

Karma - Conditioned Theory of Rebirth and Transmigration of Soul

Robin Ghosh

Abstract: *Before we go into the details of Karma conditioned rebirth we should first of all know what rebirth is. According to Buddhist literature rebirth is determined by Karma with good realms favoured by Kushal Karma (good or skillful Karma) while a rebirth in evil realms is a consequence of a Kusal Karma (bad or unskillful Karma). It is an opportunity to seek spiritual liberation through ethical living and a variety of meditative, yogic (marga), or other spiritual practices. It is the belief that after death, an individual's consciousness is reborn into a new form of existence. According to the major Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism) also teach that there is something about you that survives the death of your body, it does not leave this world, instead it finds another body to go live in.*

Keywords: Karma, Rebirth, Transmigration of soul, Life Divine by Aurobindo, Law of cause and Effect

1. Research Methods

The research methods and its findings are based fully on the author's Research work on "Karma and Rebirth" in Indian Philosophy for which he was awarded Ph. D in the year 1972 (Patna University) some 52 years ago and now the authors age is 83+. The author has given his heart and soul to make the research a success.

Period of rebirth in Hinduism

It depends entirely upon your own jiva's Karma. Some take birth shortly, some may not take rebirth until the next cycle.

Law of Rebirth

The law of rebirth governs all existence in creation. The Bhagwat Gita teaches the important truth that every human being has a choice to get freed from this cycle of rebirth (7/2/21)

Where do we go?

The soul ascends to heaven

Life is a mystery

We know that life itself is a mystery, death is a second mystery than a life after death is to be characterized as a third mystery. So, we are roaming in the world of mysteries trying to find one solution or another in our walks of life. Sri Aurobindo has summed up the ideas very beautifully in chapter XX entitled 'The Philosophy of Rebirth' outlined in his immortal book Life Divine. According to him - "Birth is the first spiritual mystery of the physical universe, death is the second which gives the double point of perplexity to the mystery of birth, for birth which would otherwise be a self evident fact of existence, becomes itself a mystery by virtue of these two which seems to be its beginning and its end and in a thousand ways betray themselves as neither of these things, but rather intermediate stages in an occult process of life. At first sight birth might seem to be a constant outburst of life in a general death, a persistent circumstance in the universal lifelessness of Matter. On a closer examination it begins to be more probable that life is something involved in Matter or even an inherent power of the Energy that craves matter but also be able to appear only when it gets the necessary conditions for the affirmation of its characteristic phenomena and for an appropriate self-organization, but in

the birth of life there is something more that participates in the emergence, there is an element which is no longer material, a strong up surging of some flame of soul, a first evident variation of the spirit.

All the known circumstances and results of birth presuppose an unknown before and there is a suggestion of universality, a will of persistence of life, an inconclusiveness of death, which seems to point to an unknown hereafter" 1.

Aurobindo too has admitted that man has not yet found the final solution of the mystery of birth and death. As he says, "what were we before birth, and what are we after death are the questions, the answer of the one dependent upon that of the other which the intellect of man has put to itself from the beginning without even now resting in any final solution".2 So, here we find that life is full of many puzzling and mysterious facts that one may go on putting questions one after another, but the mystery will remain unsolved. What is there beyond death is almost impossible for a living man to prove on empirical basis. We can simply make conjectures on the basis of some observed facts but we shall never be able to prove them.

The doctrine of Karma conditioned rebirth is also an attempt of our country to solve why men are born with different tendencies and different aptitudes even in the same family. If we believe that the life stream is single and limited to the present birth only then man will lose confidence in the moral force and law of justice pervading the universe. Life stream is flowing in innumerable currents and cross currents and each current is undergoing expansion and contraction being fed by the actions of a living being. When a particular current contracts, its gross cover falls off and when it again expands it does so with the help of a fresh cover. It is also a psychological fact that habits and complexes formed in early life continue to influence the whole of later life. In the same life if the thoughts and habits remain active despite the intervention of such a length of time and moulds the next life then advancing the same principle a bit beyond it can be said that the actions of one life takes its shape in the next life.

