

REINCARNATION

Mrs. Silloo Mehta

Kipling. once wrote, "They will come back again, as long as the red Earth rolls. He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think He would squander souls?"

A FACT OR A FANTASY?

The purpose of stirring up this controversial subject is to encourage the study of the doctrine of Reincarnation and Karma which is the most logical solution, to the mystery of life and to the problems arising out of the concept of Good and Evil, which reconciles us to the terrible and "apparent" injustice on earth. When one sees genius withering away, perishing of want, or innocent men and women suffering for no reason than what we call fate, or when one observes people who are like a curse to mankind, living happily in the lap of luxuries, when one looks around to see all the misery, treachery, deadly diseases, terrorism, natural catastrophes, could one help cursing life? Could one sincerely worship his Omnipotent, just and Merciful Creator, if one did not have that blessed knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation?

There is an abundance of quotable material arising out of scholarship and achievements in various fields of thought, which carries a lot of weight, against the almost impervious materialism of our times. To reproduce everything that I have read, learned or come across, on this subject in *The Mazdeyasnie Connection*, would fill hundreds of pages! Therefore I have touched upon sub-titles like Reincarnation in different religions, by

prominent Modern Scientists, Philosophers, and literary giants, Then about Reincarnation in Zoroastrianism how mystically it is expressed and how beautifully Zoroastrianism explains the paradox of "tooth for a tooth, eye for an eye" on one hand; that "God is just yet merciful" on the other.

RE - INCARNATION IN HINDUISM

The Hindu believes in a progressive cycle of births, and views life as a period of compensation and retribution. The most famous of all Hindu scriptures is that part of the MAHABHARATA, called the BHAGVAD GITA - The Lord's Songs. The "GITA" truly summarizes the Hindus' concept of rebirth. It is the form of a dialogue between Krishna, the great spiritual teacher and his disciple Arjuna.

"When disappointments stare me in the face", wrote Mahatma Gandhi, "and when I see not one ray of light.....I turn to The Bhagvad Gita.....and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me. I owe it to the teaching of the Bhagvad Gita".

The Vedas which are acknowledged to be the most ancient, reveal a high level of civilization among those who find in it the expression of their worship. It is very significant to learn what the Vedas say about Reincarnation. Dr. Radhakrishnan states that the elements of reincarnation are to be found even in the earliest of the Vedas, namely, the Rig Veda.

The UPANISHADS are regarded as esoteric interpretations of the Vedas and abound in references in the doctrine of rebirth. The PURANAS are poetical works following the same doctrines. VEDANTA also teaches that "the doctrine of reincarnation alone can explain most satisfactorily and rationally many instances of uncommon powers and genius displayed in childhood".

Reincarnation was a major tenet of Brahmanism in the ancient times but traditionally, the teaching belonged to the warrior class, who guarded it as an esoteric secret.

SRI KRISHNA : The wise in heart mourn not for those that live, nor those that die. Never the spirit was born, the spirit shall cease to be never. Never was time it was not End and Beginning are dreams! Death hath not touched it at all dead though the house of it seems! May as when one laveth his worn-out robes away and taking new ones, sayeth. "These will I wear today!" so putteth by the spirit lightly its garb of flesh and passeth to inherit a residence afresh.

- The Bhagavad-Gita (Tr. Sir Edwin Arnold)

IN BUDDHISM

Gautama Buddha belonged to the caste of warriors and this teaching must have been strongly emphasized in his early training. To Buddha, reincarnation was the solution to the apparent inequalities of life and made possible the absolute fulfillment of the law of cause and effect. In Buddhism, there is no escaping the result of action. Without the law of rebirth, existence is purposeless, meaningless and absurd.

The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows

and woes

The Bygone right breeds bliss.....

Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels None other holds you that ye live and die, And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss Its spokes of agony.....

I, Buddha, who wept with all my brother's tears, Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe, Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty! Hol ye who suffer! know

Before beginning, and without an end, As space eternal and as surety sure, Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good, Only its laws endure.....

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness, Which none at last can turn aside or stay; The heart of it is Love; the end of it is Peace and Consummation sweet, Obey!

IN SIKHISM

The Sikh religion has achieved the spiritual triumph of discovering the fundamental harmony underlying the discord between Hinduism and Islam. Their Guru Nanak, holds that "beings are caught in the whirling wheel of SAMSARA- of involuntary births and deaths-"

IN JAINISM

Jainism teaches that our present life is nothing more than a link of the great chain of transmigratory circuit.

IN TAOISM

"Birth is not a beginning, death is not an end. There is existence without limitation; there is continuity without a starting-point"..... Thus wrote a Taoist Poet.....

If I depart, I cast no look behind Still wed to life, I still am free from care. Since life and death in cycles come and go, Of little moment are the days to spare. Thus strong in faith I wait, and long to be One with the pulsings of Eternity.

