

Satsang by Swami Amar Jyoti

# Karma and

# Reincarnation

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**H**UMBLE ONES WILL INHERIT THE EARTH. That does not mean it will be written in their names legally, but they are the ones to guide, to show the way. Those who are greedy, who are selfish, will not prevail. Chances are given to see if mankind awakens willingly; if not, then God does His will. And when that happens, whatever happens is for our good. The angels and higher beings are waiting for us to awaken into higher consciousness. Just as we are linked with the animal kingdom to a certain extent, we are linked with the angels and higher beings, only it is not so conscious. As our connection with nature—animals, birds, trees—is increasing, in the same way our connection with the higher realms needs to expand.



If we play our part more consciously in this creation that the angels and higher beings have sown, things will be better. We squeeze and narrow our consciousness too much; that is the problem. We do not allow expansion to take place. This resistance, which is *tamas*, inertia, closes and suppresses our consciousness into narrow-mindedness, which makes us more unconscious and basically ignorant. The reality is, as if, nonexistent for us, simply because of our narrowed consciousness. The mind wants to do its own things. You call it freedom. It resents rules and discipline but if the same “freedom” were given the mind, what would be the difference between the spiritual path and the mundane?

According to yogic science, when the ego was created it formed the mind, and the mind formed the body and the senses or perceptions of the gross world. All of this involved action or karma. The power of motion in any action, since it has a beginning and an end, stops somewhere and then it begins to rebound. Whatever is in motion eventually exhausts and then begins to recoil in a circular motion, creating a reaction, the *effect* of the cause. Each action, each karma, has its own duration of producing the result. Until the time comes for the effect of the action to be realized, karmas are stored in a portion of our mind called the subconscious—*sub* meaning “under.” There is a slight difference between the subconscious and the unconscious mind; mostly they are the same. The unconscious mind is that part of our consciousness and expanse in creation that is unknown to us, our basic ignorance. The subconscious mind is also mostly unknown to us, but that is where all our vibrations and impressions are stored. The subconscious mind has a storage capacity that includes everything from the creation of each soul up to the present moment and into the future. It goes on storing each action-reaction whether it happens in dreaming or waking condition. It is the greatest computer chip ever created with the capacity to record trillions of bits of data.

At the point that a reaction from an action is set in motion, that particular karma emerges out of the subconscious with its own force and motion. It emerges at the exact time and the place because all karmas—action-reaction—are dependent upon time and space. If you have gone beyond time and space, you are free of karma. The circular motion of karma is such that it will meet or converge whether we are conscious of it or not. The science of knowing the past, present and the future,

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including reincarnation, is a part of Raja Yoga and is known to yogis who successfully concentrate on the subconscious mind in meditation. And no wonder then that they can guide, they can show, they can *see*.

This recording in the subconscious of everyone is sometimes called the *akashic* record. It is known by going deeper into this knowledge, which is mostly unknown to us today. Some yogis and mystics have this wisdom but it is not as common as it was in previous ages when mankind was more evolved spiritually. It is hard when rationality demands proof, because rationality has its own limited level of understanding. There are things under it and over it that have to be seen or realized on their own levels, but rationality demands proof on its own terms. This is a fallacy. If everything were to be proven within the terms of rationality, then one would assume that rationality is the highest instrumentation, which certainly it is not. Rationality can ask and reason out; it can try to understand, but it cannot prove matters

beyond its own sphere. The instrumentation of the intellect is limited and incomplete. It can question reincarnation but it cannot prove it; those who want proof have to follow the way. Rationality has its intellectual satisfaction, its own pleasure and pain, but it cannot bring you true wisdom. It cannot take you to God.

To *know* is to relax, to be still, to be humble. To *know* does not require effort, tension or excitement. To *know* is to be quiet, serene, tender, gentle and sweet. It has to be a non-aggressive, non-resistant, non-projecting approach. It is to reside unconditionally, to resign, and then whatever your wishes are, accordingly you will realize and *see*. So if your wish is to dive deep into the ocean of the subconscious, you can know your previous births and future births. You just have to wish to see the past or future and it will come into the spotlight: who you were, who you will be.

Until we pay the price, karmas are stored in the subconscious. It is tiny but it can store billions of

details. This is actually how man got the idea to make a computer. Where else would he get this idea if it were not in him already? The truth is that we cannot express or discover or invent anything unless it is already within us. Some may disagree with this; it needs to be proven. But spirituality does not boast of proving. It says, “I have seen it. Come, I’ll show you if you have faith and patience.”

