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THE TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL by Rayarama Das
THE EIGHT PRAYERS OF LORD CHAITANYA

BACK TO GODHEAD



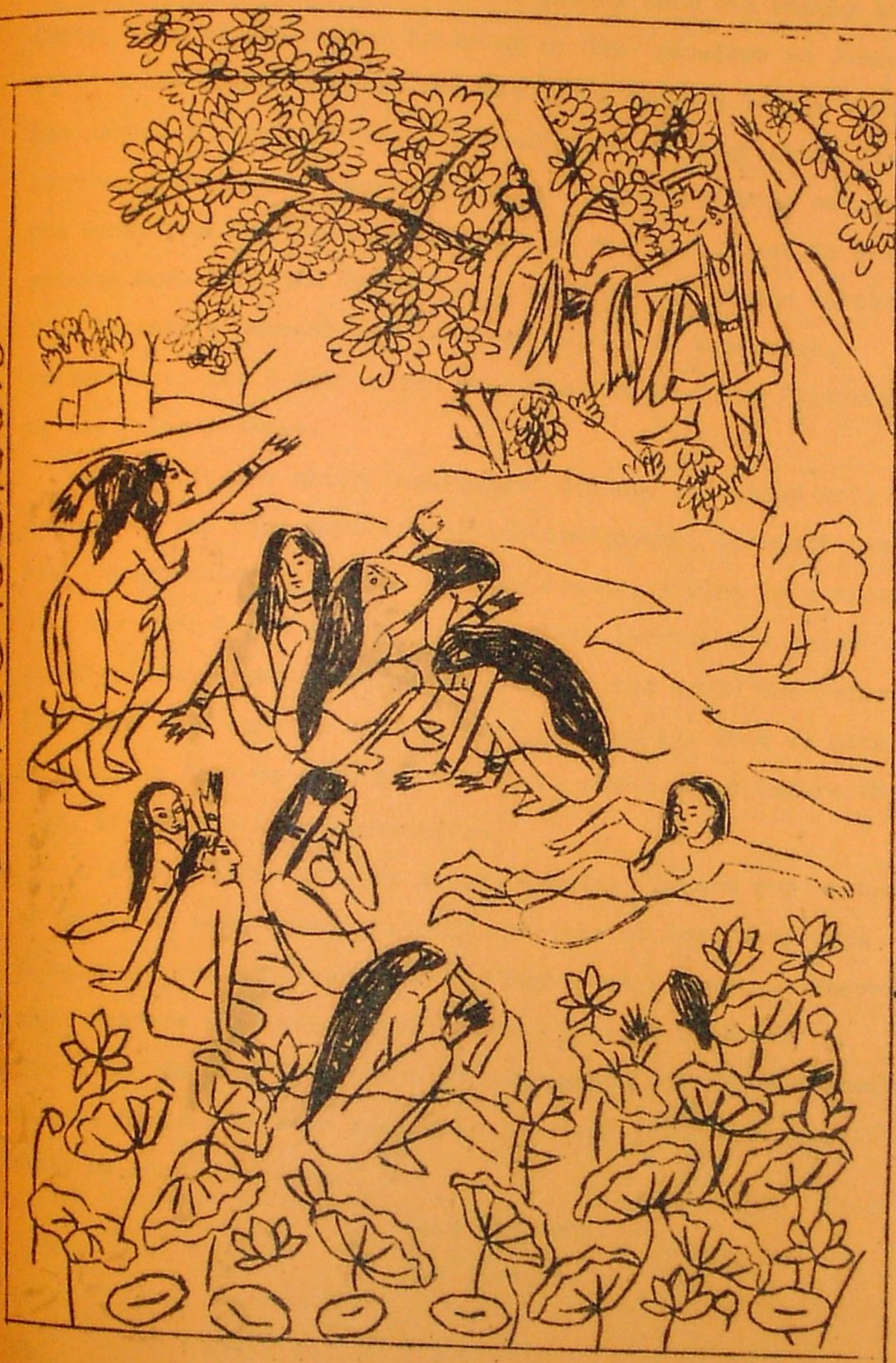
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By the mercy of Krishna,

It is our great pleasure to report that the Mantra Rock Dance, held at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco on January 29 in order to raise funds for the Radha Krishna Temple there has proved a great success. The assistance of poet Allen Ginsberg is noted, and deeply appreciated. As a result of this success, the spread of Krishna Consciousness on the West Coast is steadily gaining momentum. The Swami has given lectures at the Christian Yoga Society's ashram, and to other groups in that area. Furthermore, the construction of an ashram in upper California is now being planned.