PO CHU - i (A.D. 772-846) Taoist Poet

IN CONFUCIANISM

is a code of morals and manners more than a metaphysical religion Confucius does not preach or deny Reincarnation, but because Confucius had the highest respect for the ancients and Lao Tzu; through Taoism or Buddhism a Confucian may be considered as a believer in the philosophy of reincarnation.

AMERICAN INDIANS

"Belief in the possibility of rebirth is general". writes Dr. H.B. Alexander in *NORTH AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY*, "although some tribes believe that only young children may be reincarnated....."

IN ISLAM

In Islam, as in other world religions, the more esoteric doctrines are disappearing in favour of somewhat materialistic agnosticism. The modern intellectual Moslem will of course ignore the inference of rebirth in the sacred writings of Koran, but In his monumental work, *Literary History of Persia*, E.G. Browne indicates in the chapters on the Ismailis and other esoteric schools of Islam how widely prevalent was the belief in reincarnation in the early centuries of the Mohammedan era. Three aspects of rebirth were accepted: hulul, the periodical incarnation of the Perfect Man or the Deity; rij'at, the return of the Imam or

spiritual leader after death; and tariasukh, reincarnation of the soul of ordinary men.

THE KORAN

This sacred scripture of Islam is regarded as having been revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by Allah himself. It is largely ethical in character. In the work, honor is rendered to Issa Ben Yussuf, or Jesus, son of Joseph.

The existence of an esoteric foundation to the Koranic teaching is indicated in these statements from *The Sayings of Mohammed*: "The Koran was sent in seven dialects; and in every one of its sentences there is an external and an internal meaning..... I received from the messenger of God two kinds of knowledge: One of these I taught to others and if I had taught them the other it would have broken their throats."

In a letter, dated October 8, 1963, Mikhail Naimy, the renowned Lebanese mystic and friend and biographer of Khalil Gibran, wrote to Joseph Head: "In Al Koran clear hints (on rebirth) are found which orthodox Islam brushes aside as meaning something else than reincarnation..... In Al Koran occurs the following verse which I give in my own translation: 'And you were dead, and He brought you back to life. And He shall cause you to die, and shall bring you back to life, and in the end shall gather you unto Himself' (Sura 2:28). The words 'you were dead' mean that they had lived before becoming dead. That is the clear implication of the phrase. Then the whole sentence would clearly indicate that it had reference to more than one life and one death".

Quoting now from other parts of the Koran:

As the rains turn the dry earth into green

thereby yielding fruits, similarly God brings the dead into life so that thou mayest learn. (Chapter 8-Sura Iraf-Meccan Verss 6-6-13.)

And He sent down rains from above in proper quantity and He brings back to life the dead earth, similarly ye shall be reborn. (Chapter 25-Sura Zakhraf-Meccan Verses 5-10-6.)

(Those who doubt immortality) are dead and they do not know when they will be born again. Your God is peerless and those who have no faith in the ultimate have perverse hearts and they want to pose as great men. (Chapter 14-sura Nahel-Verses 2-12-8.)

In the last of his articles Mr. Abdi has some interesting things to say on how reincarnation gradually lost popularity in Islam:

The position adopted by the successive luminaries who followed the Prophet, was to affirm the belief in reincarnation but not to propagate it as a teaching for the masses. This attitude was due to psychological reasons. The emphasis in Islamic teachings has throughout been on the purity of action. Another factor to remember is that the defensive wars, which have been described as Jihad or holy wars, which the Muslims fought in the early days and the wars of conquests (therefore not holy) which the Muslims fought in later days... gave a different shift to Islamic teachings. Philosophical, mystical and ethical teachings received an impetus in the first phase but they had subdued existence in the later phase. During this phase the republican character of the State was changed into monarchy and the supremacy no more belonged to the saints and philosophers. A subject like reincarnation demands a subtle mental attitude. It entails understanding of the higher planes of

consciousness, the laws of cause and effect and the working of the laws of evolution. The monarchs had no interest in such subjects. Like so many other teachings, reincarnation was confined to the study and attention of the outer and inner students of Sufism.... (However) there is no danger for a Muslim being called a heretic if he believes and expresses himself in favour of reincarnation.

IN SUFISM

Omar Khayyam, Hafez, Jalaludin Rumi, Tbu Arabi Jami, Mausur Al-Hallaj and a host of other SUFI poets, philosophers, who command universal respect, have very much preserved the teachings of reincarnation.

