

REINCARNATION AND TRANSMIGRATION

Among the factors that have given rise to the doctrine of reincarnation and transmigration, ignorance and superstition preponderate over all others. The belief that a person who dies is born again on earth or that there is a soul in man that enters, after death, into another human or animal body is without scriptural foundation. It is deeply rooted in heathenism; and true Christians do not believe in it.

Reincarnation is described as a religious belief and is defined in the *Oxford Dictionary of the English Language* as “the return of the soul to earth after death, in a fresh bodily form”. From all data available there is no doubt that the belief is very ancient and it is shared by peoples of various creeds, tribes and nationalities in all the world.

“Transmigration of the soul” or “metempsychosis” is said to be the belief that after the body dies, the soul passes into some other material form or body – whether human or animal, plant or inanimate matter and so on. According to The American Educator Encyclopedia, “transmigration involves belief in the pre-existence as well as the survival of the soul after death; it is the conviction that the soul is not only indestructible but uncreated – eternal in the strictest sense. The doctrine appears in many religions, among them the Hindu and the ancient Egyptian, and it was held by many Greek and Roman philosophers, notably Plato...” – Vol.14, page T-154

It can be noted that while transmigration is said to mean the rebirth of a “soul” at death in another body, whether human or animal or plant or so, reincarnation usually means rebirth in a body of the same species.

Concerning reincarnation, E. Royston Pike stated: “The belief that when we die we are reborn on earth in another human body. Very often it is regarded as another name for Transmigration but this, strictly speaking, teaches that the reappearance on earth may be in non human (plant or animal) form equally with human. The Greek term for very much the same idea is Metempsychosis.”- Encyclopedia of Religion and Religions, page 319.

Spiritual Ignorance

On the subject “Reincarnation, otherwise Transmigration or Metempsychosis” the Chamber's Encyclopedia has this to say among other things: “The primitive conception of the separable soul capable of passing out of the body, assuming an independent existence of its own and taking up its abode in some other human being animal or inanimate object, finds expression in the idea of metempsychosis and transmigration which in the philosophical thought of Greece and India gathered a moral content as an explanation of the inequalities of life... At death the soul passes into an insect or some other animal or vegetable species; and not infrequently it is reborn with in the same family or clan in human form, an occurrence which is thought to account for the resemblances between persons of different generations. By some what similar reasoning the Australian natives explain why strangers become fast friends almost at first sight, alleging that the parties must have been comrades in a previous existence.

“In Madagascar there appear to have been many tribes of whom their neighbours asserted that

they were transformed at death into animals...

"The Zulu, like many other peoples, believe that their dead pass, according to their rank, into various kinds of serpents or lizards; but other Bantu-speaking peoples hold that their chiefs, or even the common herd, pass into lions and other animals; some Zambezi tribes say that a man can choose his own soul-animal by swallowing the maggots from the putrefying flesh of his chosen species.

"The following account of Ewe beliefs, itself only a sample of West African creeds is but a survey of some features of the reincarnation complex. The Ewe say that a man had two souls, one of which goes into the grave and thence to the land of the dead, which is a duplicate of this world: a man who has been a great king there will die soon after birth here, so that he may return to the scene of his former glories; and an aged man in this world may fall ill because his associates in Amedzowe, impatient at his long absence, are preparing to break down his hut there; his relatives in Amedzowe send him to this world...

"The deep-rooted confusion disclosed by this summary is parallel among the Edo of Benin, though the aspect of the creed differs widely; among them the genius is double and some say that the one in elimi (heaven) comes to earth when the one on earth leave the corpse of a dead man." – Vol. 11, page 572-573

This encyclopedia also touches on the ideas of Greece, India, Australasia and Europe, and they all reveal how man because of spiritual ignorance is capable of making himself a slave of his own imaginations and inventions.

Among several tribes in this country the belief is rife. Such children who are believed to have been born again in a new body are mostly identified by some kind of names with superstitious intention. In their infancy they are deemed not to deserve as much tender care as others, and their mothers prefer to use rags or sack-clothes for them.

Yoruba Conception

Dr. J. O. Lucas, writing on "The Yoruba Conception of Man", stated among other things: "The fact that children are born who show physical characteristics possessed by their parents to such an extent as to suggest that they are re-incarnations of their parents or ancestors leads to the idea that the second individuality is a double entity, a part of which may be incarnated in a new-born child. Whilst the other part contains the existence of the man as an individual." – The Religion of the Yorubas, page 245

In the view of Mr. Justice Adewale Thompson: "It is impracticable to expect any better standard of proof other than circumstantial evidence" as regards reincarnation. He stated in his book, The Invisible World, thus: "Since I am not yet dead and since I do not propose to do so for a considerable time I think it will not be fair to expect me to give an account of a former life.