The picture which immediately follows our cover this issue is more of the fine work of our art directress, Jadurani Devi Dasi (Judge Koslofsky). It portrays Krishna, hiding in a tree, with His girl friends, the Gopis, below. Krishna had taken the girls' clothing while they were bathing, and would not return it unless each came to ask for hers personally. This is meant to teach us that we must be willing to stand naked before the Lord, if we want His association.

At the close of this issue, (again, forgive our numbering of pages) we have added the only writings of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the originator of the Samkirtan movement. These eight prayers have been rendered into English by Swami Bhaktivedanta, and into verse by Hayagriva Das (Howard Wheeler). We hope to publish them again, in the near future, along with an essay on Lord Chaitanya.

Hare Krishna,

The Editors.

FROM THE LECTURES OF SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

Notes transcribed from lectures given December 21, 22, 1966.

Lectures on the Chaitanya Charitamrita

Liberation from material bondage is called Nirguna. As soon as we are transcendental to the three modes (gunas) of material nature, we are liberated. There is a Vedic injunction that living in the city or village is for those in the state of rajas (passion); living in the forest is for those in the mode of sattva (goodness); and those who live in the liquor store or gambling casino are in tamas (ignorance). When you live in a temple of Krishna, that is Nirguna.

Only Vishnu is actually Nirguna. The three gunas cannot effect Vishnu (Narayana, Krishna). Those in touch with Krishna are similarly above the modes-- so it is quoted from the Srimad Bhagawatam by Lord Chaitanya. It must be accepted that we are transcendental and liberated from the modes if we are engaged for Krishna. Such a person is liberated. But Krishna-consciousness is also a declaration of war against Maya. Maya is so powerful, how can you hope to save yourself? Yet, if you simply adhere to Krishna consciousness, there will be no power to get you into the province of personal sense-gratification which is maya's domain. In the spiritual world there is only activity for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord. No power in the world can drag you down if you are situated in the Supreme. If you simply think, How can I serve Krishna?-- even then you will become liberated, so what to speak of actually doing something?

Although it may be snowing outside, you have the means to

stay inside and be protected. Similarly, Vishnu and Vishnu bhakta (devotion) are not effected by the modes. The foolish think that Krishna is one of us. Whereas it is He who provides and He who is the Proprietor.

Krishna is the Original Lord and Vishnu is His plenary expansion. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna Himself says, "There is nothing Supreme over Me." In Brahma Samhita it is said that, "Govinda is the Original, and from Him come all other Vishnu expansions." This is like the original candle from which one can light innumerable candles. These others may be of equal power, but you have to accept the one as original. When Krishna came, He was completely free from all rules and regulations. Rama, on the other hand, took only one wife and later banished her when public criticism was turned against her-- thus Rama followed the codes and regulations for a King. Krishna, however, called girls at night to come and dance with Him. He followed no rules or regulations; for Him there is no law. Other incarnations came to fulfill some particular purpose, but they did not exercise full power. It is widely confirmed that He is the Supreme Person. Not even Radha, His Eternal Consort, nor the Gopis could control Him when He wanted to leave Brindaban.

Shiva and Brahma are order-carrying servants of Krishna. Krishna is the only Master, and everyone else is His servant. We are servants of the servants of His servants, thus extended a million times. He who realizes this is liberated. But he who thinks that he is God is a dog. Lord Chaitanya said, I am not a Brahmin, I am not a Hindu, I am not a Sannyasi-- I am the servant's servant's servant. When you learn that, you will be in

Krishna consciousness. Liberation is not to become God, but the dog of God.

Realization means to know, "I am not this matter." That is all right, but what are your activities? Liberation is to have activities based on realization, in other words, devotional service. When you give up your obligation to Maya, you then become obliged to Krishna consciousness. One just doesn't say "I am American," or "I am married"-- there must be some activities of an American or a married person. Just to say "I am Brahman" is insufficient. What are your activities? Nonsense? Do you mean to say Brahman means nothingness or death? There are activities which turn on Brahman realization. But those with little brain substance cannot see beyond the giving up of the world. Therefore, after giving up the world and family and taking sannyasi (the renounced order), they again come down and open hospitals, do philanthropic work, and take up the worship of man. Those sannyasis who open hospitals are applauded, and those who preach Krishna are thought of as third class and old fashioned by people in general.