The seventeenth-century oriental treasure-house, The Dabistan, states that the eastern school of Sufis was derived from certain ancient Zoroastrian mystics. These Sufis taught: "When the souls not yet come forth from the pit of the natural darkness of bodily matter, are nevertheless in a state of increasing improvement, then, in an ascending way, they migrate from body to body, each purer than the former one, until the time of climbing up to the steps of the wished-for perfection of mankind... after which, purified of the defilement of the body, they join the world of sanctity... In Chapter 12, entitled "Religion of the Sufis," (III, 277-278), the Sufi master, Said Mohammed Nurbakhsh, is shown distinguishing between tanasukh, or ordinary reincarnation, and buruz, the reincarnation of a perfect soul "for the sake of perfecting mankind."

IN THEOSOPHY

Strangely enough, the Theosophical Movement, though Western in origin, brought

about a revival of interest in reincarnation in the Orient as well as the Occident.

To the old teaching of the periodical reincarnation of great spiritual teachers-taught by the Jews, the early Moslems, the Egyptians, and all the peoples of the East-the theosophists add that these beings form a living fraternity of perfected adepts who continually help mankind to the degree its karma and evolutionary development permit.

IN JUDAISM

"The fact that reincarnation is not specifically mentioned in the Old Testament ACCORDING TO OUR PRESENT VERSIONS, DOES NOT PROVE ITS ABSENCE. The most ancient existing fragments of the Old Testament are in Greek, and it is quite possible that the doctrine of reincarnation has been edited out of the Bible so that only fragmentary, imperfect, and distorted remnants of the belief have survived in some verses" (Manly Palmer Hall).

Regardless of the testimony of the old testament the doctrine of reincarnation occupied a prominent place in the religious tradition of the Jews. There is a clear statement that rebirth is the way toward perfection, the means of accomplishing the end of liberation, and also that it is a proper medium for the administration of divine retribution.

The Kabala, which is the esoteric interpretation of the Old Testament, and represents the hidden wisdom behind it, considers reincarnation as an essential part of the system.

In attempting to answer the intriguing question as to where the ancient Jews originally obtained these teachings, Myer writes:

"The Kabbalah most likely, originally came from Aryan sources, through central Asia, Persia India and Mesopotamia We know that the Hebrew Genesis, and many parts of the Old Testament are tintured with Aryan, Akkadian, Chaldean and Babylonian thought and that Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and other learned Israelites were under the influence of Persian and Chaldean learning"

The Zohar, which is the most mystical and metaphysical of Jewish books, teaches that men have to be reborn until they achieve a degree of perfection which then will enable them to be reabsorbed into God.

IN CHRISTIANITY

Jesus Christ is believed to have been educated by the Essenes, and their entire sect believed in reincarnation and studied the arcane traditions of the Egyptians.

ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY

Primitive Christianity is parallel to the Gnostic movement. Modern scholars are giving extra attention to this because of the results of new archaeological discoveries and the unearthing of the lost Gnostic texts.

The main sources of information available are: The New Testament with the writings of Church fathers; the teachings of the Christian Gnostics. The New Testament passed through the censoring church councils. In the 6th and later centuries, when the present Bible was decided on, a number of gospels existed. Those which were considered as unacceptable, were destroyed. By this time there was a strong anti-reincarnationist sentiment in the Church, so

the material could not survive. Nevertheless, we do have evidence to say that the New Testament teaches plurality of lives. To quote just three of the examples from New Testament:

- (a) The very fact that Jesus' disciples asked Jesus concerning a man who had been born blind, means the possibility of reincarnation was evident. They asked: "Who did sin, this man, or his parents?" (John 9: 2-3) Obviously, if the man had been born blind, how could he have committed a sin? When? Besides if the doctrine was wrong, Jesus would have denied the whole theory, but he did not.
- (b) Another illustration of the prevalent karmic law is that Christ warns that 'those who live by the sword shall die by the sword. (Matthew 26:52) This could only be true if there is more than one life in which the two experience the reaction.
- (c) St. John in Rev. 3:12 states: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." Evidently, he had 'gone out' into incarnation before, otherwise why would he say "no more"?

The CHURCH FATHERS were not of one mind concerning the soul's origin and destiny. All their theories except the one that became orthodox, involve some form of the souls' pre-existence.

The Gnostics were believers in the theory of Reincarnation. they hold rigidly to the infallible working out of the great law of cause and effect. They are thought to be, (by some) descendants of the original Christians and are the

inheritors of the esoteric teachings of Christ. It is said that the central ideas of Christianity are rooted in Gnostic philosophy. Jesus said to his disciples: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables" (Mark 4:11 see Matthew 13:10-16)

JESUS OF NAZARETH: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" And the disciples answered, "Some say that thou art Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." "Verily I say unto you. Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. And if you will receive it, this is Elijah who was destined to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

- Matthew 16:13-14 11:11, 14-15

(To be continued)

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REINCARNATION (2)

Mrs. Silloo Mehta

Continued)

MODERN

Today reincarnation is a thoroughly established belief in the Western World, especially among thinking people. A number of liberal ministers are enrolled in mystical Christian organization that teach reincarnation. Various such organizations have grown up in Europe and America like The Unity Movements, the Anthroposophical Society, the Rosicrucian Fellowship, the A.R.E. to mention only a few.

