

Death & Time



Krishna now teaches Arjuna the decisive importance of remembering the God-within at the moment of death, specifically the point of relinquishing and leaving (*muktva*) the physical body (VIII.5).

काले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् .
याति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ..
८- ५..

antakāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṃ yāti nāsty atra saṃśayaḥ
8.5

In his commentary on the *Gita*, Abhinavagupta argues that Krishna is not merely talking about the moment of death. If this were so, then any being could throughout their entire life behave in a totally unconscious manner and then by luck or chance think of the Immutable Oneness in the moment of their death and therefore attain the same state of consciousness as the *Yogin* who practiced a lifetime of devotion. That would never happen. It is only the person 'who has always taken the Lord to be the highest reality who attains liberation' (B.Marjanovic).

The power of a higher consciousness

However, for those of us who have not spent a lifetime in devotion to God, there is the hope that we can, by our own efforts, counter the influence of our previous distracted and deluded consciousness. Abhinavagupta quotes from *Patanjali's Yogasutras* 1.50:

'Impressions born from that (meditation) counter the influence of other impressions.'

This gives us the understanding that our thoughts of the Imperishable One

have greater power than those with a more temporal vibration and can overwhelm the lower frequencies. Thinking of God can hopefully melt away the residue from mindless chatter, indulgent fantasy, and endless sitcoms.

Remember God at all times

Abhinavagupta presents the sublime picture of the *Yogin* who by his or her own effort has been continually remembering God. This is not as arduous as it may first appear, for God is All - *Vasudeva sarvam iti* - and it is only that you must remain conscious of this truth. This constant practice 'neutralizes other impressions' and when one who has become enlightened 'drops' the body, they are united with 'the highest reality and consciousness' (B.Marjanovic).

Krishna tells Arjuna that he should, based in this teaching, therefore (*tasmat*) at all times (*sarvesu kalesu*) remember the God-within. In this consciousness of constantly thinking of God, the one so devoted to the highest goal will without any doubt come Home (VIII.7).

The Moment of Death

My own thinking is that the moment of death will probably rob most of us of the ability to control our thoughts. Even if you are fortunate enough not to be in pain, the transition from one state of being to another will throw your consciousness into the unknown. Recall any trauma you have experienced and this will verify the potential for an enormous unexpected shift in your usual state of mind.

Therefore in my understanding, our thoughts at the moment of death will be the concentrated synthesis of whatever we hold to be of the greatest value based on our entire life. The state of our consciousness will be compelled by everything we have done and every thought we have entertained.

This cumulative product, as Abhinavagupta suggests, will 'spontaneously' come into our memory and therefore be the matrix of our nature in the next life or free us from rebirth forever. Thus it is obviously crucial for us to work towards the highest consciousness before we become ill and in the possible confusion of pain, move into the experience of death.

Abhinavagupta quotes from *Patanjali's Yogasutra*, Ch.4.9:

There is an uninterrupted continuity of cause and effect, even though separated by life states space and time, because memory and the habitual potencies possess similar form.

Frequencies of consciousness as memory and 'habitual potencies' produce form as material manifestation. We are what we think and what we think emerges from what we believe, our faith (*sraddham*). One acts as one believes. The uninterrupted continuity of cause and effect is the power of Time.

Time is the Product of Consciousness

The poet-author of the Mahabharata, Vyasa, offers profound illumination on the metaphysics of Time in the *Mahabharata's Shanti Parva* (Vol.7, Ch.25 & 33; M.N. Dutt). In the character role of esteemed enlightened Seer, Vyasa teaches the King Yudhisthira that man gets everything through Time.

The Great Ordainer has made the course of Time the instrument of acquisition (Ch.25.5).

Astrology is the science of Time and it is predictable that in the Kali Yuga those who are immersed in worshipping modern day scientism are ignorant of astrology. Rejecting this ancient source of knowledge as mumbo-jumbo, our myopic quantifiers of surfaces have deprived mankind of access to the deeper insight into human destiny and the nature of Time.