Materialistic View

The materialistic science which believes that death is complete extension of life cannot be accepted in the light of

the argument than life is not merely a conglomeration of consciousness and matter. It is something higher than the physical forces and chemical actions which determines life. It has certain spiritual forces within which it dominates. The guiding principle of conscious life is the soul and because of the non destructibility of the soul, we have to believe in the transmigration theory, the soul transmigrates from one body to another.

The soul, as E Palmsterna says, can be compared to the shell of the clock. According to him - "Cannot man understand that what makes the body function is the spirit, which naturally, the physical eye cannot see, but which without the flesh possesses infinitely stronger everything of value, that is love and beauty in the true sense, music, passion etc. All these are independent of the body and as on earth you enter flesh, they use flesh or rather the organ as medium. None of you feel love, enjoy music, poetry etc with the body but having a body so gloriously calculated for enabling the spirit to demonstrate all heavenly sensations, it becomes impossible for souls to understand that in reality the flesh is the barrier for complete advance. The spirit never tires as it is eternal, but the body tires. It is perishable and tires of things connected solely with the body. The spirit never sleeps.³

Swami Abhedananda in his book ('Life beyond Death') has explained very explicitly, that death is not the end of life. In his words "Death does not mean annihilation of anything, or destruction, on reduction into nothingness of anything but it means disintegration. It means that the instrument which has served its purpose must be thrown away, yet another instrument must be rebuilt, out of the same material, perhaps. Who can tell that the atoms and molecules which make up the body of Cleopatra thousands of years ago, are not used in the bodies of living beings today? The same atoms and molecules that are buried in the dead bodies, have been dissolved and taken up in the vegetable life, have reappeared in the form of plants or cereals, and we may be eating them and taking them in again, and they are forming parts of our own body. So, it is revolution - Nothing is destroyed. The atom and molecules go into one body, get out and enter into another body and in this continuous process, of evolution and involution, the living soul is the master".⁴

Eustace Miles, a believer in the theory of rebirth, in his book 'Life after Life' says that it explains much that science has not explained. "Though it is unproved" says Miles, "still it explains phenomena which science leaves unexplained. It satisfies the cravings which science does not satisfy the craving to know how the world can possibly be explained as a just and fair arrangement. According to reincarnation or the theory of life after life, since each life results from previous lives and actions, and is full of opportunities all creations (or evolutions) have eventually an equal chance. In every creation is latent the possibility of a higher revolution.⁵

Death on the supposition of immortality is in fact a change of form and nothing more. It implies a change for a new life. Death has no such power to see voice of justice as mute. No man can escape the just consequence of his own voluntary actions even by death. Thus we find that if we believe in

rebirth, then death assumes a new meaning for us. It no longer stands as a symbol of total annihilation, producing a living, glowing and palpitating life to unthinkable blankness, on the other hand it is just a gate to a new existence vibrating with new hopes and aspirations. In this way a belief in rebirth may exercise a soothing influence on the life and mind of man by removing the fear of a life negating death.

Expert opinion on Rebirth Walker

Walker in his work on Reincarnation says - "The Hindu conception of Reincarnation embraces all existence - gods, men, animals, plants, minerals. It is believed that everything migrates, from Buddha down to inert matter. As we know that Buddha himself tells us that he was born an ascetic eighty three times, as the soul of a tree forty three times, and many other times as ape, deer, lion, snipe, chicken, eagle, servant, pig, frog, etc mounting to four hundred times in all. A Christian authority represents. Buddha as saying "The number of births and deaths can only be compared to those of all the plants on the universe". Birth is the gate which opens into every state, and merit determines into which it shall open.

"Many of the orthodox church Fathers welcomed Reincarnation as a ready explanation of the fall of man and the mystery of life, and distinctly preached it as the only means of reconciling the existence of suffering with a merciful God. It was an essential part of the Church philosophy for many centuries in the rank and file of Christian thought, being stamped with the authority of he leading thinkers of Christendom, and then gradually was formed upon as the western influence predominated, until it became hereby, and at length survived only in a few scattered sects." ⁶

Among the other experts such as Professor Francis Bowen, W. Intos Lavski have all accepted the theory of reincarnation.