"It is safe to assume that we are now prepared to accept the view that man is made up of body, soul and spirit and that the spirit is part of the universal spirit which pervades the whole of

creation.”

Justice Adewale Thompson explained that the two schools of thought on reincarnation are “The Extinctionist School” and “The Survival School”; and “judging by the results of modern experiments,” according to him, “the latter school is more acceptable”.

He stated: “The Survival School... argues that since the process of procreation continues, it is only logical to expect that the universal spirit which is being replenished by additional spirit essence on the death of a person, is also committed to surrender a corresponding side of its illimitable substance, at any time a new life is born, otherwise our public registers will be filled with records of deaths, and no births; maternity hospitals will be closed down and cemeteries constructed instead.” – Page 52

None of the authors quoted in the foregoing claimed to be inspired by the Father of Jesus Christ – Jehovah or Yahweh whichever you accept.

That the devil has capacity beyond human measure in making men take the shadow for the substance or believe what in fact does not exist, no one can gainsay. The Holy Bible does not in any way give credit to the doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration.

There is no time in all of history that reincarnation transmigration was connected with the true worshippers of God – whether before Christ or after him. The belief in either of them is known to have existed in ancient times only among the Greeks, Egyptians and some other non-Jewish nation who were not of the true supreme religion. And no Jew who was not an apostate would ever cherish the illusion that a dead person could be reborn on earth.

But today many people who claim to be Christians have expressed their belief in reincarnation. It is not because they find a passage in the Holy Bible that gives such an idea but because they have a tendency of swallowing or accepting what they will without recourse to the Book of books, which is the guide to true Christians in all matters of faith.

Living Soul

The whole foundation of the belief or teaching concerning reincarnation or transmigration is, according to the Scriptures, without substance. To think of the soul as a “living entity” or “being” in man that after death, is able to live on its own or enter another body to continue existence is very wrong. This notion, which has been instilled in the minds of men at the instance of Satan the devil, has developed into lots of imaginary beliefs and dogmas both among professed Christians and other religionists.

As regards the creation of man the Bible states: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7) The living soul or person is made up of the body from the dust of the ground and breath of life or spirit. The spirit is the air or breath men take in through the nostrils. What makes this particular air different is that it has the power of existence or life.

When the breath of life or spirit goes out of man or animal, the organs of the body cease to function and that means death. The Psalmist declared: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the

son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” – Psalm 146:3, 4

It is the same breath that operates in animals. And King Solomon, moved by the holy spirit of God, stated: “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts: even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” – Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20

God has made the air or breath available to all creatures that come into being in any part of the world; and it is inexhaustible. There is no particular kind of breath or spirit for every individual person or animal. And the air in the whole world is under the control of God. So when a man dies his breath of spirit returns to God in the sense that it is deposited in the air. As it is written, “If He (God) were to turn His thoughts inwards and recall His life-giving spirit, all that lives would perish on the instant, and man return again to dust.” (Job 34:14, 15 New English Bible) “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” – Ecclesiastes 12:7

All stories that have been weaved around the word soul as an “immaterial being” that passes, after death, into another human body or into animal or plant, or goes to heaven to enjoy bliss or into “hell-fire” for punishment and so on, are a web of lies. They are just human imaginations, and the devil has always endeavoured to create circumstances to make them appear as though they are realities. And so when Justice Adewale Thompson stated with reference to reincarnation that “it is impracticable to expect any better standard of proof other than circumstantial evidence” he was being honest.

The view that the soul is uncreated and indestructible or immortal is unscriptural. God Who is the Creator of all souls said: “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die...” – Ezekiel 18:4, 20

St. Peter, having pointed to Jesus Christ as the prophet and Messiah spoken of by Moses, added: “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet (Jesus), shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23) It is abundantly clear from these indisputable scriptural authorities that the soul is destructible or mortal.

True Christians do not believe in transmigration. The idea of a human “soul” taking abode in plants and even in inanimate objects is not from God but from Satan.

With regard to the creation of plants, it is written: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so ...” (Genesis 1:11, 12) God never said that the “soul” of persons should find abode in plants.

