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Understanding Who We are...

KK AGGARWAL

The classical description of 'who we are' comes from Adi Shankaracharya's Bhaja Govindam, where he says that even the wife refuses to touch the same physical body after death, and if she touches it, a ritual bath has to be taken. This means physical body is not what we are.

If we weigh physical body before and after death there will be no difference. The life force, also called consciousness or atman, has no weight, shape or dimensions.

In Bhagavad Gita, in Chapter 2, Krishna describes its characteristics as "fire cannot burn it, air cannot dry it, weapons cannot cut it and water cannot wet it. It is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient."

Though modern medicine may not talk about soul but it does differentiate life and death based on certain parameters.

Vedic description describes five different movement forces in the body: Apana vayu expulses urine, stool, baby and menses; Samana vayu controls the intestinal movements; Vyana vayu controls the circulatory system; Udana vayu controls the neurological impulses and the connection between soul and spirit and Prana vayu controls the brain stem reflexes.

Soul or consciousness is linked to udana vayu and prana vayu. The best description of these five forces apart from Ayurveda text comes from Prasannopanishad.

A patient with brainstem death can be kept on ventilator for months together, as the body has normal vyana vayu, samana vayu and apana vayu. The patient will therefore, maintain blood pressure, gastrointestinal (GI) functions, urinary functions and reproductive functions. These three vayus are controlled by the atmospheric oxygen and not by the life force.

Can anyone remember the weight, height, abdominal circumference or size of collar, waist or shoes of Lord Krishna? He is only known from his actions and the soul profile.

Group Editor-in-Chief, IJCP Group

All of us have physical, mental, intellectual, ego and soul characteristics. Soul characteristics are same in all and are positive. The examples are love, compassion, care, humility, etc. These soul characteristics are influenced by the subtle mind, intellect and ego characteristics.

While introducing ourselves, most of the times we talk about our intellectual or ego profile and not the soul profile. When we describe our status, house, car or money, we are describing our ego profile and not the soul profile. Our aim in life should be to understand our soul profile, as without the soul, nobody will come near us. The very same people will dispose of our body at the earliest opportunity they get.

Most of us correlate life span with the life span of the physical body, which has to perish sooner or later. When we ask people how long they want to live, their usual answers are 60 years, 70 years, 80 years or 90 years. Nobody thinks beyond physical death. People like Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa are not dead. Though their physical body does not exist, their good karmas, work, memories and the soul profiles are still alive.

The purpose of life should be to create an atmosphere or an aura in such a way that the society remembers us after the death of our physical body. This is only possible when we shift our thinking from the ego profile to the soul profile.

Soul is nothing but an energized field of information and can be equated to the live information fed in any computer or mobile phone. Both computer and mobile phones with and without information weigh the same. Similarly, weight of radio does not change whether the radio is on or off. The live data information in the TV, radio or mobile phone can be termed as their soul. A computer without this soul is useless, so are the mobile and radio sets.

The information is always static and still without any movements. This information in a computer requires a software to run. The static soul in our body also requires a software called life force.

Soul, thus, can be described as a combination of the life force and the static information. In Hindu mythology, this is called Shiva and Shakti. Some people describe

them as prana and chitta. In Vedic philosophy, by controlling prana, one can control chitta and vice versa.

For a computer to operate, two softwares are required: operational software and application software. Operational software makes the computer do basic work and application software helps one to manipulate the data the way one wants.

All of us are born with the operational software or the life force. We develop and create our own application software over a period of time by using the triad of action, memory and desires.

To understand oneself, therefore, one needs to control our own application software and do not let it go beyond its desired scope of work.

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Bacteria in Parts of the Body may be Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

A clear difference has been found in the bacterial signature between individuals with diabetes and those without.

The greatest amount of bacteria was reported in the liver and fatty material connecting the stomach and the colon. It is suspected that the bacteria found in the tissue of people with diabetes came from their intestines… (*Medical News Today*)

Brain Cell that Triggers Tremor Discovered while Working with Experimental Models

The researchers have discovered that Purkinje cell, a type of brain cell, triggers tremor when its pattern of signaling to other neurons changes from a regular pattern to signaling in bursts.

The findings of this study published in the journal *eLife* showed that the tremor stopped when the experimental models were treated with deep-brain stimulation directed at a group of cerebellar neurons that communicate with Purkinje cells.

Lack of Walking, a Major Contributor to Premature Death in Osteoarthritis Patients

Researchers have revealed that people with osteoarthritis are at 11% greater risk of premature death compared to their healthy counterparts. A major contributing factor to this is lack of regular walking.

Other underlying factors that were identified were unrefreshed sleep and depression and anxiety.

However, the difference was too small to be clinically relevant. Thus, it is suggested that clinicians should prioritize keeping people with osteoarthritis active to lower their risk of death… (*Medical News Today*)

Multi-tissue Model Developed to Study the Relationships Between Different Organs and the Immune System

A multi-tissue model has been created by biological engineers to study the relationships between different organs and the immune system on a microfluidic chip seeded with human cells.

Using this "organs-on-a-chip", also known as "physiome-on-a-chip" model, the role of immune cells in ulcerative colitis and other inflammatory diseases could be explored, suggests a study published in the journal *Cell Systems*.

High-pitched Sounds can be Reduced, Propose Physicists

Materials made up of tapered chains of spherical beads could help in dampening sounds that lie at the upper range of human hearing or just beyond it.

The best set-up found by the theoretical physicists consisted of tapered chains of beads made from a metal called tungsten carbide, alternating with tapered chains of beads made from a plastic called Delrin. The material is yet to be tested in the laboratory… (*Science Daily*)