2. Introduction

The theory of Karma conditioned theory of rebirth is not merely a theory of birth and death. It is, in fact, the basic note of the moral philosophy of India that has given a forceful and dynamic guidance to the religio-cultural life of the vast country. The belief in rebirth and Karma, however, was not a readymade one that has suddenly dropped down from heaven in the cultural life of India, but like all other moral and religious beliefs, this belief also had germinated in the early phase of Indian cultural life and has gradually drawn its nourishment, through ages, from the fountain of the lofty thoughts of the great minds. If we go through the philosophical literatures of our country, we find that the belief in karma and rebirth had started gaining ground in the cultural soil of the Vedic period though its final fruits and colourful flowers have spread their delicate fragrance only in a much later age.

It is now our purpose to trace the origin and development of this belief in Karma rebirth through the philosophical writings of the different periods.

The Vedas

The law of Karma can very well be traced to the Rg Vedic conception of the Rita. The cages of the Rg Veda seem to believe that all the activities of the world are regulated by the cosmic law in the form of Rita. It is an eternal law that governs the physical world and preserves its inherent harmony. The seen has been placed in the haven in a proper way due to Rita. It is the Rita that has made the cosmos orderly and harmonious. Harmony is necessary not only in the physical world but also in the moral world. There must be harmony between the higher and the lower aspects of man to keep him in existence as a human being and also to enable him to rise to the state of perfection. It is from the conception of Rg Vedic Rita that the doctrine of Karma has gradually grown. The doctrine of rebirth forms a corollary to the law of Karma and the concept of rebirth also in its germinal form can be traced to the Vedic period.

There are however, some scholars who are reluctant to trace the concept of rebirth to the Rg Veda. A B Keith, for example demotes the possibility of tracing the concept of rebirth to the Rg Veda. He remarks -

“The reference to transmigration in the Rg Veda are all of the most improbable character, it is to ignore the nature of poetry to press the wish that there may be a long life for man among the gods into the view that it contemplates rebirth: the attempt to find references to it in two of the verses of the riddle hymn of Dirghatamas is bold, but not very plausible: the allusion in which Vasistha is made to refer to his previous birth, is quite impossible, and the same criticism can be applied in every other case”.⁷

Keith's objection answered

The contention of Keith does not seem to be justified because of the fact that a detailed study of the Rg Veda reveals to us that there are definite references to rebirth in many of the hymns. Perhaps Keith was very much impressed with those beliefs of the Aryans which would go to imply that man died only once and attained immortality.

While holding the view that the idea of rebirth had no place in the hymns sung at the funeral rites of the Aryans, Keith further observes -

“The Rg Veda and the Vedic literatures of the period of the Samhitas and the Brahmanas present us with no clear proof of the belief in the transmigration of the dead: The most important piece of evidence is late: it is recorded by Baudhyana that the birds at the offering of the dead should receive humps of food, just like the Fathers, on the ground that in the form of birds, the fathers go about. It must however, be admitted that this is not enough to prove a popular belief.”⁸

In the opinion of both S. Radhakrishnan and A. MacDonnell, however, germs of rebirth do exist in the Rg Vedic hymns and the view seems to be correct. Quoting the passage from the Rg Veda IV 27-1 which states that “After he has completed what he has to do has become old he departs hence, departing hence he is once more born, this his third birth” S. Radhakrishnan says -

“This has reference to the Vedic theory that every man had three births, the first as a child, the second by spiritual education, and the third after death. We meet with the belief in the soul as a moving life principle”.⁹

It is true that clear references to future life are made in the later portions of the Rg Veda i.e. the IXth and X Mandalas but it is not altogether absent in the earlier parts. In Book I + Book VI there are also references to the theory of rebirth. Both MacDonnell and Griswold have held similar views. The following verses give a clear indication that the concept of rebirth was in a germinal form in the period of the Rg Veda.¹⁰

“Burn him not up, nor quite consume him. Let not his body or his skin be scattered. Agni O! Jata Vedas, whom thou has matured him, Then send him on his way unto the Fathers” Of course the reference to future life made in the verses indicate also the transmigration of human souls into lower animals and plants. In other hymns there are further indications where the dead are supposed to be furnished with bodies suitable to the new environment.