Spirituality or going within starts with faith. We achieve only up to the point where we have faith. The outlook of rationality, though its pursuit is to seek, does not give you knowledge. The difference between the layman and the yogi or conscious seeker is that the karmas of the seeker are accelerated. He dives deep into his subconscious where he can dissolve karmas in much less time—not only years but lifetimes. Some may think, “Oh, everything is okay with me except maybe one or two things.” I am not being pessimistic but we know how much is stored there once you begin to open



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the subconscious. You are busy hiding it. How much time and energy do you waste in hiding, just to keep it unknown? Once you begin to open your subconscious you will see that the computer disk has billions of bits of data.

The purpose of Raja Yoga is to exhaust lifetimes of karmas in a single birth. Through this science you can know the hierarchy of creation, right from Brahman, the all-pervading, infinite, eternal Lord, throughout the cosmos with all its infinite details. You can know the mystery of birth and death, how when we die the body disintegrates back into the five elements: earth, fire, water, air and ether. You can understand the subtleties of reincarnation, who it is that is thinking, seeing and speaking; the difference between the living and the dead. In yogic science we call it *prana*, the life force. This force or energy is in every living person even when we are sleeping or dreaming. At death the prana is no longer there.

When in meditation you go deep within your subconscious, you will see how the mind, as an astral body, leaves the physical body at death. The astral body of each soul is identical to the previous physical body, only it is vibratory or ethereal. You cannot perceive this by these senses, only by the inner sixth sense, the third eye. You will see how the astral body, for whatever reasons of each one's own karmas, leaves the physical body. It carries its own conscious and subconscious with it. Some are young when they die; some are old. Some die at birth, others live long though having so many diseases. Some go away having no diseases, or very minor things. Some astral bodies hover around the physical body for some time because of attachment, desires and karmas. These intricate permutations of karmas are a vast subject and a unique history for each soul.

We have all heard the saying, "As we think, so we become." The mind creates the physical world. You project your thinking in such a way that you create your physical body correspondingly. According to the Bhagavad Gita, even such things as fire, swords, bullets and diseases that kill the physical body are not capable of killing the astral body, the mind. We are identified with the physical body, so the loss of dear ones grieves us. If you knew the journey of these souls on the astral plane you would not grieve because each continues with their destiny as good as on Earth. That person who is now in the astral world does not view death from our