From the moment of our birth, right through the yearly progressions and the daily transits, the constantly changing arrangement of the heavenly bodies reflect very subtle and complex states of consciousness. Those who crave power have always utilized astrology. The birth chart is the map and blueprint of our hologram, which is the cumulative result of all our thoughts and actions in all of our lives. In each moment of time in our every thought and act, we are creating our future.

Vyasa describes the mechanics of Time:

Know that Time depends upon the fetters of action and is the witness of all

actions good and evil. It is Time that brings about the fruits, pleasurable or miserable, of our actions (Shanti Parva Ch.33-19).

The very existence of Time ‘depends’ on the consciousness we hold in the moment of any act. The strength and power to bind, the ‘fettters’ of any action, depend solely on the level of attachment or non-attachment our consciousness is holding, whether the act be good or evil.

The ‘fettters’ of action are generated by the *gunas*, the three qualities *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The etymology of the Sanskrit word *guna* is rope. All actions emerge in the hologram through the mechanism of *guna-maya*. Acts performed in attachment - meaning you are attached to the temporal results that may feed or hurt your ego - rope, tie and bind us into the hologram.

Like a spider that weaves its own web, we are bound by the fettters of our self-created illusions generated by our own *gunas*. Thus the Creator binds and veils Its Self in the Illusion of Separation and the appearance of multiplicity. This is the nature of our bondage to rebirth and transmigration from which we inevitably begin to seek liberation (*moksha*).

Our Consciousness creates Time

As a weapon made by a smith or carpenter is under the control of the person who uses it, and moves as moves it, likewise this universe, controlled by actions done in Time, moves as those actions move it (Shanti Parva Ch.33.22).

Time is absolutely created by our own actions. No wonder Krishna tells Arjuna that he must act to sustain the well-being of the world, the *lokasamgraha* (III.25). It is our consciousness, as the veiled yet power-filled pieces of God, that produce Time itself in all its varied rates of vibration from one Yuga to the next. No wonder we do not understand time beyond arbitrarily measuring it - we are submerged in it! We are not only living in time, compelled and controlled by it, but we are creating time with every thought and every act.

On the level of common experience, this explains why time flies when you are having fun and how time can deepen into heaven when you are in love. This also explains why time drags by like a slimy slug when you are heartbroken, miserable and depressed. And this gives us insight into why

great Spiritual Masters are never in a hurry, never irritable or nervous. They seem to possess and emanate a kind of measured, solid state of sattvic peace and tranquility. Time is produced by our own consciousness which is the result of our thoughts and actions.

Kali Yuga Time

Those whose consciousness is agitated, deluded, in the frenzy of need and greed reside in the cycle of time known as the Age of Conflict and Confusion, the Kali Yuga. The wise ones who have learned to control the mind, who have reined in the five senses operating on their objects, are in the frequency of time that corresponds in vibration to the golden Satya Yuga. These enlightened beings may be living in this our current Kali Yuga, but in their consciousness they are resonating with the Satya Yuga.

At any moment you can choose to pull your consciousness out of the frequencies of the Kali Yuga. You can slow time down and bring authentic serenity to the world around you. In every Yuga there are those who hold the consciousness of the higher Cycles of Time. The actions and consciousness of the majority in each cycle create the quality of Time experienced in that cycle.

The ones who have liberated their being from the Illusion of Separation produced by *guna-maya*, and who hold fast to the refuge of Union with the God-within, will through their acts, their sacrifices (*yajna*) based on the regard for others, generate in this world those frequencies of consciousness that will eventually bring about the next Golden Era.

As Vyasa says, this universe is controlled by our actions done in Time and moves as those actions move it. We get the world we earn.

You will go to that state of consciousness which resonates with your thoughts

The moment of death is once again emphasized and Krishna says that 'whatever state of being' (B.Marjanovic) the dying remember is the state he or she will go to after leaving the physical body (VIII.6). I interpret 'state of being' to be state of consciousness.

The Swami Gambhirananda translation of Madhusudana Sarasvati's

commentary is slightly more explicit and states that ‘... thinking of any one entity, whichever it may be, one gives up the body at the end, having always nurtured its thought, he attains that very one.’