In Book X Hymn L VI - 1 - 2 again such reference can be seen.

“Here is one light for thee, another yonder; Enter the third and be there with united.

Umiting with a body be thou welcome, dear To the Gods in their sublimed birth place.¹

“Bearing thy body Vajin, may thy body afford us blessing, and thyself protection unswerving, establish as it was in heaven, Thine own light as the mighty God's supporter”.²

Further in the Atarveda, Yajurveda, Brahmanas, the Upanishads several such examples are given.

Paul Deussen “The Chief aim of the Brahmanas is to prescribe the acts of ritual, and to offer for their a compliment a manifold reward, and at the same time sufferings and punishments for their omission”¹²

Here too, we find that at the root of the idea of rebirth stands the genesis of the Law of karma. Therefore, on all occasions so far, we find that rebirth works as the supplement to the law of Karma.

Dr Radhakrishna says -

“The Brahmanas contain all the suggestions necessary for the development of the doctrine of rebirth. They are however only suggestions, while individual immortality is the main tendency. It is left for the Upanishads to systematize these suggestions into the doctrine of rebirth. The general view is that although the conceptions of Karma and rebirth are unquestionably the work of the Aryan mind still it need not be denied that the suggestions may have some from the aborigines who believed that after death their soul lives in animal bodies”.¹³

According to Dr Anurima Sen Gupta - "The Aryan people were not in favour of regarding wife, cattle and other forms of property as obstacles in the path of the realization of life's mission. For them, the entire world was a fountain of bliss and happiness. They always used to pray for a happy and prosperous worldly life. The idea that creation was shot through and through with pain and that all sorrows and evils of life could be removed by the renunciation of all forms of worldly enjoyment, seems to have been crept into the Aryan culture from some Aryan source." 14

Thoughts and Desires Determine Rebirth

In some of the Upanishads, it has been mentioned by Hume that rebirth is due to one's thoughts and desires. In the Mundaka Upanishads, it has been mentioned in the first verse that those who think that the fulfillment of desires is the highest Karma without giving due importance to the real good are fools. They are reborn after completing their period of happy life on the summit of heaven, either in this world or in a lower world are in a lower world.¹⁵ In Prasna Upanishad 3-10 there is a passage which explains that one's thinking determines his future life and destiny. He is reborn according to his dormant cherished wishes.

Ignorance and Impurity leads to rebirth

Ignorance and Impurity of self are regarded as the cause of man's taking a second form in the process of births and deaths. That is he is reborn who has in him the aforesaid qualities. Such ideas are expressed in the third Valli of the Katha Upanishad in verses 7 to 9 of the first chapter which says that lack of understanding and impurity compels one to revolve round the wheel of Samsara or reincarnation. But a person who has understanding and purity of heart reaches the goal, i.e. the highest place, at the feet of Lord Vishnu, from where one need not return.¹⁶ Again heedlessness and failure to comprehend the essential unit of being are sometimes attributed as the causes of an after life.¹⁷

Again the Chandogya, Brhad Aranyaka, Kaustilaki, Swetasvata Upanishad etc all hold similar views. In the language of Yajnavalkya - "As a caterpillar when it has come to the end of a blade of grass, in taking the next step draws itself together towards it, just as this soul in taking the next step strikes down this body, dispels its ignorance and draws itself together for making the transaction." 4.4.3.¹⁸

"As a goldsmith taking a piece of gold reduces it to another newer and more beautiful form, just so this soul, striking down this body and dispelling its ignorance makes for itself another newer and more beautiful form like that either of the fathers or of other beings". (4.4.3)

According to Yajnavalkya, an unwise soul remains for a while forgetful of this world of experience and action. When it awakens from a sleep of death, it becomes conscious of a tendency to rebirth. Then the potentiality of action and past impressions overtake the soul and it comes back to the world in a new form. Karma, however, cannot touch a wise man who has made himself free from desires for sons, wealth etc. such a soul merges in Brahman and becomes the immortal Truth.

