtues and are the exclusive means for entering the gates of **heaven**. Believing in superstitions tantamounts to groping in the dark. As we misutilise our time in so

many futile activities during life so we do in observing the many so-called traditions. It is a total waste of time for the other world. Acts of virtue provide us happiness within. This happiness unfolds in the **heaven** in the same way as the sins do in **hell**. The way our concepts of **hell** beyond life are perceived in the astral world so are those relating to **heaven**. A Hindu finds his **heaven** conforming to the *Vaikuntha* and *Indralok* of his scriptures, the Muslim as *Jannat* of *Gilmas* and so on and so forth. It is because **heaven** and **hell** are only conceptual projections of our points of view in this life, in the life beyond death. The pleasure of **heaven** also lasts a particular duration. The objective of heavenly bliss is to upgrade the virtues imbibed in the soul, so that in the next life, becoming more activated and invigorated, the being is able to interact with a much more subtle sphere of existence (*Adhik Sūkshma*). Unaware of this truth, the ignorants think, that **heaven** is full of means and materials of sensual enjoyment. This is not true. Only those individuals deserve experiences of **heaven**, who had already achieved total contentment of sensual gratification in material life. For the slaves of sensuality and leeches of lust, **heaven** remains a far cry. Had **heaven** stood for abundance of wine, beautiful women and sex (which belong to material world only) there would not have been any necessity for the aspirants to perform so much penance and austerity (*Tapascharyā*). All of it would have been achievable anywhere in this world in lieu of money. As a matter of fact, heavenly bliss does not mean material happiness or sensual pleasures. On the other hand it is the extra-sensory happiness felt by the inner-self. The pleasure experienced in this way is of a much higher order than that felt by the human body in this world.

Scholars (*Pundits*) of science of spirituality are aware of the infinite power of the soul. Being a component of the omnipotent God, it is competent and self-sufficient in every respect. There is no reason for disbelieving or considering it incredible that soul can create a heaven or hell as it wills. The scriptures mention that in the beginning, God, who was the only **being** existing at the moment willed to create the cosmos by transforming **His** existence as the **only one existence** into a **multitude** (*Eko Hum Bahusyām*) and thus **He** became omnipresent as the innumerable animate and inanimate beings of cosmos. In this world itself the soul creates for its ownself three states of wakefulness, sleep (dreami-

ness) and sub-consciousness (*Jāgriti, Swapna* and *Sushupti*). Similarly, it creates **hell** and **heaven**, falls in bondage and delivers itself from the same by its own endeavour. So great is the power of soul.



5. Preparation for Rebirth

As mentioned earlier, in the astral world, the initial one-third duration of stay is spent in resting recuperation, the succeeding one-third in going through the experiences of **hell** and **heaven** and the remaining in making preparations for the next birth in the material world. After the perceptions of **hell** and **heaven**, the being feels particularly encouraged to make a fresh beginning in the next life. The punishment in **hell** wipes out earlier serious sins but stubborn habits persist. In parlance of spirituality, the hardened traits which are carried forward by the soul in the next birth are known as *Samskārs*. The *Samskārs* remain integrally attached to the soul, till the being identifies them by virtue of enlightenment and struggles hard to get rid of them. It is the *Samskārs* which are responsible for the bondage of the soul to the cycles of life and death and consequent good and bad experiences. God has provided absolute freedom of action to the human being. It weaves the cobweb of *Samskārs* around its soul out of its own free will and remains entombed therein. *Māyā* – the inability to perceive the world in its true perspective is only a synonym for ignorance. Why does an individual make one's own self unhappy by getting entangled in a self-created bondage of ignorance, is an enigma. This complex phenomena itself is described as the insurmountable bondage of *Māyā* in parlance of spirituality.

The *Samskārs* accumulated in previous cycles of life and death are not totally wiped out even after making penance for the evil deeds in the other world. As an habitual gambler desires to bet again and again after losing a number of times, or an addict craves for the drug inspite of repeated suffering, the being looks for a place to be born again because

of old habits. An average person generally looks for a familiar socio-geographical environment of previous life. For instance, a farmer in this life who has accumulated *Samskārs* related to farming would like to take up the same profession in the next birth, instead of becoming a businessman. Let us not assume that some alien **Super Being** compels the soul to take rebirth as a person in a particular environment. Man, by virtue of his own *Samskārs* is motivated to be born at a place of his choice. Like a vulture flying high in the sky, looking for a carcass, the soul searches an environment of its liking in the immense space around the world. As mentioned earlier, since the intellectual faculty (*Buddhi*) of the material world which uses logic and arguments, does not exist in the astral world, the soul does not manipulate for a better worldly status in the next birth which does not conform to its habit of previous life. As a small child used to living in a poor family prefers to live in a hutment rather than a palace, an individual accustomed to the *Samskārs* of a business environment likes to be born in a family of businessmen. More or less fifty per cent individuals prefer to be born in their erstwhile household or family. Unless insulted, accused or ostracised, the being desires to take birth in the same house, family and community or its neighbourhood where it was living in the earlier life. The same holds true about the geographical preferences, Since the language, customs and culture have a deep imprint on the psyche, all beings with very few exceptions, prefer to live in the state where they had been living in the previous life. Thus unless there is some specific reason, an Italian would not like to settle in India, nor would an Indian in Turkey.