American Psychiatrist and Parapsychologist Ian Stevenson is regarded by a number of his peers in the scientific community as the world's leading authority on the subject of life after death, and in particular, reincarnation, as one possible means of survival. His book "20 Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation", has become a classic in the field.

Carl G. Jung Psychiatrist and Psychologist reveals how frequently and naturally he thought in terms of many lives. In his memories, Dreams, Reflection, he states:

"My life as I lived it had often seemed to me like a story that has no beginning and no end. I had the feeling that I was a historical fragment, an excerpt for which the preceding and succeeding text was missing I could well imagine that I might have lived in former centuries and there encountered questions. I was not yet able to answer: that I had to be born again because I had not fulfilled the task that was given to me. When I die, my deeds will follow along with me - that is how I imagine it. I will bring with me what I have done. In the meantime it is important to insure that I do not stand at the end with empty hands....."

In the words of Henry Ford; "When I discovered Reincarnation it was as if I had

discovered a Universal plan. I realised that there was a chance to work out my ideas. Time was no longer limited, I was no longer a slave to the hands of the clock. There was time enough to plan and create."

S. Radhakrishnan Oriental Philosopher President of India 1962-67 whose "Eastern Religions and Western Thoughts" has been quoted a number of times believes that "the world reaches its consummation when every man knows himself to be the immortal spirit.... till this goal is reached, each saved individual is the center of the Universal Consciousness...."

Pythagoras brought from Asia the doctrine of Rebirth and taught it esoterically to his disciples. He also described to certain of his disciples the experiences of their own former lives. Plato was influenced by the teachings of Pythagoras. His profound universal genius recognize in the teachings of Rebirth the most reasonable solution to the mystery of existence.

Aristotle preserved the doctrine of rebirth among the other philosophical traditions he had derived from Plato. Reincarnation was taught in the Platonic Academy for more than nine centuries. Plato believed and taught that all learning was remembering, and the very word education was originally meant to draw forth which already was known we all come into the world with abilities talents and peculiar aptitudes. We are destined to certain labours by the Karma which we have brought with us out of the lives gone before.

David Hume: Scottish Historian and Philosopher "Metempsychosis (Reincarnation) is the only system of immortality that philosophy can hearken to."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON : It is the secret of the world that all things subsist and

do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again. Nothing is dead; men feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries, and there they stand looking out of the window, sound and well, in some new strange disguise. Jesus is not dead; he is very well alive: nor John, nor Paul, nor Mahomet, nor Aristotle: at times we believe we have seen them all, and could easily tell the names under which they go. ("Nominalist and Realist")

PLATO: - Education is not learning, it is remembering.

"Nature invented death that there might be new life". **Goethe.**

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: Finding myself to exist in the world. I believe I shall in some shape or other always exist; and, with all the inconveniences, human life is liable to, I shall not object to a new edition of mine, hoping, however, that the errata of the last may be corrected. (Letters)

THOMAS HUXLEY: In the doctrine of transmigration, whatever its origin, Brahmanical and Buddhist speculation found, ready to hand, the means of constructing a plausible vindication of the ways of the Cosmos to man. None but very hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality. (Evolution and Ethics.)

TOLSTOY: How interesting it would be to write the story of the experiences in this life of a man who killed himself in his previous life; how he now stumbles against the very demands which had offered themselves before, until he arrives at the realization that he must fulfill those demands.*** The deeds of the preceding life give direction to the present one. This is what the Hindus call Karma. (Diary and other writings)

RABBI SIMEON BEN JOCHAI: All souls are subject to the trials of reincarnation. They know not how they are being at all times judged, both before coming into this world and when they leave it. They do not know how many transformations and mysterious trials they must undergo. The souls must re-enter the absolute substance whence they have emerged. But to accomplish this end they must develop all the perfections, the germ of which is planted in them: and if they have not fulfilled this condition during one life, they must commence another, a third, and so forth. (The Zohar or Kabalistic Book of Light)

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS: The Soul passes from form to form: and the mansions of her pilgrimage are manifold. Thou puttest off thy bodies as raiment: and as vesture dost thou fold them up. Thou art from old. O Soul of man, yea, thou art from everlasting. (Egyptian Hermetic Fragments)

HENRY DAVID THOREAU: As far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence lived in Judaea eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was such a one as Christ among my contemporaries. As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now as a New-Englander. (Letters and Journals)

GOETHE: I am certain that I have been here as I am now a thousand times before, and I hope to return a thousand times. When one reflects upon the eternity of the universe, one can conceive of no other destiny than that the Monads or Souls should eventually participate in the bliss of the Gods as joyfully cooperating forces. The work of creation will be entrusted to them. Man is the dialogue between nature and God. On other planets this dialogue will doubtless be of a higher and profounder character. ("Conversation with Johannes Falk")

The doctrine of Reincarnation is constantly increasing in popularity as more and more western people are embracing the teaching. Great men have believed in it, wise men have sought to probe its mysteries and brave men have dared to live by its laws.

