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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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Spotlight -Svarga

By Swamini Brahmajnananda

We generally translate 'svarga' as heaven in English. But they are not the same. 'Svarga' in Hinduism is a **temporary realm of experience** beyond our physical world. The Karma *Kānda* section of the Veda reveals that if we perform karma aligned with Dharma with mantras, rituals and meditations, we will attain *svarga*, presided over by Indra *Bhagavān*. Due to the fructification of excessive *puṇya*, the *jīva* is bestowed with a celestial youthful body and can enjoy the comforts and pleasures of this special place without ageing. But the *jīva* cannot earn fresh karma. Sounds attractive? Wait until you hear more.

Spotlight on word



and meaning for clarity

Is 'svarga' eternal? For how long can the *jīva* remain in *svarga*? *Bhagavad Gītā* teaches us,

ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
एव त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥१९.२१॥

*te taṁ bhuktvā svargalokaṁ viśālaṁ kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokaṁ viśanti
evaṁ taryīdharmam anuprapannāḥ gatāgataṁ kāmakāmā labhante ॥१९.२१॥*

These people having enjoyed that vast *svarga*, enter the world of mortals when their *puṇya* is exhausted. In this manner, following the rituals in the three Vedas, those who are desirous of various ends, gain **the condition of (repeated) going and coming**, *saṁsāra*.

Then, the *jīva* is reborn either on earth or on some other plane depending on which unique combination of *puṇya-pāpa*, fructify. Even if one goes to *svarga*, it is not permanent. The happily-ever-after ending eludes us even in *svarga*. The sense of separation and hence loneliness that plagued the *jīva* on earth is likely to continue

in *svarga* although it might be numbed due to celestial entertainment. Since *svarga* is temporary and the *jīva* is still plagued with *avidyā*, a human life is considered a **great blessing** because *Mokṣa*, freedom while living is possible only in this realm after which there is no more rebirth.

Levels of manifestation and evolution

Satya loka
Tapo loka
Jana loka
Maha loka
Svarga loka
Bhuvah loka

Bhū loka (We are here)

Atala
Vitala
Sutala
Talātala
Mahātala
Rasātala
Pātāla

The *Śāstra* mentions **14 different loka-**s (realms with gradation in the level of evolution of the medium and the experiences that one has). Needless to say, all the *loka-s* above *bhūh*, (our world) are more evolved with different dimensions and experiences and blessings of powers for the denizens. The *loka-s* below *bhu loka* are at lower levels of evolution and indicate a baser temperament given to adharma. One attains a *loka* depending on the *puṇya-pāpa* that fructifies for the *jīva*. One cannot travel on one's own like one does to different places. Satya *loka* is where **Brahma ji lives and teaches *Brahmavidyā***. Are you willing to do all the *puṇya* karma and meditations required to get to Satya *loka* or would you

rather get *Brahmavidyā* here and now?

Like *svarga*, *naraka* is not hell. It is a temporary place where one pays the price for doing *adhārmika* actions. Going through suffering makes one **aware of the consequences** of one's actions and hence more responsible. Here one exhausts one's *pāpa* by suffering. Both *svarga* and *naraka* are temporary.

In Christianity or even Islam there are descriptions of heaven and Jannat. In both religions, heaven is the Kingdom of God which is eternal and only believers are allowed in, which is vastly different from *svarga*.