Our physical senses find it difficult to identify the psychological environment or the state of psyche of an individual, but the beings of the astral world can do so very easily. They wander around the family where the environment appears congenial. The beings of the astral world also have recollections of their earlier life cycles. And because of previous attachments to people and places, they are instinctively attracted towards them. At times, because of a long passage of time the attitude of soul towards the previous environment undergoes a change or on the other hand the environment of the erstwhile family itself changes. In such anomolous situations too the soul, at times, takes rebirth in the same family. Birth of an idiot in a clan of scholars or a saint amongst sinners is thus indicative of one of the following situations : (1) Either, while

passing through several cycles of life and death, there has been some change in the environment of the family, while the soul continues to retain the old *Samskārs*, or (2) The soul has moulded itself into different frame of *Samskārs*, but it is attracted towards the said family because of personal attachments. It has been repeatedly asserted that each being has the freedom to change its *Samskārs* by changing its behaviour (character). Hence, if a child born in a family has a different nature, it indicates either some change in the ancestral traits of the soul or an old attachment of the soul for the family because of which it gets into the incongruous association.

Having located a family of its liking, the soul hovers around it waiting for an opportunity to enter the material world. When a woman therein becomes pregnant it makes an entry into the womb and after nine months forces its way out to the external world as a newborn baby. Many experts are of the view that the soul reserves the embryo beforehand and permanently enters the body of the child when it is about to be released from the womb. In my view when the sperm and ovum fertilize, the soul takes charge soon thereafter and begins to live in the embryo lodged in the womb. There is a general misconception that living in the narrow confines of the womb is a very painful experience for the unborn child. It is not true since the underdeveloped brain, sense organs hardly inhibit the freedom of spatial movement of the soul since at this stage it does not have any particular attachment to the body. By virtue of its faculty of animation (*Chetnā*), it is able to wander around beyond the body, using the womb as its nest. However, a little before the moment of birth, when the sense organs of the child acquire maturity, the being loses its freedom and immediately tries to force its way out along with the body of the newborn. This is the period of spasms during the delivery (*Prasava Kāl*).

At times, there are a number of beings intending to take birth in the same family. In such a case, they have to await their turn. In spite of the intention to enter the womb of a particular woman, if it is not its (soul's) turn or if the woman is not in a position to conceive, a stop gap arrangement is sought and the being has to choose an alternative place for rebirth. At times a soul keeps on waiting for a very long period for an opportunity to be born in a particular family. If such an opportune moment does not arise and the specified period of stay in the astral world

expires, it hastens to take rebirth at some place or the other. As a strong urge to vomit forces one to discharge instantaneously at an inappropriate place, so does the being hurries to accept an unintended environment on expiry of his tenure in astral world.

The soul has no control over formation of internal and external organs of the body of the embryo. The new body is a joint venture of the genes of the parents and requirements of the being. For example a desired piece of pottery is produced by the efforts of an expert potter and proper raw material. The sperm and the ovum may be compared to the raw material and the soul with the potter. An artless potter cannot produce a good piece even with excellent material. On the other hand effort of an expert potter is wasted if the material is not good. A soul having superior *Samskārs* exerts positive influence on the physical characteristics of sperm and ovum whereas the one with bad *Samskārs* contaminates the good characteristics of sperm and ovum. The quality of thoughts of parents and their character (*Bhāvnā* and *Charitra*) too affect the development of embryo. Unless highly evolved, the being is compelled to live under the influence of inferior *Samskārs* of the parents. It is seen that a child born of adultery is often troublesome, since during the coitus the parents are full of anxiety which leaves an impression on the fertilizing embryo.

Some individuals become firmly addicted to bad habits and misuse a particular sense organ again and again. For this reason they are repeatedly required to go through the treatment of hell in successive life cycles. On account of strong habits, however, they forget this punishment and revert back to the old practice. Such individuals are ultimately deprived of the misappropriated sense organs for a number of succeeding cycles of life. This system created by the Supreme Being works to reform the compulsive sinners and is akin to temporary debarment of a person from membership of an organisation or cancellation of licence issued for a firearm. Congenital aberrations such as deafness, dumbness, blindness, deformities of limbs, absence or under-development of genitalia, mental retardation are given to such individuals who have become habituated to misutilization of the particular organ of sense-gratification. However, the life on this earth as a human is never meant to make the being reap fruits of good and bad deeds of previous life. The soul of even the handicapped person is healthy and active (*Jāgrat*) like others,