Explanation of Krishna's "separation" from the Gopis:

This is a spiritual matter and cannot be understood in terms of material or physical separation. The Gopis' intense crying when Krishna left Brindaban is spiritual and eternal. On the spiritual platform, there is no difference between crying for Him and being with Him. If there were separation, how could it be transcendent? To be crying for Him they are fixed on Him, thinking of Him. This is absolute. Lord Chaitanya also cried for Krish-

na. To actually cry for Krishna is the most perfect realization.

In Chaitanya Chaitamrita, Lord Chaitanya quotes from the Srimad Bhagwatam and Brahma Samhita in which Brahma says, "I am appointed by the Supreme Lord, and Shiva is also an appointed agent. We are under the control of the Supreme Lord. Actually, nobody is free or independent of God. Furthermore, nobody is equal to or greater than He." This is spoken by Brahma to his disciple Narada who said, "So far as we know, you (Brahma) are the Supreme; yet sometimes you meditate and worship." In answer to this, Brahma informed him of his real position.

The energy of the Lord is said to be in three forms, whether conceived of materially or spiritually. Perceived materially, the energies are divided into goodness, passion and ignorance. On the spiritual plane, the energies are divided into spiritual, material and marginal potencies.

Lord Chaitanya goes on now to discuss the six kinds of incarnations. These are: Purusha, Leela, Guna, Manantra, Yuga, and Saktavish. Thus far he has discussed Purusha, Leela and Guna avatars. Now he explains Manu and Yuga. He is telling Sanatan Goswami, his disciple, that there are countless avatars of Manu. They come in one day of Brahma. One day of Brahma is equal to 1,000 yugas or 4,300,000 of our earth years. Similarly, one night of Brahma has the same duration, and he lives 100 years, consisting of such days and nights. Within these twelve hours of a day of Brahma there are fourteen Manus. In one such month there are 420 Manus, in one such year, 5,040. So there are 504,000 Manus in one Brahma lifetime. And there are innum-

erable Brahmas.

Therefore, these incarnations can't be counted. What is more, all these Manus and Brahmas live during one outgoing breath of Maha Vishnu. There is no way of measuring the power. Because our intelligence cannot cope with this, we dismiss our source as void, or else we speculate endlessly on it. But we have evidence from Vedic literature, on which we can to some extent gauge the size and scope. Evidence comes in three forms: (1) Higher authority, which is the surest; (2) Direct perception, which is often not available; and (3) The age-old tradition of parampara, or disciplic succession of knowledge. The source of evidence of my father's identity is my mother. I must hear this from her. Similarly, we hear of the Supreme from Mother Vedas.

The Manu avatars are rulers. Manu is the father of man. He gives directions on how to live to the conditioned souls--who are conditioned because they wanted to enjoy material nature. The Manus say, "Enjoy in this way, and you can come back to God-head." Manu Smriti and Manu Samhita are law books of the Hindus. So for those who are serious, the sages and saints, such as Manu, point the way. After each and every dissolution, Manu comes. There is one Manu avatar in each universe. They have names, but they are uncountable.

The Yuga incarnations occur in every millennium. There are four Yugas, the Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali Yugas. When 1,000 yugas pass, that is 12 hours of Brahma. Each Yuga is divided into four. The Satya Yuga lasts 18 lacs, or 1,800,000 years. The Treta Yuga lasts 1,100,000 years; Dwapara lasts

800,000 years and the Age of Kali lasts 432,000 years. At present, 5,000 years of Kali Yuga have passed. There are 427,000 years of Kali yet to go. Kali Yuga means the age of quarrel, hypocrisy and ignorance. This situation will grow more intolerable as the yuga progresses. One should know that earth is a condemned place. If one is satisfied with a condemned condition, as the Bowery bum is satisfied lying in the road, he cannot make progress. We are always in the grip of Nature, and consequently we are suffering the three-fold miseries of material existence. Spiritualists are said to be pessimists, and this is actually quite true. One must be.

