

Journey of the Soul

The Great Journey, Lesson 7

Elizabeth Carman, Ph.D.



Just as a caterpillar coming to end of a blade of grass takes hold of another object before it releases its grip, so also our soul visualizes the body to come before it leaves the present body.

When the soul enters the body, it is birth.

When the soul exits the body, it is death.

Life flows on ceaselessly. Death is only a phase of life, the mystery behind how we arrive at our birth. Death is the hidden connection between one life and the next.

It is incorrect to think we are the body and possess a soul. We are the soul temporarily covered by a body. The soul is important, not the body. This problem is many people give undue importance to the body which they will be exchanging for another one within a few years.

Just as we throw a worn-out, useless coat away and buy a new one, we separate from our present body and accept another body. That is death. The body which we previously occupied becomes unimportant and body we now occupy becomes important.

Life is a river flowing back to the Infinite Ocean

Our life is like a river. The image of a river representing our soul's journey that leads us back to God is a familiar archetype, found in ancient cultures, religions and NDEs. On the river, we are always moving forward from a source and toward an end.

In this way, the journey of our soul is analogous to the water cycle. We are each like a raindrop, which fell from a cloud and entered into a river for our journey back from where we came from - an infinite ocean of consciousness.

In the same way that a drop of water is a part of the ocean and contains within itself the nature of the ocean so, too, our soul is a part of God containing within it the Whole of God itself. By becoming a droplet in the water cycle, we experience adventures, which teach us to more about ourselves and the infinite ocean.

We chose our river and its destiny before birth. It is as if our soul stood on top of a mountain overlooking a vast system of rivers and we chose which river to journey on. From the mountain top, we see all the rivers from beginning to end. We see that each river has a number of forks and branches to choose from. And some rivers are challenging whereas others are less challenging. Some rivers are dangerous and can lead to disaster.



Our river of life starts out as a small creek and grows into a large river with rapids, forks, tributaries, rocks, and floods. There are many decisions to make while traveling the river.

Many choices are not predetermined. How we navigate our journey is determined by daily choices.

- We can cruise down the middle of the river at top speed.
- We can hug the shoreline and spin around in eddies. But if we remain on shore, we make little progress and never reach goal.
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- We can slum along river bottom in the muck and slime of sediment or crash over rapids and then blame God for our suffering.
- We can stop at a variety of destinations along the shore.
- We can submit to the mercy of the river and the course it takes.
- We can relax and go with the flow and row our boats gently down the stream.
- We can chart a safe path between obstacles and glide along sparkling surface where air is clean.

How we chose to flow down river is our decision. Whatever challenges arise along the way, we must learn to view them as opportunities for growth and face them head on. Each challenge measures the strength and progress of our soul. If we encounter pain or sorrow and can learn patience, tolerance and love, we reach our destination and become co-navigators with God. Wisdom means knowing the best course of action to take as we travel down river.

No matter which river we choose before birth, the destination is set; the river inevitably carries us back to the infinite ocean, our Source. Each soul is predestined to return to God.



BIRTH AND DEATH by Swami Sivananda

Birth and death are two illusory scenes In the drama of this world:
Really no one is born, no one dies, No one comes, no one goes. It is Maya's
jugglery, It is play of the mind; Brahman alone exists. There is birth for the
body alone, Five elements combine to form the body; The Atman is birthless
and deathless; Death is casting off the physical sheath. It is like deep sleep;

Birth is like waking from sleep; Be not afraid of death, O Ram! Life is
continuous. The flower may fade but the fragrance floats; The body may
disintegrate, But the immortal fragrance of the soul Always will remain. Learn
to discriminate The Real from the unreal; Think always of the Infinite That is
birthless and deathless. Transcend Maya and Moha, Go beyond three Gunas,
Give up attachment for the body. Free yourself from birth and death And
merge in the Immortal Essence.