and gives the person freedom to strive for enlightenment, if the individual so desires. Then there are very wicked individuals misappropriating all sense organs throughout their life. They are made to "take birth" in the biological kingdom as an immobile being (*Jaḍ Yoni*). Thus the plant-life belongs to the species (*Yoni*) in which the being is made to suffer for the sins committed in earlier life. It is known as *Bhog Yoni*. In the *Bhog Yoni*, though the life exists, most of the animation pertaining to physical activity (*Kriyāshīl chetnā*) is confiscated. Placing the soul in this *Jaḍ Yoni* (plant life) too is indicative of benevolence of God. Since otherwise, the degraded individual would find it difficult to discard the compulsive bad habits and the retrogressive *Samskārs*. From this state again begins progressive evolution of the soul. Gradually passing through numerous cycles of life and death as bacteria, worms, animals, birds and so on and so forth it successively moves to higher levels of enlightenment. This phenomena is corroborated by Darwin's theory of evolution. According to Hindu Scriptures the number of such *Yonis* is 8.4 millions, whereas material scientists would consider the number to be much larger. Notwithstanding the number of *Yonis* the fact remains that wicked beings who misuse their senses take birth in a *Jaḍ Yoni* and in order to be born again as human being, have to undergo progressive evolution for millions of years. If there is some interruption in the process of evolution the being is made to appear in a particular *yoni* again and again, till it qualifies for the next grade, like a failed student. However, only extremely wicked persons are awarded *Jaḍ Yoni*. An average individual committing small acts of sins and virtues takes birth again as a human being, since the wisdom accumulated in course of millions of years of living in numerous species is not so insignificant as to be overlooked reverting the being to the arduous process of evolution. Man is again and again provided an opportunity for self-evolution in order to achieve the ultimate objective of deliverance from the bondage of life and death.



6. Ghosts and Spirits

Here while mentioning about ghosts and spirits, it is implied that we are talking about the invisible human beings whose physical body, (*Sthūl Sharīr*) have since become dead. There is a vague notion that after death all living persons turn into a ghost or an spirit. This is, however, not true. Many are released from the bondage of human births, some find themselves in heaven, still others fall into a comfortable sleep for rest. Very few individuals turn into ghosts. Hindu scriptures refer to the word *Pret* (Ghost) in derogatory terms. This class is specified as the *Pāp Yoni* (sinner's species). When one of the following three types of infatuations (*Vāsna*) overpower a living person to the extreme limits, the soul of the dead breaks the normal chain of events in progressive evolution and instead of moving forward, goes backwards in time. Deviating from the normal course in which it should have passed through periods of rest, experiences of **hell** and **heaven** and preparations for next birth, the soul tries to return to the environment of life before death. On account of excessive fondness to the earlier living environment, extraordinary attachment to some favourite person, extreme jealousy or enmity, the soul becomes static in its evolution. The urge of the inner-self (*Chitta*) implores it to move forward but disregarding it, it adamantly sticks to this state. The life-long burden of deeds (*Karmas*) and tiredness make it very uneasy and perturbed. Desires emanating from resentment and enmity to frustrations on leaving the body to which it was unduly attached, too are no less reasons for its misery. Besides since the person was too much materialistic in life, substantial amount of physical matter is also brought forward by the soul in its otherwise extra material form from its erstwhile body of the world. It makes the being crave for material enjoyment. Affiliation of previous life and longing for sensual appeasement make the soul intensely oppressed, anxious and dejected and it keeps on wandering from place to place, as ghost.

We are sometimes told that a particular place is haunted, that someone has been possessed by a spirit or that there is a poltergeist creating disturbance. In most cases the spirits are reported to harm rather than

help. It indicates that spirits are generally emotionally disturbed beings. As mentioned earlier, the soul falls into this wretched state because of excessive sensuality or infatuation with a person, place or object. Individuals craving for good food, having addictions to drinks or drugs, abnormal interest in entertainment, a mania for sex in fact make themselves a slave to bad habits even while living in this world. On being deprived of the physical body after death, the spirit watches these activities helplessly and finding persons having similar infatuations, use later as medium for satisfying their own desires through the body of the living person. Since the desires of such departed spirits are of a very low order, they specially wander around brothels, gambling and drinking dens and other socially ostracised places. Visitors to such places secretly and unknowingly become possessed by such spirits temporarily. Though the former remain unaware, they know that a visit to such places of addiction excites their desire extraordinarily.

Ghosts and spirits do exist but their number is not large. In many cases, reported encounters with ghosts turnout to be projections of personal imageries. To a weak mind, every movement in the dark simulates a ghost. This self-hypnosis about being possessed by a ghost cannot be removed without giving an equally strong counter suggestion to the mind of the sufferer. People in backward undeveloped areas where the masses are ignorant and uneducated suffer more from such conceptual haunting. Amongst the educated, it is a rare phenomena.

When spirits become visible to the living persons or make their presence felt, they draw the elements of matter for their manifestation from those very persons who are haunted. The spirits have the capacity to draw out physical elements from the living persons. Whenever, the former desire to materialise, they drain out matter from the living for moulding their shape. Medical examination of persons undergoing a haunting experience would show a loss in body-weight, decrease in body temperature and subdued biological activity. Except for the persons who know the science of compensating this loss, repeated haunting is not healthy for an ordinary man. It produces biological shocks which can lead to dangerous consequences.