Sir George Trevelyan explains that "we are sojourning in the world of gravity only for a brief period of education and experience. Once we accept that, our attitudes will change. We see the soul as going on an allegorical pilgrimage. It must submit to tests trials and ordeals which are designed not only to train and strengthen the soul but also transmute the streaks of ignorance, evilness that has clung to it into good; so that the soul may return to the realms of light, to God."

One life is hardly sufficient to reap all the harvest of experience that this earth can offer. The soul voluntarily chooses to descend into the earth to learn the lesson. "History," says Sir George "may be likened to a great school. We must move from class to class, allowing each to offer its unique lesson, no one would presume to believe that by entering the forth form for one term we are qualified to sit for a diploma".

It is interesting to note that Edgar Cayce who was raised in the strict 19th century Bible traditions, suffered the greatest mental and emotional shock of his life when he discovered that in his psychic readings, he declared the truth of the mysteries and acclaimed Jesus as their crowning glory.

"The system of metaphysical thought which emerges from the READINGS of Edgar Cayce is a Christianized version of the mystery religion of ancient Egypt, Chaldea, Persia, India and Greece.... In the scramble which Christianity made to establish itself as the dominant religion of the decaying Roman Empire, the mysteries were denied their proper place.."

According to E.D. Walker; "Although most Christians are unaware of it, reincarnation is strongly present in the Bible, chiefly in the form of preexistence". Hugh Lynn Caycee in his book "Edgar Caycee on REINCARNATION", gives a wealth of information in chapters 10 and 11; DOES THE BIBLE CONDEMN REINCARNATION? and WHY ISN'T REINCARNATION IN THE BIBLE?

MORE GREAT BELIEVERS IN REINCARNATION

Albert Einstein, Pythagoras, Thomas Huxley, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Plutarch, Plotinus, Dante, Julius Ceasar, Tolstoy, Voltaire, George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, Samuel Butler,

Mark Twain, Robert Browning, Tennyson, Oliver Wendall

Holmes, Longfellow, Elizabeth Browning, Shelley, Victor Hugo, Thomas Moore, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Shakespeare, John Milton, Edmund Spencer, Charles Kingsley, H.P. Blavatsky, Rudolph Steiner, Thoreau.....

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REINCARNATION IN ZOROASTRIANISM?

Briefly the 3-stages of Anhuavar Plan :

- (1) The first stage was to create all regions, centers and stations of the Immortal and Mortal Worlds;
- (2) The second was to pass those souls lacking in divine knowledge, (of spirit form) into Matter for their progress, development and transmutation of evil into good; (Law of Infoldment)
- (3) Then raise them back to the immortal worlds from Matter into Spirit thus bringing about individual renovation (Law of Unfoldment); then bring about the Collective Consummation (Farshogard)

So we know that those souls lacking in divinity were sent into exile from the Spiritual World down to the Planetary World and farther down to the Evanescent World which includes our Earth, for cleaning themselves of what the Avesta calls DRAVAO. Until they did that, entry to the Planetary and Spiritual Worlds was barred to them. The prodigal son could only return to his father after gaining full emancipation.

And so it has come to pass that billions of years and hundreds of Birth-Death cycles later, your soul and mine have reached that stage in the evolutionary cycle, where we are still in the process of removing the blemish of grossness and the dross of ignorance that have clung to them.

The result is: almost all of us have to enter into the many-cycles of THWAASHE KHADAAT or self-created rounds of life on earth again

and again, till selfishness turns into philanthropy, till the widening of our consciousness can encompass the width of the cosmic oceans; till bodily limitations are transcended, till our earthly desires of the flesh are subdued into blissful acquiescence of His Will; till the egoistic lower self turns into golden spirit in which in full obedience accepts "I AM". As Sir George Trevelyan beautifully writes "the true nature of man is a droplet of the divine source" and we have to strive, not to slip the droplet into the Ocean, but to pour the Ocean into the droplet!

In the Khorshed and Meher Nyaishes, we pray to be in tune with these Cycles of Time - THWAASHE KHADAAT.

This cycle has 3 stages -

(a) Birth, Life and Death.

When the soul descends upon this earth it is a painful experience for the Spirit to be imprisoned in a dense body-that carries with it both pain and pleasure and a mind with endless desires and appetites. It is constricting and limiting.

