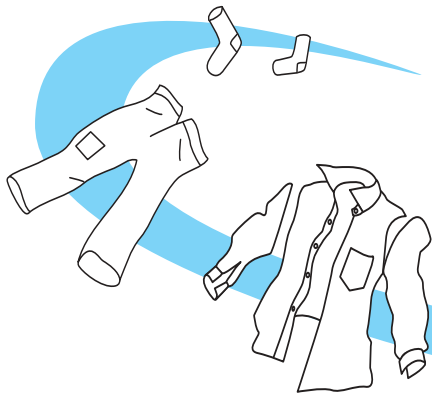


Death: an end or a beginning – insights from sacred texts



Worn out garments are shed by the body,
Worn out bodies are shed by the dweller,
Within the body new bodies are donned by the dweller,
like garments.

Bhagavad Gita 2.22 –
words spoken at Hindu funeral services

A vision of the spiritual world beyond death

Where people of goodwill and good deeds rejoice, their
bodies now made free from all disease, their limbs made
whole from lameness or defect. In that heaven may we
behold our parents and our sons!

Atharva Veda 6.120.3



As a caterpillar, having reached the end of a blade of grass,
takes hold of another blade and draws itself to it, so the
Self, having left behind a body unconscious, takes hold of
another body and draws it to himself.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.34f

As a goldsmith, taking an old gold ornament, moulds it into another,
newer and more beautiful, so the Self, having given up the body and
left it unconscious, takes on a new and better form, either that of
the Fathers, or that of the Celestial Singers, or that of the gods, or
that of other beings, heavenly and earthly.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.34f



Activities for pupils

The 'pictures' painted in the texts above illustrate what Hindus believe about life, death and beyond.

- **With a partner**, talk about what you think each means. You could record your ideas as a series of spray diagrams.
- What would you compare death to? **On your own**, draw your own image or write your own description. 'For me death is like...'