Fear, which prevents the human and the spirits to interact, is a great blessing of God. Had it not been so, spirits would have been living in each house like birds, rats and ants. In that case the process of evolution

of the dead as well as living persons would have stopped and both would have remained spiritually stagnated because of the worldly ties of attachment. God does not expect us to be unduly attached to the temporal relationships of this world and desires us to keep on moving towards progressive evolution by performing our duties towards mankind. For moving forward, one is required to leave the ground behind and place one's leg on the space ahead. This is the natural process of all forward movements. Hence, progress means never looking back to the past. There is a local belief in India, that the feet of the ghost point backwards. It means instead of establishing a new relationship, the ghosts look backwards to old life.

At times, the bio-electric units of a living person personify into an independent figure (Etheric Double of the theosophist). The moment we enter a house, we intuitively feel the psychic field of its inhabitant, since the invisible radiations of their psychic energy (*Mānviya Tej*) are present there and our own psychic field interacts with the former. Places where acts of great violence took place retain the residual charge of the psychic energy of the persons involved for years. Devastation by fire, forced abortions, infanticides and other such criminal acts, make even the bricks and masonry of the place of event cry in silence. Sufferings of oppressed persons, long since dead, personify into spirits and terrify the people living at the place of event, at times appearing in dream when they are asleep. Many houses are considered haunted and people living therein come across ghosts. At inhabited places, however, generally images projected by someone's extreme happiness, enmity, anger, anguish or attachment (*Mamtā*) are seen. The real spirits prefer to stay in isolation, far from noisy places. Only in specific circumstances and for particular objective they make their presence felt.

Ghosts of lower order (degraded souls of ordinary persons) can at the most afflict a mental shock, suddenly terrifying a person or even making him sick with fear. On account of their low bio-energy, such spirits can neither make themselves clearly visible nor inflict physical harm. It is, however, possible for them to hurt children substantially, since the latter do not possess a strong will to counteract the evil influence. Because of abundance of evil traits, they create only trouble for others. Then there is a middle class of ghosts, which is more powerful and imposing. They have the capacity to manifest in many shapes and forms, lift and move

material objects (poltergeist) satisfy their desires by taking possession of the body of person or make a person deranged or sick. The most elevated class of spirits (*Vīr Brahma Rākshas*, *Betāl*, *Pitar* etc.) can also help a person, provide relief from the lower class of ghosts and inform about known and unknown events. If persuaded, they may also inform about future events, but such predictions are not always reliable. A spirit has no capacity to cast a spell, curse, or grant a boon, since it lacks the spiritual energy required for such great endeavours.

Human bodies (and other living systems) have specific energy fields (halos) which interact with the energy fields of other beings coming in contact with their spheres of influence. Each particle radiating from this energy-field is capable of producing an independent living entity (*Srishṭī*). Sometimes, in case of persons having extraordinarily strong psychic power (*Manobal*), these particles are very strongly charged. Emanating from the body of the person they create an "embryonic clone" which if left undisturbed by the energy fields of other persons, grow in lonely, uninhabited places intensifying into permanent living image of the person. Such spirits are found haunting ruins thousands of years old. The soul of the person, in the mean time could have gone through several cycles of life and death, yet the clone produced by the residual high energy particles get an opportunity to grow independently. Where people live, their energy fields displace the earlier ones.

Blessings and curse of individuals possessing spiritually elevated souls (Messengers of Divinity, saints, angels, super persons) too create energy fields personifying as independent living beings. There are many such events described in Indian scriptures. The ire of *Shiva* producing *Virbhadrās*, emergence of a she-demon (*Rākshasi*) from the hairs of *Durvāsā* for punishing *Ambrish* are examples of mental images projected as personified living beings (*Mānas putra*). An intense reaction of a tormented person may also personify and strangle the tormentor. We are hardly aware of boons, blessings and good wishes of living and dead persons living with us as invisible deities and helping us in our moments of distress. Individuals inexplicably surviving serious accidents testify to this phenomena. Like spirits, strong opinions of other persons about us, whether good or bad, at times help us invisibly or materially. As there are many types of ghosts and spirits so are numerous other living entities in the astral world. They do not cross our path unnecessarily but we do provide them an opportunity to do so because

of our mental pollutants. Ghosts find it easy to possess the persons who suffer from weakness of will, excessive fear, superstition or weak psychic force. If your soul is strong, is not timid because of indulgence in sin, the poor ghost can hardly do you any harm.



7. Domination by Evil Spirits and Exorcism

As discussed in the earlier chapters, ordinary persons and those following a sinful life style, if overwhelmed with unfulfilled desires, pain or personal attachment at the moment of death are made to live as the

species of astral world known to us as ghosts or spirits (*Pret Yoni*). In this state, the spiritual evolution of the soul virtually becomes static. Instigated by unfulfilled desires, enmity, suppressed resentment etc. such individuals try to unload their burden by trying to make the living persons suffer, harmed or terrorised. Then there are a few, who become ghosts because of their excessive infatuations in worldly life and desire to live in the last environment and with the people they liked. The latter category of ghosts, though do not harm, yet keep on requesting for small favours for fulfilment of their desires. The spirits, having a non-material existence cannot consume material food and liquids like human beings. Yet they are unable to get rid of their sensual pleasures of human life experienced during past cycles of birth and intend to enjoy the same.