Before the soul descends, Nature chooses his parents, family the circumstances and the measure of his compensation, etc. The soul also itself is its own judge, by creating situations where within itself, it confronts the real consequences of its actions. We are responsible for creating our own hell. Thus equipped either to listen to or ignore his conscience it acts in this world and sows the seeds of its actions. Nobody can change or interfere in what it reaps. Karma is the law and

reincarnation is the means by which that law is administered. The earth is a training ground where it learns its lessons through pain and suffering. If it doesn't learn in this life time, well, there is another and another.... till every soul is perfected, and reincarnation becomes unnecessary. What occurs in life is not a sequence of chance, mishaps, accidents and misfortunes but a pattern that is mysteriously planned. Therefore the foundation of soul's fate in the other two stages is laid in the first stage itself.

Second Stage of THAWASHE KHADAT:

This stage begins with what we mortals call "death" - that is, when the soul leaves the physical body and rushes inside the astral body KEHERPA, which becomes a vehicle for the take-off to the ultra physical planes. Immediately prior to death, it experiences in one great flash, an instantaneous panorama of the past life. For the first 2 or 3 days the soul hovers around the body. On the 4th day, it gets an inkling of its past and what is in store for future and thus comes to 'hosh' (full consciousness). At this delicate stage, it is absolutely essential for the living to help the soul by performing the prescribed ceremonies. Now there is a lot to be written but we shall not go into details.

The soul goes through pain caused by lingering attraction to the earth and earthly objects, remorse, lamentations for opportunities missed - it is like an extension of man's earthly hell. There is no physical pain but terrible torture. Therefore prayers are necessary. But the imperishable soul lives on and passes through the gates of death several times. Death is not an end of life. It is merely a

transfer of man to another plane in space --

"For every birth must end with dying breath,
And new life ever kindled by every death
Inevitable is this eternal cycle of fate
Then why grieve over this mortal estate?"

Now the soul travels through certain regions, repents and a lot happens which can be dealt with under a different topic.

The third stage of THAWASHE KHADAT

Now on the sub-plane of Varzmkard, "real death" takes place. The soul is now fully illumined and enters a stage of deep meditation. It is in communion with Ahura Mazda and becomes aware of its future fate. After meditation, it recites Avestic prayer praising the Lord and submitting to His infallible decree, the Lord delivers the Judgment, which the soul willingly and in all humility, accepts it.

Now if the soul has led a pure and pious life, observing all tenets of his religion etc. there is possibility that it will not return to Earth, and then onward. But the majority have to fulfill incarnation on Earth, a spiritual NAVJOTE ceremony of the soul takes place. (exactly like ours on earth). In this spiritual Navjote ceremony, the soul solemnly declares and affirms that he is a MAZDEYASNIE and A MAZDEYASNI ZARTHUSHTI. Preparations are made in nature for the prospective parents to bind themselves in matrimony.

When the time comes for the soul to go down to the Earth, the particles and atoms of the material body of the last birth now properly cleaned, (which were in the custody of Daham Yazat) are transformed into a seed; which through the rain go into grain, fruit, milk, etc. on Earth. These food particles are eaten by the

parents before conception and that is how the seed which was with Daham Yazat, trails down to Earth and through the husband is passed on to the wife. After 9 months, when the child emerges out of the womb, the 3rd and final round of THAWAASHE KHADAAT is completed, to begin the whole cycle anew.

Souls which do not incarnate i.e. real zarthoshtis (which most of us are not) do not undergo TANAASAK (rebirth) but TAN-E-PASIN (final or last body - the soul gets so purified that it gains mastery over the five senses). These souls and their 'resurrected' bodies are full of Divine Light. They proceed to Dadar-e-gehan and reach the stage of Rastakheez in bodies of Light ! Finally, after aeons, they will fulfill their final aim of meeting the Maker. Mr. Adi Doctor explains this beautifully in detail in his article "The Case Of The Orbiting Soul".

According to Dasturji Dabu, "the destiny of man proclaimed by Zoroastrianism is Ravan-Bukhtagi, that is the redemption of the Urwan (soul) from the fetters of those errors which bring about the penalty of sin and subsequent descent into matter. The doctrine of Resurrection is not inconsistent with that of Reincarnation. Both are true, but many incarnations have to precede the final liberation. Like the never failing Law of Karma clearly defined in the Gathas, the doctrine of Reincarnation has to be a natural corollary to the Law of Justice. Otherwise how could we explain the odd vagaries of Fate? : innate defects, innocent child's suffering, a born genius or a millionaire. Why should Meher Yazad (dispenser of Justice) afflict many and bless a few?

The law of gradation and evolution of the soul is also proclaimed in our religion as

GAHAMBAR stages of creation of the Universe.