The Vedic literature offers us an ideal place, where we can go after the leaving of this condemned place. We must try for it. Try for Krishna. Unless one tries, he is defeated. We are born ignorant, and if one is educated more and more into ignorance, as we are today, then all is defeat. One should ask-- is there a remedy? The Vedanta Sutra states: "Now (in the human form) it is time for you to inquire into your Brahman life." This is the knowledge that I am not this body, I am spirit-soul. But to simply know this without living according to one's knowledge is pointless. To act like Brahman is to be a Vaishnava. The act is called Bhakti, or devotional service. As soon as you begin activity in Krishna consciousness, you at once attain Brahman. The more you act, the more firmly you become situated in spiritual life. In Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, "My dear Arjuna, declare it to all the world, that my devotee never perishes." We should try to follow this concept as it is found in the Vedic literatures, and under the proper guidance.

"Day After Day, Life After Life"

To go to Krishna's Abode
a ladder is provided.
We must pull ourselves up
rung by rung.
There is no one to push us.
There is Maya

swirling like smoke
above, around, below.

By simply

chanting

Krishna's Name
with sincerity,

submission,

and purified desire,

we clear away the smoke
and see standing rungs above us,
Beloved Swamiji.
How easy it is then to pull ourselves up
one more rung.

But if we forget

Krishna

and say, "Oh, I have advanced another rung,"
the smoke quickly engulfs us
and Swamiji is lost

from our sight.

So we stand there;
we cannot fall off the ladder,

(This is Krishna's Mercy.)

we just stand there

on whatever rung we are on.

We only need to remember

always,

"I am not the provider;
Krishna is the Provider,"

and the smoke melts away,
and we see

Swamiji
standing there
a few rungs above us,
looking down,
bright-eyed and smiling,
beckoning us to reach up
one more rung towards

Krishna.

Again it is so easy
to pull ourselves up
one more rung.
And no matter how many rungs
we pull ourselves up,
standing there always

above us is

Swamiji,
helping us

to help ourselves

get out of this foreign place
and go back

Back to Godhead.

Home,

-- Brahmananda Das Brahmachary
(Bruce Scharf)

Set adrift again
perverse ocean of duality
 (diseased)
 billowing the sails
 (leading to hell)
ever entangling web of hate
minds sullied with repeated contamination
 hearts overladen with dust
from the harvests of senses unrestricted
 wastelands of forgetfulness
imperfect, illusioned,
 clouded,

covered . . .

This Maya
proportionately miserable
lurking (hands out stretched)
awaiting those mode accomplices
 (of unreality)
attached to the darkness of ignorance . . .

 Krishna
 all pervading Lord
shine on the lotus seeds
(that are Your devotees)
till they bloom
 (with the fragrance of You)
and drift upstream through the modes
empowered by Your spotless disciples
 resting at Your Feet
perfect (in full remembrance)
eternal

 knowledgeable
 blissful.

-- Ranchhor Das Brahmachary
(Ronald King)

What if every person on this planet
only chanted and sang and danced and lived
HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE
every hour
 of every day
of every life?

-- Brahmananda Das Brahmachary
(Bruce Scharf)

THE TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL

by Rayarama Das Brahmachary
(Raymond Marais)

The transmigration of the soul, sometimes called reincarnation, is a much misunderstood phenomenon. This is because the doctrine has most often been presented by philosophers who do not actually believe in the existence of the individual spirit soul. However, transmigration has no meaning except on this basis. In trying to explain the infinite variety which we actually see around us in terms of abstract Oneness or Void, these philosophers have twisted the Vedic teachings quite out of shape. Justifiably, therefore, most people cannot grasp this concept-- they either get a very vague picture of it, or they laugh it off as ridiculous.

The transmigration of the soul is, however, presented very lucidly and scientifically in the Bhagavad Gita, that marvelous battlefield conversation which sums up the essence of Vedic knowledge in the space of seven hundred verses. Bhagavad Gita was taught by Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It stands to reason that the doctrines of the Supreme Divine Person do not lend themselves easily to impersonal philosophical speculation. This is why the impersonalist thinkers so befuddle their readers when they try to use the Gita's authority to back up their own theories. If we are to learn from Bhagavad Gita, as from any scripture given man by God, then we

must put aside our preconceptions, and accept what is said to us-- as it is spoken.

