



Punar Janma – Are we the Phone or the SIM Card?

I was very proud of myself! My owner was carrying me and showing me off wherever he went. My two mega-pixel camera, my 8GB memory, my high fidelity built in MP3 player, my 3G Internet connectivity and wow, my wonderful Android interface... I can go on and on! I was simply unparalleled! Yes, I was the new Samsung phone that my owner bought and was the “show and tell” piece for the week for my owner!

Of course, as a cell phone, I am also being used by my owner to talk to his friends and relatives... he talks to his wife, son, mom and dad... by now I have gotten used to their voices as well. But, I am known more for my **add-on features** that I described above, not just a “**mere phone**” that all the older low-tech “**mere cell phones**” that are just used for talking!

One day I woke up and found that I don't have the camera, the MP3 player or any of the high flying features. But my owner was still using me “just for talking” to his wife, son, mom and dad. Those connections remained the same, but I felt miserable that I am no longer the sexy phone that I was with all the high-tech gizmos! I came down to earth with a thud, realizing I was a “**mere phone**”, a SIM Card used for communication and all the other “features” were really extraneous to my nature.

Our situation is not very different from what was described above! We identify “ourselves” with the phone that houses the SIM Card rather than the SIM card itself! The camera, the MP3 player and all the other paraphernalia that we proudly claim we are extraneous to us. The mega pixels of the camera and the fidelity of the MP3 player that we brag about is like our fair skin, riches and pretty spouse that we take pride in real life. We seldom stop to think about the vital function that the SIM Card – the Atman -- serves to communicate with others! Would the owner of the cell phone carry it around if it merely provided a camera and MP3 player if it could not be used as a phone?

The “**True Me**” is the SIM Card that is within the phone. It is not the instrument itself! The SIM Card is the Atman, while the instrument is just the body which carries the Atman. Just like the Atman itself, the SIM Card is “**sookshma swarupam**”, i.e., miniscule in size and not directly visible externally. Again, just like the Atman, the characteristics of the SIM Card do not change with the instrument you use it in. Your “number” or true identification is associated with the SIM Card and not with the instrument. Put another way, the number does not change if you change the instrument but changes when you change the SIM Card. So also, the true traits of an Atman remain invariant over several births.

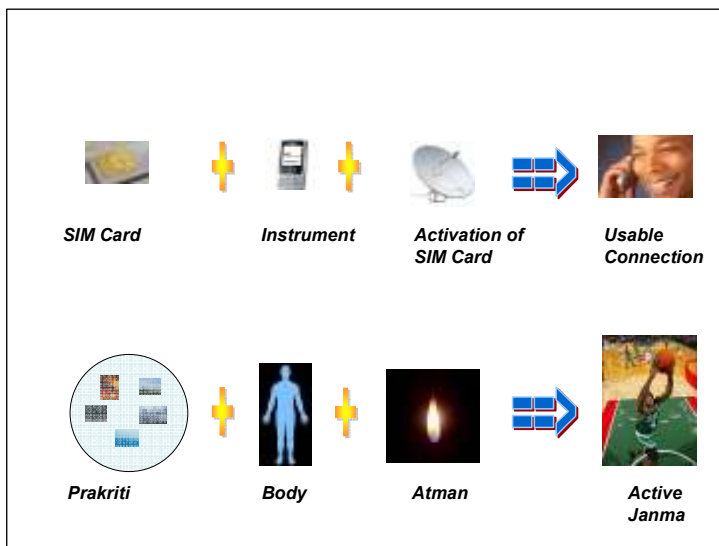
The billing for your phone number does not change with the change of your instrument. In fact, the service provider does not even care or know that you have changed your instrument! All the accounting for your phone number is merely based on your SIM Card. So also, all the **paapa** and **punya** “you” do is accounted to your Atman and not to your body. Even when you have a rebirth, transform from one body to another, your paapa and punya get carried forward. Can you go and tell your service provider that “I have changed my instrument; can you reset my dues to zero and start all over again”? Obviously not! The service provider will carry forward your billing regardless of your instrument. So also, God carries forward your paapa and punya across **janmas** or different physical manifestations.

What is visible to us and what we perceive and what we identify ourselves with is the instrument, the body, the **sthoola swarupam**. Our kith and kin, our riches, our beauty, our youth, our children, our spouse.... All these are what we identify ourselves with. Little do we realize that all these can be taken away from “The True Self”, the Atman in a jiffy, just as the owner can change the instrument any time.



The Atman and **Punar Janma** concept will become even more clear if we observe the dynamics of how the SIM Card “comes to life”. Initially the SIM Card is made up from silicon and other raw materials. This is the **Prakriti** that makes up the matter. Prakriti or nature is the raw material for the entire Universe.

But the Prakriti alone is not sufficient. It cannot be used; it cannot be brought to life unless there is a physical frame wherein it can be housed. The physical frame is decided based on our Karma – our past paapa and punya. A vegetable vendor would go for a simple cell phone while a rich businessman would go for a sophisticated PDA! Similarly, you may be born in a poor family or a rich family, you may be pretty or ugly, you may have a happy life or a sad life – all depending on your past **karma**. Once God decides whether your Atman should be housed in a PDA or a no-frills cell phone, he then activates the SIM Card. Here God plays the role of the service provider and provides the activation or the **Mukya Prana**. The combination of Prakriti (raw materials that makes up the SIM Card), the sthoola sarira (the body, the physical instrument) and the Atman (the activated connection) is what brings life into an otherwise static and ineffective mixture.



If we realize that the “True I” is the silent and almost same-looking SIM Card inside and if we realize that the features of the instrument we are housed in do not affect us and if we realize the vital importance of Mukya Prana to activate us, we have taken our baby steps towards Self Realization and eventually God Realization!

We Are SIM Cards Not The Phones!

- The Atman is the SIM Card, not the Instrument which houses the SIM Card
- The SIM Card can be moved across instruments, but the number does not change
- God does accounting for your number just like the service provider does accounting by your SIM Card – the Atman.
- Just like we should remember that the primary purpose of a cell phone is to communicate, we should not forget the primary purpose of our Atman.
- Just like for useful communication, you require a fusion of raw materials, a housing body and activation, you need Prakriti, Body and Atman for activation.