The following passages in our Scriptures show that the Law of Karma was clearly accepted.

Gatha 29.4, Gatha 43.5, Gatha 30.11, Yasna 7-27, Vispa Humata

Zoroastrian Texts supporting Reincarnation:

We must realize that the entire Zoroastrian Scriptures consisted of 21 Nasks and out of that we have only one left. Could it not be possible that more evidence may have been lost in the Nasks that have been lost ?

Let us take the Gathas first:

1. There is a stanza in the Spentamad Gathas (49-11) which has a key-word: Paitiyeinti (They come back).

The subject of this verb is "souls" that had a record of evil deeds, and who had earned evil reputation. They return to this "world of illusions" (drujo-De-mane), because they had belonged to it (anghen astayo). The Pahlavi people had a tradition that "demons go out to receive, in hell, evil souls taking with them a potion of bitter drink!" So this passage (49-11) was translated to incorporate this legend, and they took Paitiyeinti as meaning "go out to receive"; and actually smuggled the word "demons" (non-existent) as the subject (understood) of the verb! European and other scholars, for reasons known to them, never doubted this version! In 1908, as a youth attending college. I had the audacity to differ. The subject "souls" was there. What need was there to borrow the word "demons"? And the verb distinctly means (even in the Sanskrit equivalent): "Come back."

This was published with annotations in the Cherag, in The Theosophist and other magazines. Later, a great scholar, Sohrab Bulsara, concurred. Then came another independent confirmation from Erwad R. Meherji Rana. Later Erwad Phiroze Masani, another eminent scholar, also translated the stanza on my lines. Dr. Irach Taraporewala, agreeing with my translation, has added a foot-note referring to me. The most surprising support came from Dastur F. Bode and Behramgore Anklesaria who, in their published translations, agree that "the souls return" and they eliminate the fictitious demons!

It should be noted that the word Paiti occurs twice in the stanza: meaning: "again and again".

The gist of the stanza is that certain undeserving types of souls belong to this "lower world of delusions," and have to return to the same abode by a sort of law of affinity and attraction.

2. Gatha (30-10) is another significant stanza (with the key-word Zazente which Mr. Bulsara took as the reduplicative present tense of za "to be born") meaning: "They used to be born repeatedly". In the same paragraph, it is stated that "those very souls would, one day, be reunited (yaozente) in the abode of God, when that influence of delusions is broken. Till then they used to be re-born because of "the reputation and glory of this world."

3. Gatha (46-11) is typical of several other similar allusions to "falling down from the Bridge of Selection into the lower world of illusions", because "they had hardened their conscience"! This "bridge" is an allegory. In Zoroastrian eschatology, souls with a bad rec-

ord are supposed to be unable to cross over to Heaven. (Heaven is the Caro-deman, the abode of Divine Songs, the opposite pole of Druio-deman, this phenomenal world of deceptions). The falling down into an "unreal" plane of existence (because such souls could not cross over to Paradise) can only mean return to this earth in another incarnation (prior to yazente or re-union, mentioned in 30-10). I can quote many similar allusions to the arrival at the Bridge and "the downfall". (Compare the fall of Lucifer, Adam, etc.)

In Gath (34-6) and (50-9) there is a variant of the verb, as Paiti-ayent meaning "may I return" to fulfill certain aspirations.

4. Gatha (46-19) has a clear statement about deserving "souls getting their reward in the next life (Paraahum)"

Zarathushtra promises this reward to all who follow the Path of Righteousness prescribed by him. This word Para-ahum has no other meaning but "next life" in Avesta, as well as in its equivalent Sanskrit.

5. In the Pazend text known as Dhoop-sama, there is a concluding prayer: "May the departed souls return (Be-ayend) to our good religion of Mazdayasnis!" But supposing they have reached perfection and "do not have to return" (agar ne-ayend) then "may they pass on to the tribunal of Meher (Mithra), the true Judge, with their great aspirations". Here both eventualities have been weighed in the balance: may return and may not have to return. Thus it impartially surveys the lot of both types of men.

Afn Rapithwan (para 29) similarly presents two alternatives for the departed souls (va-

taran): those that work out their destiny - and those who fail.

6. During the performance of the Yasna ritual, the doctrine of reincarnation is symbolically inculcated: The extract of Haoma twigs represents "Wisdom, derived from the strokes of fate"; the mortar signifies incarnation; the pestle the play of fate; the resultant juice (mixed with the extract of an evergreen tree, representing immortality) has to pass through a dish with nine perforations repeatedly, from the mortar to another cup (the post-mortem rest) and vice-versa. This dish represents one's physical vesture which has nine apertures. The repeated filtering indicates several births, until finally the sacrament is fit to be poured back into the well, from which water had been drawn at the initial stage, symbolizing that Yaozente or reunion with the Divine Source.