Although the impersonalist philosopher makes the claim that everything is one, the Lord Himself draws a line of distinction for us:

Earth, water, fire, air,
Ether, mind,
Understanding, and false ego--
This is the eightfold division of My nature.
This is My lower nature.
Know My other and higher nature
Which is the soul,
By which this world is upheld, O Mighty-armed.
(Gita, VII/5)

This means that Lord Krishna manifests His creation through two energies. The one-- matter-- is called lower because it is mutable, and because it depends upon the other for its existence. The other energy is the soul, which is called higher because it is immutable, eternal, and because it depends directly upon the Lord Himself-- the Supreme Energetic-- for its existence and activities. Furthermore, the lower nature has no independent consciousness, whereas the higher nature is composed of an infinitude of individual, independent sparks of consciousness, identical in quality with the Lord Himself, Who is the Supreme Soul.

A basic difference between God and the individual soul now comes into view: the Supreme Consciousness is all-pervading, but the individual consciousness is limited. Although the Lord is the awake indweller in all manifestations, the individual living entities are each subject to a limited range. They too can extend their consciousness, but on a smaller scale. This they actually do when they adopt the material concept of life, and identify themselves with the body, which is nothing but matter, or lower energy. Unlike the Lord, however, the living entities

tend to forget themselves while in contact with matter. For this reason, they are classified in a third category, as marginal energy, although they are constitutionally spiritual. This forgetfulness is the source of all woe, and the mechanism of all bondage.

The soul, being eternal, does not die when the body dies, even though it imagines itself to be the body. It simply goes on to take up habitation in another form. Lord Krishna describes this as follows:

Just as a person casts off worn-out garments
And puts on others that are new,
Even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies,
And take on others that are new. (Gita, II/22)

Although this may seem a very far-fetched notion to the man who hasn't given it much thought-- and even more so to one who hasn't made the distinction between body and soul-- it is actually a principle which we see illustrated for us every day of our lives-- and in our own lives at that. This is how the Lord puts it for us to comprehend:

As the soul passes, while in this body,
Through childhood, youth and age,
Even so is its taking on of another body.
The wise are not perplexed at this. (Gita, II/13)

Even modern medical science agrees that the body is perpetually changing. And yet, there is that constant "I," that has been here since my first memories, and I am still unchanged. In this way we can see that the change of body is always occurring. The change from one body to another is only a bit more emphatic in that, in the process, we lose most of the remembrances of our past life.

The factors guiding this change from one body to another can

also be understood in terms of the daily processes of the organism. The food I take today will determine the structure and soundness of my body tomorrow. Good, nutritious food will assure me a healthy, strong body. Poor or careless diet will assure me ill-health, and unclean food will result in disease. Food determines the nature of the body. In changing from body to body, it is conscious association that acts as the determining factor.

Thinking of whatever state
He at the end gives up his body,
To that state does he attain, O son of Kunti,
Being always absorbed in thinking of it. (Gita, VII/6)

The living being thus puts in an application, so to speak, in terms of its devotion. That to which it is devoted is given it in full. The much talked-about genetic code is actually the application blank-stamped by nature and approved by the Lord, Who is willing to let everyone have what they want.

All this is accomplished through the agency of the three modes by which material nature manifests itself. Because the soul has lost consciousness of its real identity, and has given itself over to nature, it is limited to nature's means of expression, which consists of the modes. The situation is outlined in the Thirteenth Chapter of Bhagavad Gita:

The soul in nature
Partakes of the modes born of nature.
Attachment to the modes is the cause
Of its births in good and evil wombs. (Gita, XIII/21)

The three modes are goodness, passion and ignorance. They may be characterized as follows: Goodness applies to duty, purity, health and knowledge. Passion is the principle of attraction, avarice, lust, anger and activity. Ignorance is the principle of inertia, negligence, indolence, stupor and blindness. All

three are material manifestations, not found on the spiritual platform. As regards the transmigration of the soul from one body to another, the modes work in this way:

Those who are established in goodness rise upwards;
The passionate remain in the middle regions;
The dull, steeped in the lower events of the modes,
Sink downwards. (Gita, XIV/18)

The concept of rising applies to more highly developed consciousness, and therefore sinking applies to less developed consciousness. This is the principle of karma, or worldly activity. Those who devote their lives to, and work in accordance with, a particular mode or concept, will quite naturally cling to that concept at the time of death. By concept, I do not mean some abstraction. I mean that to which one is actually actively devoted, irrespective of his announced public philosophy. Thus, one's activities in this life prepare the ground for the next birth.

The results of actions performed under the influence of the different modes is more fully described elsewhere in the same chapter by Sri Krishna.