We come across persons who though on deathbed, desire to eat various types of delicacies, which they are hardly able to consume. The ghosts are more or less in the same state. They wish to relive the experience of human body but their present ethereal body does not let them do it. Thus the soul inhabiting a tree cannot have the experiences possible for an animal and vice versa. The sense organs of various life forms function differently. Since the soul that is spirit, is not able to fulfil a strong desire, it becomes restless and frustrated and feeling resentful towards people in the neighbourhood for not helping it, tries to terrorise.

However, exceptionally, some spirits behave in a different manner. At the moment of death certain individuals become emotionally mature. Particularly, old persons, who leave behind younger children, retain an attitude of patronage, fondness and forgiveness towards the living. They also have very few unsatiated desires at that age. Such benevolent spirits living in a particular house, try to help its inhabitants, warn them about impending disasters (through dreams or clairvoyance) and extend whatever little help they are capable of. Knowingly they never harm any friend or relative of earlier life. Human mind naturally finds contentment in helping others achieve that which could not be done for one's own self. The grown-up persons derive pleasure in watching their children play with toys. In the same manner, the benevolent spirits sometimes desire the living persons to be entertained. It relieves them of their misery to certain extent.

Seven kinds of spirit encounters

A reported phenomena of haunting may or may not be actually related to an encounter with a spirit. Such sightings can be classified into seven categories: (1) The imaginary ghost, which a person visualises by virtue of a strong auto-suggestion, fear, apprehension, belief or conviction (*Sankalp*); (2) A psychic disorder producing a hallucination; (3) Clones produced by the bio-electric particles of the dead; (4) the demons (*Pishāch*) who are perpetually restless because of unsatiated desires, lust or revengeful attitude in life; (5) the beings which are excessively infatuated with their past glory, place, family or friends; (6) Spirits personified as *Chāyā Purush*, *Yakshini*, Genie etc. for particular objectives by the exorcist (*Tāntriks*) by occult practices and (7) The liberated souls which help by providing inspirations and help in endeavour of human welfare. Amongst the foregoing, the spirits belonging to the initial five categories do nothing but harm people. The fifth one may help or harm persons whereas the sixth and the seventh are always benevolent. Let us now learn a little about each one and know how to get rid of them.

(1) The Imaginary Ghost

It is personification of one's own fear. When intensified terror or apprehension develops into a conviction, it takes the shape of visual image. Under hypnosis an individual can be made to see things which do not exist. A terrified person makes out a human figure out of a bush in darkness. Fear creates confusion in mind and apprehensions produce living images perceptible to senses. In this way eyes and ears record audio-visual signals generated in one's own mind as those coming from without. The skin feels as though the subject is being touched, grabbed or possessed by a spirit. When the mind is weak and susceptible, whatever is imagined, appears real. Thus persons troubled by imaginary sightings of ghosts do not have the least doubt about the reality of the event. For them everything actually happens. In this state whenever the level of fear or apprehension crosses a certain threshold, the ghost is perceived and it also creates disturbances of various kind.

(2) Psycho-somatic disorders

Psychological disturbances give rise to diseases like mental disorders and hysteria. As a consequence, abnormalities appear in man's actions, facial expressions, habits, speech, likes and dislikes. The patient does

not talk normally and behaves strangely. *Āyurveda* (An ancient treatise on medical science) gives elaborate descriptions of psychic disorders which are mistaken for possession by spirits. Finding a suitable environment, suppressed desires manifest as hysteria or sudden loss of consciousness. When one is forced to live in an unfavourable environment from which there is no opportunity to escape, the accumulated stress creates a confusion in the information-sensors of mind making the person behave as if he is possessed by some spirit. At times in order to attract attention, individuals also pretend to be possessed or relate tales regarding their fictitious encounters with ghosts. This is also a type of psychosomatic disorder. Some young brides do not find the new environment of married life favourable. The perturbation and frustration due to helplessness create a stress manifesting as symptoms comparable to those seen in persons possessed by spirits. At times individuals dissatisfied with the behaviour of family members manage to create impressions of haunting in order to trouble, harm or fleece money. Cunning servants, rogue neighbours, tricksters and exorcists too create situations simulating hauntings. The phenomena is thus a social malady.

(3) Clones created by residual bio-energy

Seeds of a plant fallen on the ground remain inactive for some period and sprout in the next favourable season. Likewise the residual charge left over by the bio-electric particles of certain extraordinary persons or abnormal events involving strong emotional outbursts in people persist for a very long period in the inanimate objects of the house or related place. Finding an appropriate environment, these particles become reactivated and clone into a virtual 'living image' of a person dead or alive. Let me illustrate this phenomena with an experience of my own. Once a certain gentleman came to me seeking my advice on a recurring dream in which he saw a beautiful woman forcing him to have sex with her. This man, a person of high character, could not even entertain a thought about such an immoral sinful act. He became much more perturbed when one day he saw the woman of his dream in a red-light area. Inquiries revealed, that the house in which he had lately shifted in was previously occupied by that woman of ill repute. I advised this gentleman to vacate the house, since the bio-electric particles therein were cloning the woman in his dream. The man left the house and his obnoxious dreams ceased.