7. There is a special ritual called Geti-kharid. The idea behind it is significant; it implies advance "purchase of meritorious existence on this earth, by the departed soul to be born on its return". There can be no other implication, as it distinctly refers to Geti, or the corporeal world (which the soul has left, and where the returning personality seeks to possess a comfortable niche on return). It is a sort of advance reservation for the future.

8. Resurrection is called in Pazend terminology Tan-e-pasin or the last bodily existence. The word "the last" naturally suggests several previous ones, lived in tan (the gross physical vestures). At the final moment of "awakening from the dead" (which is an allegory for "the soul is dead that slumbers") there is to be an end to the long series of births

and deaths! No longer would a physical body be necessary for a resurrected soul that has attained immortality. So there is to be freedom from the thralldom of incarnations, when liberation (Rewan-bokhtagi) is achieved. There is another word, Frashogard, which refers to "promotion" from the human stage to a higher state of existence, known as that of a Soshyant (Benefactor of the human race)! Kyamat is nother term referring to the "permanency" of a soul in heaven that, erstwhile, was a sojourner on earth in his numerous incarnations.

9. A great scholar, (Shamsh-ul-ulema) Dr. Sir Jeevanji Mody, after discussing this controversial question, expresses as his opinion:

"Regarding reincarnation, Zoroastrianism does not say 'no' in so many words. I would make myself clear when I say that the negative is subject to being qualified."

This should be the attitude of a true seeker of light. (Dr. Mody was an eminent Freemason and knew the implication of "resurrection" very well).

This transformation of man-is it not the true meaning of resurrection?

In Nietzsche's autobiography Ecce Homo, he wrote regarding Zarathustra: "The fundamental idea of my work-namely, the Eternal Recurrence of all things-this highest of all possible formulae for a Yea-saying philosophy, first occurred to me in August 1881. I made a note of the thought on a sheet of paper, with the postscript: 6,000 feet beyond men and time! That day I happened to be wandering through the woods alongside of the lake of Silvaplana, and I halted beside a huge pyramidal and

and towering rock.... It was then that the thought struck me." In his "Explanatory Notes to Thus Spake Zarathustra. Nietzsche further affirms: "The doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence is the turning point of history.... The moment in which I begot recurrence is immortal, for the sake of that moment alone I will endure recurrence.... We must desire to perish in order to arise afresh. - from one day to the other. Wander through a hundred souls. - let that be thy life and thy fate! And then finally: desire to go through the whole process once more!" The poem overflows with this spirit.

Why should a Zoroastrian believe in Reincarnation.

The doctrine of Reincarnation is not mere fiction put forward by self-seeking priests or having borrowed from our Hindu brothers. It is an eternal universal law having a place in many great religions and systems of philosophy.

We should revere God's plan (evolution of our soul) and realize that the doctrine gives utmost scope for the fuller development of the soul by experience and wisdom, which cannot be attained in one short life time. In the book Hadokht Nask, it is narrated that after our bodily demise, our record of deeds done on earth takes the form as KERDAR. The Vision explains: If I am ugly, it is YOU who made me such! If I am beautiful it is YOU who deserve the credit. ARDAVIRAFNAMEH describes in minute detail how just are God's decrees. His arithmetic is unerring. Though HIS mill grinds slowly, it grinds exceedingly fine. In spite of all this He is so Merciful.

During our lifetime every thing we do, bring its compensation either in this or future one. It is we who bring upon ourselves, this trials and tribulations. If we accept that we are the total cause of all we are and that all that happens to us, we shall have new courage to shoulder the responsibility and we are better able to smile in the face of trouble, grin and bear the misfortunes so as to say.

The imperishable soul with its earthly limitations and a gravity bound body thus keeps coming again and again, till it is ready to fly back as a homeward pigeon.

There are numerous examples of cases of people remembering their past lives on which millions and millions of books have been sold.

*"Never had the spirit either a womb or a tomb
Never did it cease to exist in Time's honeycomb
Unborn, eternal, changeless, is this timeless spirit,*

Death destroys its fleeting frames but never the spirit"

We Zoroastrians can not reject the theory without carefully weighing its soundness and merit. Let us try and live as pure and meritorious life as possible so that we may reduce the number of incarnations and get a better and pleasant future in our next incarnation. The soul will surely rise above the limitations of the "flesh". Even to believe all this, we need a good Kam.

Material taken from : DASTURJI DABU'S BOOK

"REINCARNATION The Cycle of Necessity" by Manly Palmer Hall

"REINCARNATION The Phoenix Fire Mystery" Complete & Edited by Joseph

"A Vision of the Aquarian Age" by George Trevelyan. Head & S.L. Cranston.

"The Case Of The Orbiting Soul" by Adi Doctor.