When the embodied soul meets with dissolution
When goodness prevails,
It attains to the pure worlds
Of those who know the Highest.
Meeting with dissolution when passion prevails,
It is born among those attached to action.
If it is dissolved when ignorance prevails,
It is born in the wombs of the deluded. (Gita, XIV/14-15)

Thus we learn that pious activities will lead one to rebirth on the heavenly planets. Activities in passion will usually lead to rebirth on earth, or on similar worlds where greed and lust are the dominating forces. Those who have given themselves over to ignorance, meanwhile, take birth among the lower

animals, plants, and even among living stones, such as mountains.

Before going into greater detail about these births and the modes which determine them, let's examine the actual occurrence of transmigration, as the Lord describes it to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita.

The living entities are eternal fragmental parts of Me.
 They are dragging on
 In a bitter struggle for existence in material nature,
 With the six senses, including mind.
 When the soul takes up a body
 And when he leaves it,
 He takes these (mind and senses) and goes
 Even as the wind carries perfumes from their places.
 (Gita, XV/7-8)

Although the mind forgets its past activities when it is brought to a new birth, it does retain impressions. This is why some people have been able to recall events from their previous lives. This is not to be confused with the phenomenon of organic malfunction called *deja-vu*, in which we actually experience the same thing twice within a thousandth of a second. These impressions of past lives are real, and they have a strong influence on our present actions.

Mind and the senses are actually very subtle forms of matter, which we keep as long as we remain in material nature, or until the period dissolution of the universe. The body is the gross covering of the soul, and mind and the senses are the subtle. It is through the medium of the mind that the spirit surrenders consciousness of itself, and loses its identity. Mind is the seat of the senses, and mind, having become the focal point of consciousness, is also the tape on which our activities are registered, determining-- according to the modes-- what our next birth will be. This is why control of the mind is essential

to spiritual and worldly progress alike. The yoga process is actually nothing more than the science of controlling the mind. The system of bhakti yoga also tackles this problem, but on a slightly different level.

Having obtained some idea of what transmigration is and how it works, let's examine the influence of the modes of nature upon our activities, and learn what effect these have upon the cycle of rebirth. Lord Krishna says:

The fruit of good action
Is said to be of the nature of goodness and pure;
The fruit of passion is pain,
And the fruit of dullness is ignorance. (Gita, XIV/16)

Those who devote their lives to hellish activities can expect to take rebirth in a hellish situation. This is the justice which is a constitutional part of nature, and from which no being is exempt: ". . . For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians, V/7)

To many people, the idea of eternal damnation has always stood as a most unreasonable proposition in the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ. It is incomprehensible to them how the Lord can give frail man a single chance to choose his way, and then cast him forever into hell. Modified by the principles of reincarnation, however, the prophecy of the gnashing of teeth takes on new meaning. Here is Lord Krishna on this subject:

Given over to self-conceit, force and pride,
And also to lust and anger,
These malicious people despise Me,
Dwelling in the body of themselves and others.
These cruel haters, worst of men--
I hurl these evil-doers only into
The wombs of demons
In this round of births and deaths.
(Gita, XVI/18-19)

As for those who, though bound by material nature and unable to give up their attachment to it, nevertheless follow the scripture and have some faith in God, things are different. The fruits of goodness are presented in these terms:

The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice
and are cleansed of sin,
Worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven.
They reach the holy world of Indra,
And enjoy in heaven the pleasures of the gods.
Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven,
They return to the world of mankind when their merit is
exhausted.
Thus conforming to the doctrine enjoined in the three
Vedas, and still desirous of enjoyments,
They obtain what is subject to birth and death.
(Gita, IX/20-21)

This is the fruit of actions performed in the mode of goodness-- that is, according to scriptural law and with faith in God. However, it is worth noting that this is the type of birth gained by those who still love this material world, and like all things material, it is perishable. Even on the highest of all material planets, the Brahmaloaka, where life is immensely long, and where there are ample facilities for pleasure on a scale unimagined here, still the law of birth and death continues. Even for Brahma himself, whose life span is coequal with the life span of the universe, birth, death, old age and pain exist.

From the realm of Brahma downwards,
All worlds are subject to return to rebirth.
But on reaching Me, O son of Kuntī,
There is no return to birth again. (Gita, VIII/16)

Just as the craving for the fruits of material activities leads one on to take his next birth in this material situation, and then on and on again-- so there are spiritual activities too, and these lead one, by association, to take his birth in the spiritual world, in his natural, constitutional and final form as

pure spirit soul. Just what these spiritual activities are and how the association with one's own true spiritual self can be established is enunciated in all the scriptures of the world.