At ancient historical places and places of pilgrimage, at times flashes of personalities of yore are seen. Living images of saints appear before the devotees. Visitors to *Sevākunj* in *Vrindāvan*, U.P., India sometimes see *Rās līlā* being performed by Shri Krishna. Similarly, at Kurukshetra, Indraprastha ancient characters of *Mahābhārat* era have been observed. The places of pilgrimage are specially charged with spirituality of famous super persons of yore (saints, thinkers, evolved souls) who had lived at such places. The spiritual charge left during life-long activities creates a lasting field and motivates the devotees and pilgrims.

From the foregoing it is evident that the phenomena related to haunting by spirits are generally found at places, where human body has been abnormally used. The environment around places of cremation, execution, slaughter-houses etc. is particularly eerie. Because of the abnormal use of the body-instrument, some of its particles are permanently absorbed by the place of event and become manifest from time to time. The mental body of persons coming in the vicinity of such places interacts with these energy-particles and creates various experiences of fear and intimidation. At places where people were killed, or some other such violent activities like tortures were carried, similar dreadful environment is created. The people concerned in such cases, might have died long ago and reborn elsewhere, or may even be living at the moment, yet the clones produced by their *Sūkshma Sharīrs* (Astral bodies) continue to live and behave like them independently for long-periods, appearing in the fields of perception of living persons from time to time. Such clones may also react violently like other evil spirits.

(4) Senually dissatisfied souls.

Spirits of persons who die with suppressed desires specially terrorise their close associates of earlier life, since being familiar with them and because of earlier experience, they think it feasible to satisfy their unquenched desires through the former. Such spirits seek association of earlier life for a variety of reasons. Some wish to eat or drink according to their tastes of previous life. A few seek a courtyard, tree or some other suitable place to live. Yet others, who are interested in virtuous activities like giving alms, performing pilgrimages, visiting shrines etc., motivate by interacting with the astral body of the living. Such spirits may create disturbance to achieve their purpose and calm down as soon their desire is fulfilled. Spirits of this class often trouble persons who

deliberately or unknowingly desecrate their place of living. They specially become more aggressive around noon or middle of night. Such spirits may react to settle some score of previous life.

(5) The Infatuated soul

Individuals who are very much attached to certain persons in life too inhabit the *Pret Yoni* (species of spirits) after death, and move around the place of living of their favourite ones. They take pleasure in finding their loved ones enjoying life. They never harm anyone but rather warn their favourite persons in moments of danger and at times even help them. In parlance of spirituality, such spirits are known as *Pitar*. Most of such benevolent spirits of persons who died at an old age, are harmless.

On the other hand, persons dying in their youth with very strong and selfish desires, wish to drag their dear ones to their own status of *Pret Yoni*. With this motive they may even plan to kill their favourites. It is particularly true of young women, who die leaving behind young children as orphans. The infatuation to live with their children in the astral world motivates them to do so.

(6) The spiritual-robots

By practising disciplines of '*Tantra*' (Exorcism in western parlance), spiritual robots (*Chāyā Purush*) are either created or various types of powerful spirits and divine powers brought under control or personified (*Bhairvī, Bhavānī, Baitāl, Pīr, Genie, Pishāchini* and the like of them) for achieving a particular objective, acquiring some desired object or punishing someone in some way. Such spiritual robots personified by self-projection of mind (*Sankalpa Pratimā*) do not have a mind of their own. They work at the command of their creator like a robot. The *Tāntrik* (Exorcist) creates and controls these invisible robots by energizing his own psychic energies (occult power) by practising for long disciplines of *Sādhanā* with strict procedures. In spite of their being wilful creation of the *Tāntrik* (*Mānas Putra*) such robots appear to have an independent existence of their own. The capability of the genie created and its strength, naturally depends on the *Shraddha* (Infallible conviction) and *Sādhnā* (Practice of discipline of spirituality/occultism). The spiritual robot created by a psychically weaker individual may be overpowered

by another one produced by a more powerful person and defeat the purpose of the former. *Tāntriks* in India use such robots for many dreadful objectives like killing the adversary by the device known as *Māran*.

(7) The Liberated souls

About the souls of persons who had died after living a contented life, much has been said in the earlier chapters. Spirits of such persons are ever engaged in motivating people to follow the path of virtue. They feel happy in finding persons engaged in virtuous activities and help them in their progress. There are quite a few *Siddha Mahatmās* (Achieved saints) and *Mahāpurushas* (Super souls) moving around in the invisible astral world, helping human beings in their welfare activities.

Having known about the seven types of spirits, the reader would conclude that with the exception of the Liberated Soul, all other are more harmful than beneficial to the living persons. There is no need to discuss the merits of the liberated souls, since everyone likes being helped, but when someone is being harmed by an evil spirit, there is a cause for consternation and we have to think of remedial measures.