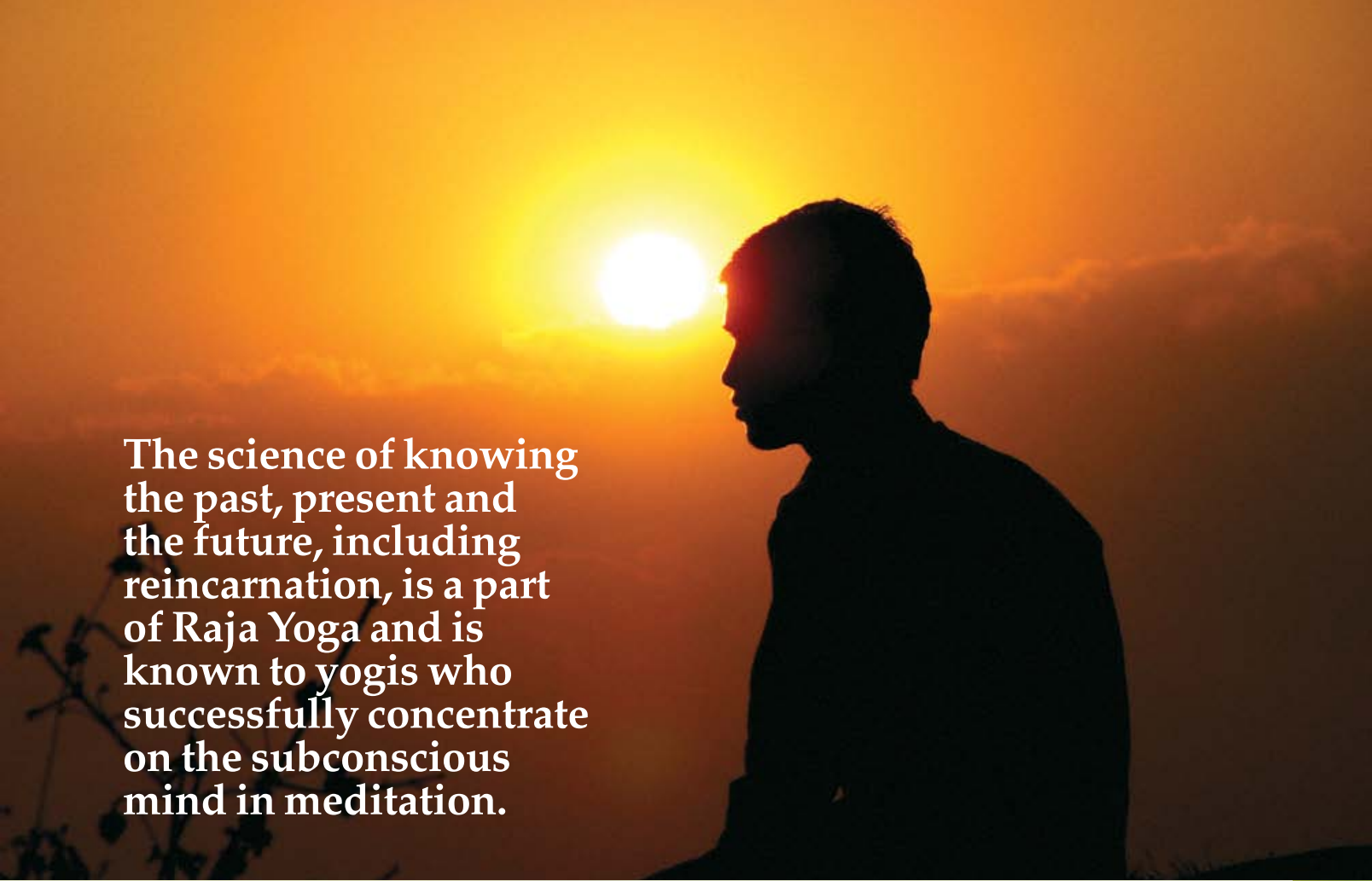
angle; she is simply relieved. This is why sages have advised us not to cling with sadness to someone who has passed away. It will go on arresting her progress or attracting her astral body to remain nearby. Release her and let her be happy.

If you were able to see the previous incarnations and future of each soul you would know that each of us has had many parents, children, husbands and wives. This knowledge of the astral and of reincarnation is liberating, leave aside the ultimate Liberation, which releases us from all the agonies, sins, sorrows, obligations and responsibilities. When your child passes away, for the time being your world has ended, which seems very natural. But if you knew the destiny of that soul, you would have nothing to grieve about. You would know that your child was an adult in a previous birth, the reason why the child died now, and that he or she did not belong to you in every birth. Knowing this will help you become detached.

Our karmas go with us to the astral plane. If, before dying, you knew that you were going to leave this world, you might prearrange your next incarnation. But for the most part we do not have that wisdom. In the Golden Age most of us had it. We lost it, but the potential is still with us in the subconscious. There are only two factors that differ: some in the astral plane are still very instinctive and unconscious; others are quite conscious. When the astral body leaves the physical body, it is released of the identification with that body. The heavy load of pleasure and pain, attachments, losses and gains is released. A few things might remain but most are released. You might have read in books that in the astral plane we often are more conscious and more sensitive. But some souls in the astral plane remain identified with the physical body and continue to hang around. That is what we call spirits or ghosts; such souls are so identified that their consciousness is not being released into the astral plane.

Those who are more conscious determine, according to their unfinished karmas, the circumstances of their next life. Those who are unconscious are primarily thrust into their next life as their karmas direct. When the soul begins the process of rebirth, gradually the bold lines of the astral body begin to melt, as waves on the ocean lose their contours and merge back into the sea. The contours of that form begin to loosen and become smaller and smaller, like a seed containing the whole tree. There are various theories on

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the duration of time that a soul stays in the astral plane; it may be three days or twelve days, but there is no one rule about this, just as on the physical plane no one lives the same amount of years. Some decide right away to take rebirth, and some delay—"Let me think about it." Some hover around for a while until they are pushed by guides, archangels or other astral beings to reincarnate. But nothing happens without your karmas.