Here, the process of transmigration is a process of

progressive development of the individual soul in knowledge and purity. The individual soul is not only assuming a new form but the form is also 'more beautiful'.

Spiritual knowledge and Metaphysical knowledge of Brahman helps one to escape Rebirth

One who has spiritual knowledge is liberated from the pangs of suffering and repeated births. In the Prasna Upanishad, it is said that with the help of chastity and austerity and spiritual knowledge, try to reach the kingdom of God, go to the through the Northern course. The sun acts as their life breath there because it is both fearless and immortal. As such they become liberated and do not further return to the earth.

From the aforesaid passages, mentioned in the various Upanishads it can be stated with rational justification that the idea of rebirth in its various forms was developed fully in the later Vedic age. It can, therefore be said that the seed of rebirth was sown during the early Vedic age and it resulted in a full fledged tree with its roots and branches in the later Vedic period (i. e. during the time when the Upanishads were composed).

The Upanishads, therefore, on the whole, give us a clear idea of transmigration and the past deeds (Karma) are attributed as the cause of transmigration. The idea of the rebirth is interlinked with the idea of Karma. The law of Karma has been introduced there as a moral law, i.e. the laws of justice. In the Upanishads, therefore, the law of Karma as linked with the theory of rebirth of living beings as appeared mainly as a moral law (i. e. as the law of retribution and justice) Brahman creates the world in accordance with the accumulated merits and demerits of the souls. The real basis of the world is the ethical staff existing in the form of Karma-vasanas of the individual souls. Karma is the creative force and the natural order should be built an ethical foundation.

The Ramayan

The Hindu scheme of life together with the ideas of Karma and rebirth was definitely fixed and widely taught during the age of the epics in the Ramayan as well as in the Mahabharat also, the law of Karma works as the vital force holding firmly the civilization of ancient India and this fact has been exemplified in a thousand ways through innumerable lives of the characters in the great epics of the age. In sloka 63 of chapter 21 of the Ayodhya Kand it has been expressed that obeying the orders of a father should be regarded as a sacred duty having the sanction of the moral law and the law of a noble life. This was stated by Ram to his mother Kaushalya when the latter refused to let him go to the Danakarya forest in exile.¹⁹

Continuity after death

The Yogavasishta also believes that death is not the final end of life and so life continues even after the destruction of the physical body. Dr. B. L. Atreya, supporting the view of Vasistha has very clearly said - "We agree with the view of Vasistha on death, that it does not bring about an end of any individual as long as that individual would not like to be dissolved and that death opens a new world before him which he deserved, in the same way as we wake up in dream

when the body is asleep. The change that is brought about by death is, according to Vasistha as well as according to Prel “not a change of place, but change of perceptual mode”. It is not going anywhere else in space, but experiencing a subjectively different world”.²⁰

Dr. Atreya has further asserted with emphasis that it would be dogmatic to ‘deny existence after physical death’. “It is irrational that our efforts and desires evaporate into nothing, are not satisfied in the long run. It is absurd and irrational that a moral, gentle and noble personality is evolved here under hardships and struggles, and with tears, only to be broken suddenly at the rock of death: Are all our aspirations for perfection, omnipotence, omniscience, and absolute bliss nothing more than illusion and mockery ? Are Christ’s, Nero’s, Washington’s all to be leveled by death ? Are the martyrs and condemned murderers sailing in the same boat, only to be dashed into nothingness”? ²¹