How to deal with visitations

Although the phenomena of visitations by spirit are rare, there is no end to the misery of persons who fall in this unfortunate situations. Experience tell us that two-thirds of the reported incidentes of haunting are figments of imagination of the subject because of fear. As mentioned earlier, because of weak will, the person concerned is troubled by an imaginary spirit of one's own creation. The root cause of this imaginary creation is ignorance, educational and social backwardness, weakness of inner-self and superstition. For an individual, who does not lack courage and makes it a habit to investigate the cause of fear, such imaginary ghosts cease to exist. Illusions like the noise created by rats, branches and foliage of plants simulating movements of human body in the dark, disturbances created by monkeys and cats etc. are at times mistaken for activities of ghosts. Some mischievous or cunning individual may also make arrangements to simulate a visitation. If seriously investigated, reasons for such spurious phenomena can be found and misgivings removed.

It is possible to get relief from two-thirds of such problems of visitations by educating people through a forceful revolution against superstition. Almost half of the remaining factual incidents of haunting are because of the cloning by the bio-electrical particles dispersed by human bodies. These bioelectrical robot are effective in particular places, within limited spatial limits, and that too for an individual who stays at that place in isolation. Spirits lose much of their power of manifestation in a crowd, since the bio-electric clones have limited energy. They generally make their presence felt by such insignificant acts as by making themselves visible, producing some sound or enacting a scene. The terrorised person coming across this phenomena harms his own self in fear. Otherwise most of these images produced by bio-electric particles do not have the capacity to help or harm anyone.

Houses where visitations are reported should be properly cleaned and disinfected. It would be helpful to fill the closed apartment with smoke created by burning herbs like *Neem*. The Indian remedy of performing *Yagna* is found very efficacious. Religious rituals like *Jāgraṇ*, singing of hymns with accompaniment of musical instruments, mass-prayers, sounding conch-shells also help in expelling such images of ghosts.

To begin with, a patient suffering from hallucination of spirit may be treated by giving him a healthy invigorating diet. Herbal medicines, such as *Brāhmī*, *Shatāvārī*, *Ānwlā*, *Salabh*, *Gorakhmundī*, *Shankhapushpī*, *Bach* etc. and massaging head and body with *Brāhmī* and *Ānwlā* oil are helpful. If a person is feeling reluctant to stay at some place, it is advisable to shift him to a place of his choice. As far as possible, an attempt may be made to keep the patient, relaxed, contented and happy. A sympathetic attitude and brain tonic would show a remarkable recovery in such patients.

At times, a person believes in being possessed by a powerful spirit against which the patient feels utterly helpless. Such weak-willed patients are required to be treated by enacting a make-believe play to make him satisfied that the so-called ghost has been pacified and forced to depart. Thus the illusion of the spirit is removed by creating an equally forceful illusion about its exit. Persons feeling possessed by spirits are generally weak-willed and highly emotional. They can be set right by some awe-inspiring mysterious dramatic devices.

The so-called occult phenomena in planchette, automatic writing and other such things are nothing but a reflection of individual or collective power of mind of the person or persons participating in the act. It is doubtful whether a departed spirit can communicate through material. The readers are advised to desist from such activities. It is also not proper to show undue interest in ghosts and spirits on one's own. However, if some one falls a prey to them it is necessary to make an endeavour to get rid of the evil.



8. Death Too Requires Preparation

It is indisputable that whosoever is born is destined to die. We are also going to die one day. If preparations for that great journey are made right now (since the time of death is unpredictable) the apprehensions and misery at the moment of death can be avoided. Regarding death as a remote possibility and considering the issue irrelevant now for ourselves, ultimately turns out to be a very painful experience. In the scheme of God, human life is meant to serve a great purpose. After inhabiting millions of body-forms in species of the lower order for times immorial and making considerable effort, the soul ultimately evolves to a state worthy of human life. Could there be a greater folly, if instead of utilizing this jewel of life, one wastes it in trivialities? The great objective of human life is to make an outright endeavour for communion with God and thereby achieve the most elevated status in the biological kingdom. But how many of us even give it a thought? Look around and you will find everyone running recklessly in the mad race for fulfilment of the never ending list of desires. Most of us are perpetually engaged in

sensual gratification, basking in self-glorifications, feeling contented in one's own little world of mistaken values and other such ephemeral achievements. While we are busy in creating mirages in our life again and again reproaching ourselves for repeated self-generated follies, the valuable moments of golden opportunity in life pass speedily. Unaware of the loss, we continue to spend precious moments of life in insignificant activities. Death should never be taken for granted. It is lurking anywhere, any time to claim anyone of us as its next victim. Who knows whether one is going to see the tomorrow for which he is planning today? It should be most unfortunate to overlook such an eventuality. It is, however, yet not too late. Everyone of us has to wake up and ask himself these questions. What is life meant for? Who am I? What is it, I want to achieve in life? Consider these questions as significant for one's existence, as important as his daily bread and butter. Repeated deliberations on these questions would set one on the process which is known as "preparation for death". The task meant to be carried out tomorrow requires a proper planning today. Since, one does not know the precise moment of his death, he has to begin the preparation right now.