Moreover, the belief that a person who dies can be born again on earth is untrue. It is a fact that the process of Procreation continues but to think that it is the “spirit” of the dead that makes the birth of new lives possible is very wrong. The process of procreation is the fulfillment of the Divine mandate – “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Genesis 1:28) If it is those who die that are born again, how then came about the birth of Cain and Abel when nobody had died after Adam and Eve were created? And if the dead pass into serpents, lizards and other

animals and so on, where then did the “souls” of the countless number of people who died in the Great Deluge in the days of Noah find shelter when both men and beasts were destroyed?

Evil Spirits

Any person who purports to have experienced the sensation of regaining the memories of a past life must either be a victim of evil spirits or must have been in the flight of fancy. There is the saying that by the power of fancy one may create an unread world. The story of the so-called pre-existence of human beings is a creation of the brain; it is not true.

It must be admitted that certain children had been born who had the very physical characteristics or features of some members of their families who had died. There is a story of a certain woman whose male child died having his face scarred by small-pot. Later on the woman became pregnant and she gave birth to another baby-boy on whose face were certain marks similar to those of the child who died. It was widely believed within the area of the incident that it was the dead child that was born again.

It is possible to cite other instances similar to this just mentioned, yet the truth remain that no human being is born twice or more on earth. Two things are mainly responsible for the incidents of new-born babies having features or marks identical with those of their deceased relatives, friends and so forth. They are either the hand-works of the devil or the outcome of the law of reflection.

The devil, as a spirit creature who since his rebellion has been misusing the wide power given him by God before his fall, can interfere with children in the womb in various ways. He had caused some to be born blind or to cripples from birth. And some of such deformed ones were miraculously healed by Jesus Christ and his apostles in their day as a manifestation of God's supreme power. – John 9:1-3, Acts 3:1-10

Moreover, the devil too can create and his children always bear his vicious characteristics. They are extra-ordinarily obstinate, troublesome and ungodly inclined. The Psalmist said: “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” (Psalm 58:3) And Jesus Christ parabolically referred to the devil's children as tares that would be destroyed by God. – Matthew 13:38-40

Law of Reflection

On the other hand through the law of reflection a pregnant woman who is fond of cuddling or playing with a monkey may give birth to a child having the looks of a monkey. Similarly, a pregnant woman who has a devoted love for her husband or who is ever pre-occupied with admiration for her husband's features, may bear a child who resembles her husband.

There is a striking instance of the law of reflection in the Bible. This happened when Jacob still managed the flocks of Laban after he had made up his mind to quit his services so as to provide for his family. In answer to Laban's question as to what he wanted, Jacob said he would still serve him if he (Jacob) would be permitted to pick out “all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all

the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats” as his wages.

Having received the consent of Laban that everyone that was spotted among the goats and brown among the sheep was his, he (Jacob) adopted a strategy whereby he increased his own flocks. As it is written, “And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.” – Read Genesis 30:37-43

Resurrection

In all the wonderful revelations of God through the ancient prophets, Jesus Christ and his apostles, as contained in the Holy Bible, no indication is given that a person can be born twice or more. Rather what is made known is the doctrine of resurrection. And by resurrection is meant the raising of the dead. This God promised to do through Jesus Christ at the time appointed.

The vision of Ezekiel the prophet concerning the dry bones was a demonstration of how the dead would be raised. (Ezekiel 37:1-14) There is no point of a soul entering into a body and being reborn. It is breath of life otherwise referred to as spirit God would send to revive the dead. And so He told Ezekiel: “Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” (Verses 9, 10) God then said to Israel: “And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.” Verses 13, 14

What is more, Jesus Christ said: “Wonder not at this; for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of Judgment.” – John 5:28, 29 (Douay Version) See also Luke 14:14; Acts 24:15

It can be seen from the facts of the Scripture already brought to light that there is no transmigration or reincarnation but resurrection of the dead. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead,” and St. Paul. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” – 1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22

It is when the dead are raised that they shall be judged and rewarded according to their works as stated by Jesus Christ. Until then excepting the “little flock”, the saints, who go to heaven according the Scriptures – they must remain in their graves. Thus Paul the apostle stated: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27) The doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration is from the devil. Not from God Almighty, we repeat. And true

Christians are strongly warned in the Holy Scriptures against “the doctrines of devils”. – 1 Timothy 4:1-6

THE VANITY OF MAN

“LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

“Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

“Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.”- Psalm 39:4-7