These whose thoughts
Are set on Me,
I straightway deliver
From the ocean of death-bound existence, O Partha.
On Me alone fix thy mind,
Let thy understanding dwell in Me.
In Me shalt thou live thereafter.
Of this there is no doubt. (Gita, XII/7-8)

And so it is that God guarantees eternal life to those who accept His association. Actually, we are all servitors of the Lord in our true position as His spirit soul parts and parcels. Therefore, returning to our conscious, natural status means returning to our relationship of service to God. If we do not worship God, then we worship some other thing, for we are by nature worshipful. Maintaining these secondary relationships keeps us from Him, and thus from our own full consciousness of Self. Further information of birth in the spiritual world-- the Kingdom of God-- is given elsewhere in Bhagavad Gita.

Those who are freed from pride and delusion, who have
conquered the evil of attachment,
Who, all desires stilled, are ever devoted to the Supreme
Spirit,
Who are liberated from the dualities known as pleasure
and pain and are undeluded,
Go to that eternal state.
The sun does not illumine that,
Nor the moon nor fire.
That is My supreme abode,
From which those who reach it never return.
(Gita, XV/5-6)

The Kingdom of God is not artificially illuminated, because it is self-effulgent. There is no dead matter of any kind there. All things are fully alive, fully aware and awake-- and all things are fully, blissfully engaged in the service of God.

This answers the question as to why so few men go there, or even aspire to that state: it is for those who serve. All who dwell there, including the Lord Himself, are full of love, and are engaged in devoted service. Men in their foolishness do not seek this position, nor have they any taste for it-- and therefore they do not attain to it. But the one who realizes the sweetness of devotion and who recognizes his real position as the servitor of God, will associate with God by means of transcendental loving service here during this life, and will then take his next birth according to that association.

We must, now, realize that all men buy and pay for their own sufferings. Who plants thistles and expects to harvest grain? We do, all of us. In actuality, the unhappiness of this earthly existence is what we want and what we ask for. The Lord merely supplies our demands.

As men approach Me,
So do I accept them.
Men on all sides
Follow My path, O Partha. (Gita, IV/11)

Nevertheless, because of His unbounded love and mercy, Krishna advents Himself-- or sends His representatives from the spiritual sky-- here on earth, in order to give us knowledge of these things, and to offer the wandering lost souls an opportunity to return home, back to Godhead.

For the protection of the good,
For the destruction of the wicked
And for the establishment of righteousness,
I come into being from age to age.
He who knows thus in its true nature
My divine birth and works,
Is not born again when he leaves this body,
But comes to Me, O Arjuna.
(Gita, IV/8-9)

We are the beloved children of the Lord of All Existences,

and we can have anything we want from Him. This is the secret of God's love for all beings. What we have to do is to understand our real position, so that the real being can have real happiness by knowing what to ask for. Death is actually a birthday party, at which Krishna presents us with just what we wanted, in the form of rebirth. Understanding this, the sublime and infinite kindness of God, what can we want beyond His association? He Himself is the dearest of all delights, and His service is the most joyful of all activities.

SECOND AVENUE SAMADHI

Standing outside the storefront
of Swamiji's Society
for Krishna Consciousness,
I look up and down
Manhattan's Second Avenue
at derelicts
Puerto Ricans
and
sundry fruitive laborers
and wonder.

Hare Krishna, I think
and look at the
COSMOS PARCELS EXPRESS CORPORATION
sign
across the way
like the very
cosmos itself
in its white and green
aggression,
and at the
Gonzalez Funeral Home and
Weitzner Brothers Memorials Corporation's
heavy tombstones
broadcasting death
to all,
and at the
Red Star Bar's
Seagram's 7 sign blinking
red and yellow relief for
exhausted karmis, poor
fruitive laborers.

Hare Krishna, I think,
 and walk down the sidewalk
 past the revolving
 red, white and blue
 Mobil Gasoline Sign
 buzzing and ringing bells of gas pumps
 feeding the dumb, steel chariots
 of Detroit.

Hare Krishna, Hare Rama, I think,
 wondering what Swamiji
 must think
 of (God bless) America,
 and walk on down
 the sidewalk's silent
 cigarette butts
 that stare up like
 little crushed universes
 of capitalism.