The best preparation for death is to understand the principle of *Anāsakti Karma Yoga* and make it the philosophy of one's life. We are ourselves responsible for our entanglement in the phenomena of *Māyā* (the illusion about the penency of worldly things and of our own relation to them). We not only become unduly attached to this illusion *Māyā* but also enjoy our captivity in its bondage-forgetting everything else. What is the way to regain the freedom of soul from this entanglement? Every day practice the mental exercise given in the book "Who am I?" by the author of this book. Let the following concept sink deep in mind and make it a practice to imbibe it in each moment of living. "Being a part of that Omnipotent, eternal entity, I am indestructible, everlasting, incorruptible, unchangeable (*Avināshī-Nirvikār*) soul (I am not this body). That the knowledge, of the supreme truth, existence and bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ānand*) are my (soul's) permanent virtues. This world is a stage-not my property, on which I am only a performing artist". The more our convictions grow and become firm in this concept by auto-suggestions, the greater becomes our enlightenment. Look after your wife, children and other family members with great love, but be detached and do not consider them as your property. Instead make them an object of adoration.

They are fellow beings created by God for you to look after. Acquire wealth but for a good purpose- not to accumulate and suffer like the honeybees. Carry out all your activities in the normal way like a worldly-wise person, but change your point of view. Do not forget for a moment that the objects and beings of the world do not belong to you, that others are not your slaves. It is a simple and straight question of ownership between you and the Creator. Everything in this world either belongs to you or nothing belongs to you, it belongs to God. 'I' and 'My' cannot coexist with 'He' and 'His'. In a nutshell, this itself is the riddle of *Māyā*. The entire science of *Yoga* is meant to solve this very riddle. We commit sins because our perspective of self (I and My) is extremely narrow. It is confined to our present physical existence only. Make an outright endeavour to expand the boundaries of your **Self** to encompass all beings. Since they belong to that Omnipresent Entity, of which you are also a part, no one is alien in this world, everyone else is your own self. The sense of belonging should be of a noble order, like the relationship between a mother and her innocent child and not that of a thief and the cash box of others. See the Omnipresent God personified in all worldly beings and serve them with utmost devotion. Instead of regarding your wife as your helper honour her as a deity like Mary in the Church. Likewise treat your sons and daughters. Carry out your worldly responsibilities towards them according to worldly norms. Let your wife not be deprived of her physical and emotional needs nor the sons and daughters of education and spiritual training. But a fair word of caution here! Do not ever think that they are your property. Otherwise, the consequences will be very bad for you. You will fall into a great deception and will get into an unfortunate situation from which it would not be possible to extricate yourself, whatever effort you may make. The cause of all misery in this world is attachment (*Moha*). You declare some land as your own, which from the beginning of creation had belonged to so many. The gold and silver too are products of nature. Your wife in this life, might have been your mother in an earlier life. Souls are independent entities. None belongs to anyone. An ignorant person thinks that all these are his or her, and, therefore, he or she has a right of utilisation for his own sake. Wisdom tells otherwise, It says, "Each particle of this creation is perpetually in fast motion- ever changing." Nothing is static here. The water flows, air moves, earth revolves. Old decayed cells of your body are deserting you continuously and are being replaced by

newer ones. You cannot claim even a straw as your own. So, be a part of the world, but do not be attached to it. If you wish to enjoy the waves of a running stream, watch them quietly by all means. Any attempt made to stop movement would only throw you aside disdainfully.

Ignorance of the eternal truth is the root cause of sorrow, adversity, misery and pain. There is one and only one root cause of suffering at the time of death-immolation in the inferno of **hell**, wandering of soul as ghost and spirit and repeatedly falling in the trap of the cycle of birth and death and that is the veil of ignorance surrounding the soul. So, Friends ! Throw away this mask of ignorance and become enlightened. Do not live and die as one of the lowly innumerable creatures of the world. Have a taste of immortality. (Realise and enjoy the truth of your immortality). God is love. Worship is love. **Heaven** can not be bought. Flattering entreatments (prayers) cannot deliver you from the bondage of ignorance and attachment. Rituals of religion can do little for the upliftment of soul. Do not expect others to free you from this bondage, since none is capable of doing it. Let your own self make an endeavour to free your soul, (*Uddharet Ātmānam*)". Become large-hearted, benevolent; cultivate high thinking. Expand your perspective of 'self' so that everyone else appears intimate. Fill your 'self' with love and sprinkle this nectar of love on every other living being of the world without any discrimination. Carry out your duties religiously. Let there not be any slackness in performance of your worldly responsibilities, but be like a lotus-living in this world but detached from it. Be a *Karma-Yogī* like King *Janak*. Be unattached. Consider everyone as your intimate friend. Realize, (being part of the Almighty) how great you are and holding your head high with pride, say, "*So s s Ham*"-I myself is that God. With self-enlightenment, you can make your other world full of happiness. Then alone the thought of death would not trouble you. Life would appear to be like a game in which you are merely a player. You will be elevated and achieve the great goal of human life in this life itself. In order to prepare for death, begin to contemplate on the real nature of your soul right from this moment. As soon as you become convinced about your greatness all bondage of *Māyā-Moha* (Illusion and attachment) will be shattered. The changed perspective would pro-

vide you lasting happiness. Declare to your soul loudly, that you cannot become mean, petty and selfish since you are part of the Supreme Eternal Existence and bliss.