The Mahabharat

In the Mahabharat also, the law of Karma has become a vital force holding firmly the civilization of ancient India and this fact has been exemplified through innumerable stories. Clear indications of future life (i. e. rebirth) resulting from the acts performed by living beings in their previous births are found in the Mahabharat. Men are born in different categories of beings ranging from the higher to the lower as a result of their good and bad actions. When king Yuddhishtra was having a discourse with the Snake incarnation of Nahusa, regarding actions and their fruits in the form of rewards and punishments, the latter told him that living beings have to be born in the world in three forms (namely man, heavenly beings and lower animals) according to the merit and demerit of their past actions.²² According to Nahusa, one goes to heaven by performing charity and other prescribed ethical actions. But those who perform contrary acts are born as lower animals, Anger, lust, temptations etc make one fall into the human state to the category of animals during reincarnation.²³

Idea of Heaven and Hell

Again we find that the idea of heaven and hell according to the good and bad actions done in this world, is also admitted to the Mahabharat. Men who perform good deeds were supposed to go to heaven after death. In the age of Mahabharat also death was not supposed to be the final termination of life. A life after death was supposed to be the final presupposition. Death was supposed simply to be an act of transference of souls from one body to another. Death according to the Mahabharat is simply a change of form. It may so to say the outer cover of the ‘inner body’.

Bhagwat Gita

In the Bhagwat Gita we find that the ideas of Karma and rebirth have been expounded in a clear manner though it is the rule of the moral world that good actions produce good effects while bad actions lead to painful effects, yet there is also a path by following which one may bring out cessation of Karma. If a person can perform his duty without any desire for the enjoyment of its fruit, then he will be able to unfasten the knot of Karma and rebirth. Lord Krishna has said that the motto of life should be ‘Duty for the sake of duty’ without any expectation for its rewards. He has stated

repeatedly that all actions should be performed without any desire for their fruits and should be dedicated to Brahman. By doing so, he would be freed from sin just as the lotus flower, though blooms in water, yet is never wet with water.²⁴ A wise man performs disinterested actions, He does not hanker after fruits.

Immortality of the soul and Rebirth

The immortality of the soul as expounded in the Gita also when Arjun refuses to fight in the battle, Lord Krishna explains to him in various ways that ‘death is not complete extinction of life’. The soul that resides in living being does not die despite the call of death. So, he advises him not to grieve because living beings existed in the past, exist in the present and will also exist in the future.²⁵

The Manusmriti, The Puranas and The Darshanas

Like the Vedas and the Upanishads, the laws of Manu hold that the law of Karma as the underlying principle operating in this moral sphere and upon which rebirth depends. It has been argued in the Garuda Purana that person who perform evil actions go to hell and after undergoing a series of sufferings there, he returns from there and take birth in the world according to the nature of their evil deeds. Similarly, the Matsya Purana and Visnu Purana also envisages that desire leads to rebirth, worship leads to liberation similarly, the Darshanas (the Nastik systems) like Charvakas Jainism, Buddhism all believe that death is not the end of life. Hell has found a prominent place in the Buddhist thought. Like the Hindus and the Jainas, the Buddhists also believe that the hell is an extra ordinarily wretched place. In the hell as described in the ‘Mahavastu Avadana’ that the evildoers are hung with head downwards and they are cut by sharp weapons made of iron.²⁶

The Astika Systems such as the Yoga Sutra, Nyaya Sutra, The Vaishesika, The Mimamsas, The Advaita Vedanta of Samkara, the Visistadwait all accept the theory of Karma & rebirth.

Western Thinkers

The Western Thinkers such as Plato, Kant Schopenhauer, Mc Taggart etc. Mc Taggart a well-known thinker in his book ‘some dogmas of Religion’ believes - “We continually find that death leaves a fault without a retribution, a retribution without a repentance, a preparation without an achievement, while in other cases where the life has lasted longer, a similar process is complete between birth and death. If men survive death, we must expect that these processes, when not worked out before death, will be worked out in a future life.”²⁷

Parapsychologists too believe that death of the personality is death of the being. Nothing remains after death. The parapsychologists do not believe that death is complete annihilation a living being: there is something in living being which exists even after death. It deals with the paranormal phenomena of human beings.