And think
 Hare Krishna
 on the corner of Houston Street
 and Second Avenue
 where I stand a long time
 thinking
 Hare Krishna,
 hands in my pockets and
 watching
 the dying sunlight fade
 over buildings and off
 the far silver parapets
 of the
 Brooklyn Bridge
 that reaches over
 the river
 like an altar
 to Krishna.

-- Hayagriva Das Brahmachary
 (Howard Wheeler)

Death paddled his dory past my fishing pole
 And he missed me, for who could this body be?
 Time leaped along a line of light that years ago
 yearned to be with me.
 And he missed me too,
 For when will the stars stop spinning?
 I pour my spirit from a cup for God to drink.
 He will wassail and I will kiss the flowers.

-- B. R. Becker

or LORD CHAITANYA'S MISSION

Lord Chaitanya (1487-1535) introduced the Samkirtan movement of chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Rama in India and is considered to be a complete incarnation of Krishna Himself. He is known, therefore, as Krishna Chaitanya. The Eight Prayers, or Instructions are Lord Chaitanya's only literary contribution. All other Chaitanya literature is written by His disciples.

1.

Glory to Thy Name, O Lord!
 Glory to Thee, O Krishna!
 Glory to Samkirtan!
 Chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,
 Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare
 my heart is purified,
 the dust of this world
 swept away,
 and the fires of birth and death
 extinguished.
 Through Thy Names alone, O Krishna,
 I am liberated
 from the binds of the flesh,
 for Thy Names spread the rays
 of the benediction moon,
 rejuvenate transcendental knowledge,
 expand the ocean of transcendental bliss,
 and enable all to taste
 the true nectar of the pleasure
 that all desire,
 for by hearing Thy Names alone, O Krishna,
 all men are blessed.

2.

Because only Thy Names, O my Lord,
 can bless all Thy creations,
 Thou hast millions of Names
 like Krishna, Rama, Govinda,
 Madhusudana, Nandanandana, Devakinandana,
 Yasodanandana, Radharamana, Gopinath,
 and in Thy Names, my Lord,
 Thou hast imparted
 Thy transcendental energies
 giving grace to all
 to chant Thy praise
 without difficulty,
 making Thyself
 so easily approachable, O Lord,
 by Thine omnipotence,
 by Thy compassion.
 Truly all misfortune and unhappiness
 is due to neglect
 of Thy Holy Names,
 O Krishna.

3.

Chanting Thy Names, O Lord,
 in all humility,
 mindful of my own
 insignificance,
 as tolerant as the grass,
 forbearing as the tree, prideless, unattached,
 like a leaf in the wind,
 offering respect to all
 without requiring
 respect for myself--
 in such a state, O Krishna,
 I can sing Thy Name
 eternally.

4.

O Nandanandana, Supreme Lord,
 I do not pray for wealth,
 beautiful women, disciples of my own,
 nor for objects of sense enjoyment
 nor for materials, O Lord--
 I pray only
 that I may serve
 at Thy Lotus Feet
 with causeless, unalloyed devotion
 life after life after life.

5.

Yet somehow, O Krishna,
 although Thy eternal servitor,
 I have fallen into this ocean
 of birth and death
 and am now tossed and overwhelmed
 by the tumultuous waves
 of material existence.
 O Krishna, kindly lift me
 from these waters of misery and death
 and place me as one of the atoms
 at Thy Lotus Feet.

6.

O my Lord, when shall my eyes
 praise Thee with tears of love
 flowing constantly by chanting
 Thy Holy Name?
 And when, O Krishna,
 shall my voice falter
 and my hair rise
 and I tremble to vibrate
 Hare Krishna, Hare Rama?

7.

Feeling Thy separation, O dear Lord,
 to me a moment is a millenium.
 When may I see Thee, at last, O Krishna?
 Now, as Thy rain,
 tears flow down my cheeks.
 I am lost without Thee
 in a vacant and empty world--
 O Thou Shining One,
 Answerer of all, be merciful.

8.

O dear Krishna, You may crush⁸ me
 as a woman at Thy Feet
 or handle me roughly
 by Thine embrace
 or break my heart
 by Thy absence,
 for Thou art free, O Lord,
 to do as Thou pleasest;
 but still Thou art always
 my worshipful Lord
 unconditionally,
 for Thou art no other
 than my Lord of life.

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