Assignments for Lesson 7

Reading Assignments

1. *Cosmic Cradle* by
Elizabeth & Neil Carman, Ph.D.:

a) Review Second
Principle of Cosmic Cradle
Paradigm, pp. 11- 15.

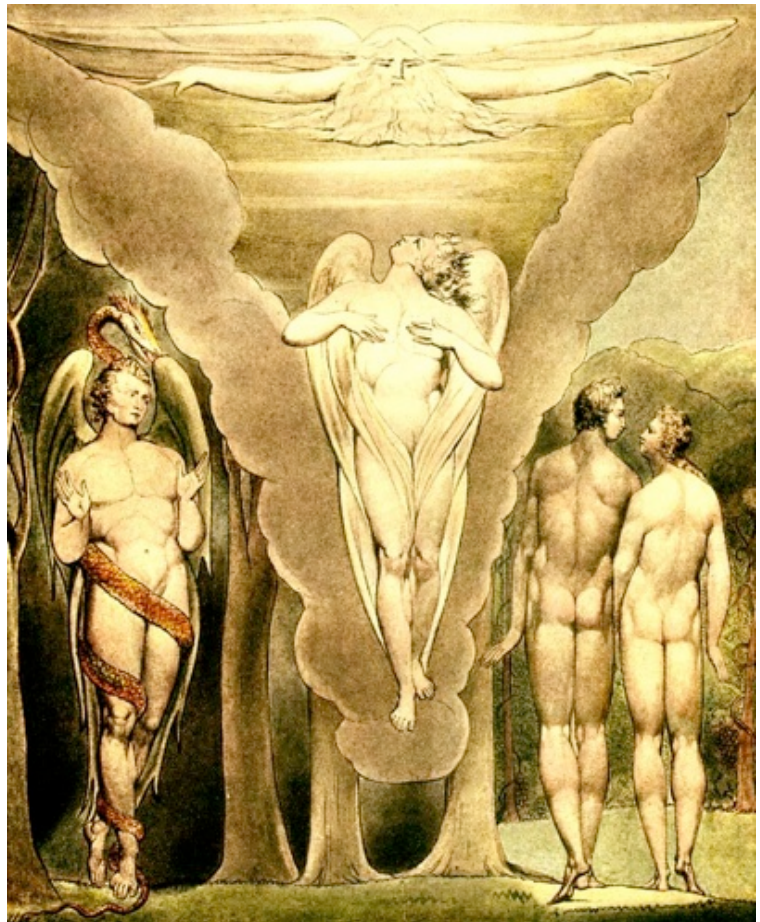
b) "I Saw all my
Costumes," p. 640 -649

c) Chapter 17, "Circle of
Life - Buddhist and Yogic
Inter-Life Realms,"
pp. 307 - 321.

d) Chapter 18, "Soul's
Orbit: Western
Perspectives on
Inter-Life Realms,"
pp. 323 - 339

e) Chapter 19,
"Indigenous Journeys,"
pp. 341 - 351.

f) Review *Cosmic Cradle*,
pp. 431 - 432.



2. *From Death to Birth* by Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, Ph.D.

pp. 73 -76 (dog who wanted justice)
Chapter 7, Return of the Soul, pp. 147 -167

3. Chapter 6, Lokas or Planes, p. 84 - 124 in
What Becomes of the Soul After Death by Swami Sivananda.

Writing Assignment Week 7

1. In this week's readings from *Cosmic Cradle* and Swami Sivananda's pdf, what parallels can you find between the description of the Journey between Death and Rebirth and the teachings of:

- a) Rudolph Steiner
- b) Edgar Cayce,
- c) Madame Blavatsky
- d) Zen Buddhism
- e) Swami Sivananda (*What Becomes of the Soul After Death*)



2. Cite 3 points that were particularly meaningful to you from each of the following accounts in *From Death to Birth* by Pandit Rajmani Tigunait:

- a) pp. 73 -76: story about dog who wanted justice
- b) Chapter 7: Vyasa and Caterpillar from *Skanda Purana*
- c) Chapter 7: King Bharata