Abstract

Apart from what has been said in the article mentioned above it would be apparent that all the philosophical system (both agnostic and non agnostic) the Epics, Manusmriti, The

Vedas and Upanishads, the Puranas, the Bhagwat Gita and most of the Western thinkers have all cried in one tone that rebirth and law of Karma does exist though scientifically it cannot be proved because science believes in observation, a laboratory and proof. It is true that science fails to prove the existence of God and rebirth because once a person is dead, he is dead for ever but the author does not believe in this because he has seen several cases in which the children speak of their past cases and have come to be true.

The concept of rebirth is very vague and undefined. It varies from person to person and hence cannot be proved scientifically. Usually, when discussing it, the concept of soul is brought up but there is no evidence at all for soul science cannot discuss what a soul might or might not be.

Summary

From the details furnished above it is quite clear that rebirth does exist. The great writers (besides the Vedas, Puranas and the Bhagwat Gita) almost all Indian writers and the Western writers have accepted that rebirth in one form or another is prevalent every where and even the western thinkers has too accepted the same as Aurobindo, E. Palmestera, Swami Abhedanand, Eustace Miles, A. B. Keith, S. Radhakrishna, Griffith, Dr. Anima Sen Gupta, , Robert Hume, Mc Taggart and even the great epics also such as Ramayan and the Mahabharat.

I personally believe in the theory of rebirth because I had a personal experience in life. When I was doing my Cambridge classes I met a child aged 6 years used to weep everyday when she accompanied her mother to school, that she want to go to Calcutta which was her original home. On my request she was taken there where she showed the way to her residence and called the inmates by name when everyone was surprised. What happened after that I do not know.

Also I have given the arguments in favour of rebirth in the conclusion which is sufficient to prove that rebirth does exist. Like Zoroastrianism, Christianity also believes that on the day of Judgement, the souls united with their bodies will be brought before God for final assessment and according to their deeds would go to heaven or hell. But prior to the day of Judgement Christ would appear on the scene during this intermediary period Christianity believes that particular individual after his physical death, if he is in love of God he would straight away go to heaven and those who lived a sinful life to hell. But those who have been stained by sins but shown repentance are sent to the purgatory for purification and then goes to heaven.

Conclusion Arguments in favour of Rebirth

In Conclusion, I would like to sum up the main arguments advanced in support of rebirth:

- 1) The general view is that ignorance of the real nature of reality arouses a desire in the mind of an individual for material enjoyment and this desire in its turn inspire the individual to perform egocentric and interested actions. Such actions lead to rebirth.
- 2) There is unequal distribution of happiness and misery in the world. The law of Karma as the law of retribution is supposed to lie at the basis of such unequal distribution.

Happiness and sorrows are allotted to human beings in accordance with the action of their past lives. An individual has to reap the fruits of all his actions in one, two or more lives. Unless we believe in the operation of such a law, most of the riddles of life cannot be explained.

- 3) An infant shows the signs of suckling and the fear of death from the time of its birth. In the present life, the new born infant has not yet perceived anything that can causes such fears, still the infant shows signs of such feeling. These experiences are possible because of the impressions of his previous life. The only cause that can be indicated in the child's mouth moving towards mother's milk is the child's desire for milk which again is possible only on the basis of our belief in the continuity of remembrance due to repeated feedings in the past.
- 4) The eternity of soul favours the theory of Karma-dependent rebirth. As the soul is not destroyed with the dissolution of the body, it takes repeated births in order to fulfill the deeds of its previous births and reap the fruits of action.
- 5) Yogins, can remember the experiences of their previous lives by the yogic method. Memories of past lives, therefore, can be revived in the present lives. Further, there are thousand of genuine cases where children have narrated their past lives and after due verification have come true.

References are given at the end

The list of references is well supported by documents that directly support the claims and discussions as provided in the foregoing paragraphs.

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- [16] Katha Upanishad - 1-3 to 9 17. I bid 1 - 3 - 6, 9 - 1 - 10
- [17] Hume's translation P/140
- [18] Ayodhya Kanda Book 2 Canto 21 - 63
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