There are many, many details on this subject; it could fill volumes. It is a science by itself: the whole astral plane, which the Vedas call *Hiranyagarbha*—"infinite womb." Then when we enter the physical realm, the next birth, we forget so many things. While in the womb we are still connected to the astral somewhat; we retain memories and thoughts. All the stored karmas, memories, thoughts, subconscious and conscious mind are in this seed form, which is astral. Then by the normal course of procreation that seed enters the womb of the mother and begins to grow again. Like a plant or tree, once you put a seed in the earth it begins to sprout and germinate, taking on the conditions around it: the air, soil, water and minerals. In the same way the surroundings of the family, the karmas of the parents, the country, the culture,

the religious background and other factors begin to influence the soul.

According to Vedic tradition it is very important where you are born. Therefore yogis and mystics aspire to leave the body consciously so they can be reborn in a family where they will have auspicious influences for spiritual growth. In India's epic, *Mahabharata*, the grandsire Bhishma was lying for days on a bed of arrows. He was a great warrior who had fallen in battle during the eighteen days' war but he had the yogic power to choose his time of death. He was waiting for a particular astrological conjunction to consciously leave his body, so that his next birth would be auspicious to help him toward Emancipation. Most souls die unconsciously and are reborn to parents according to where their karmas lead. But those who consciously leave the body have conquered the astral plane. They die conscious of their destiny.

If you knew the phenomena of life and death intricately you would not grieve even if someone very dear to you dies. This wisdom liberates you. We are talking about one birth but this happens on and on. Each life we gather some experiences, just as in school we learn new things in one grade, then the next year



we go to the next grade. On and on we take rebirth; we live eighty years, sixty years, forty years, or whatever. We learn some things and we think, "I have understood a lot." Then we die and we do not know where we are going. We do not even remember where we have been. And then we come back. Our circumstances change, just as when we move from one house to another. A few things may be better; we settle down, we look forward to a perfect house. In this way, billions of astral minds project their next lodging into the perfect "home." Our level of understanding determines where we settle, our relationships, our surroundings. Then we begin to grow in that family and many odds and evens come up: some things we like, some we don't.

But because we do not remember our previous births we do not grieve—"Had I known this I would have chosen a better family."

Destinies go on changing. Sometimes there are extreme opposites from one birth to the next. A person may be beautiful in one life and suffer a lot because of that, and then may choose to be ugly in the next birth. We do not normally choose to be a dog or an elephant, but some souls do go back to the animal kingdom to finish a karma that can be finished more easily in the body of an animal or a bird, though this is very uncommon.

If you were to evolve by the natural course of karma and reincarnation to reach Enlightenment, it would take millions of years. Therefore the yoga path and various spiritual paths and practices have been given by prophets, gurus, guides and angels to hasten the exhaustion of your karmas. Gradually you come out of it without having to wait for the natural course of your karmas to exhaust, to come to that high, golden shore of consciousness.

Life is a school and each lifetime is a class that allows us opportunities to learn our lessons and grow. To you this life is so real, so established, but most of the time you do not know what you are doing. So when a Prophet or Master or angel comes to help us, we should listen to them. In each birth we finish certain karmas and incur others; that is the problem. Like in a business where you have some deficit and some surplus, it is the same with our karmas. We pay back

karmas and we incur karmas. The goal is to balance our account. So sincere seekers or disciples should aspire to finish karmas and not incur new ones. New karmas are incurred by new desires. Even when you have paid back some karmas, the motion of previous ones may continue, but now the master or guru guides you how to finish those. This requires a true disciple. Those who go where the mob goes, picking out whatever they like—shopping around, freelance, experimenting—go on incurring karmas. To reach Liberation or Emancipation, regardless of the tradition or path, requires focusing on one goal or one mantra or one object of devotion. This will finish your karmas gradually.

**All karmas can be finished in one birth, in one year, in one moment, provided you are sincere and honest to finish them.**

There are two ways to exhaust a karma: renounce it if you can, but if you cannot, even though you have tried your best, honestly and sincerely, then indulge in the karma. That is okay, just to finish it; that should be the motive. The Vedas have given a beautiful and practical example: if you close up a room so that it is completely dark and then bring a light after a thousand years, how long will it take for the darkness to vanish? Just the twinkling of an eye. In the same way all karmas can be finished in one birth, in one year, in one moment, provided you are sincere and honest

to finish them. It does not take time. This is why we advise practices such as meditation, yoga, charity, selfless works, study of the scriptures, truthfulness and harmlessness—simply to accelerate and exhaust your karmas. 🌸

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