The Myriad Realms over the four yugas have been created by our consciousness to serve our created belief systems. In this stage of the Kali Yuga, there are thousands of these worlds. They exist to fulfill the afterlife expectations of every faith from the Protestant to the shamanic.

Location is a Function of Consciousness

This is why I urge you to find the God within you. You can spend many a *manvantara* exploring these endless realms. Please do not misunderstand me - there is nothing wrong with these locations. They are the manifested holograms of various frequencies of consciousness. They are amazing and beautiful worlds, and if this is something you desire to fulfill your beliefs, then they are there for you. However, know that they are temporal, not eternal and eventually you will have to be reborn here.

Habit forms consciousness

The commentary in the Swami Gambhirananda translation also makes the point that what we remember at the moment of death is created by our past habits. Our habitual thoughts form our consciousness, just as a carpet is worn in the places most walked on. As Krishna has said before: Those who worship the gods, go to the gods (VII.23). Whatever you hold to be the highest goal, whatever is a god to you - whether that is transcendent or material - you will move into that state of consciousness.

M.N. Dutt translates this same verse (VIII.6) as:

‘... whichever form of divinity he remembers when he leaves this body ... he goes, having habitually meditated upon him.’
- *The Mahabharata, Bhishma Parva; Ch.32.6*

Go to the Supreme Spirit - Paramam Purusham

With the mind fully reined in, controlled, and meditating on the God-within,

the one who seeks liberation from rebirth goes to the highest, the Supreme (*paramam*) Spirit (*purusham*). This ancient (*puranam*) One is more subtle than the atom (*anos*) and is both Seer and Poet (*kavim*). The Supreme Spirit is the color of the Sun, self effulgent and beyond any darkness (VIII.8-9).

At the time of death, the final hour, keep the mind still. In total devotion exercise the power of Union (*Yoga*) and focus the vital breath (*pranam*) in the head between the eyebrows. Restrain the sense organs which are the gates of the body. With the vital breath in the head, confine the mind (*manas*) in the Heart (*hrdi*). Uttering the sacred syllable *OM*, leave the body and go to the Supreme Goal (VIII.10-13).

Sushumna & Sahasrara

Individual teachings on the practice of leaving the body vary and I will not say much here beyond what Krishna teaches. In my understanding the area 'between the eyebrows' is the pineal gland which secretes the hormones that not only control the physical body, but also the subtle body and states of consciousness. It is useful to gain an understanding of the *Sushumna* nerve which moves up the spinal column and culminates in the *Sahasrara chakra*. Go into your own consciousness and through your inner experiences, find the way.

As an example of variances in teachings, here is a brief quote from the Swami Gambhirananda translation of Madhusudana Sarasvati's commentary, which as you will see is slightly different than other translations:

'... having thus first controlled the vital force, prana, within the lotus of the heart, and then lifting the vital force up along the up-going Sushumna nerve through the successive conquest of the planes according to the process taught by the teacher ... departing through the aperture on the crown of the head ... attains that resplendent supreme (param) Person (purusham).'

Each chakra in the subtle body corresponds to a plane of consciousness. The Myriad Realms are manifestations of these various planes of consciousness; they are holograms of a specific frequency. Because these correlate chakras are in the human body, we all have access to all of these worlds from the highest to the lowest. It is the frequency of our own consciousness that gives us an affinity with these realms. Location is a function of consciousness.

A playful metaphor

One might say that the spinal column is a sort of cosmic elevator shaft and the chakras are the various floors that correlate to the myriad frequencies of consciousness in the Myriad Worlds. Your consciousness determines which floor the elevator doors can open on to in response to your frequency.

I have come to trust the God-within to teach me whatever it is that I need to Know. I have complete faith that my own Self, the Spirit that dwells within my Heart, will be with me guiding my consciousness in my hour of death.

Go ONLY to the Supreme Spirit

I will say again to be aware that Krishna says to go only to the the Supreme Spirit, the God-within, and not to any other entities in any of the Myriad Worlds. Those who worship the gods, go to the gods. Those who worship the God-within go Home. (VII.23).

The Original Yoga

As Expounded in Sivasamhita, Gherandasamita, and Patanjali Yogasutra

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