

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare

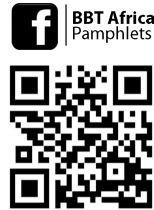
By continuous chanting of the maha-mantra, one can remember God at all times. In this way, the searching soul will return home, to the Kingdom of God.



The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust
Africa

Founder-Ācārya His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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What Is Reincarnation?

Reincarnation is called samsara in the classic Vedic texts of India. The word samsara in Sanskrit means being bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death. The soul, being materially conditioned, transmigrates through different bodies according to one's desires and past activities (karma). Desires, if materially motivated, require a physical body to enable the soul to continue to aspire for his material longings in various conditions of life.

According to the accumulated results of his activity (karma) the soul is placed in a particular body. The living being thus gradually passes through various evolutionary levels of consciousness. These levels of consciousness are characterized by the material body the living entity is placed into. From plant life to the aquatics, from the birds to the beasts, the soul gradually

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goes through this evolutionary process of consciousness until he attains the human form of life.

Throughout the ever changing states of physical body the soul remains constant. However, the souls' pure nature has been contaminated by his identification with the material body. Not realizing that the body is merely a covering, the soul acts within the material world. This activity, or karma, is what keeps the living being sliding up and down the various forms of life.

Further detail of how reincarnation works is elaborately described in the Bhagavad-gita 8.6, "Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail". All of our thoughts and actions throughout our life will collectively influence our state of being at the time of death. Our consciousness will determine what body we receive for the next life.

This relentless cycle of birth and death, in various forms of life, implores one to ask, "What is the purpose of life?" In the lower forms of life one's consciousness is not developed enough to raise such enquiry. Therefore, this human form

2

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of life is not meant to be laid to waste tending exclusively to the needs of the body as animals do. Beyond eating, sleeping, mating and the security of this body lay the quest for self-realization.

Essentially all living beings are searching for everlasting happiness. However, this search bears little or no results in the material world. We are eternal beings searching for eternal happiness in a temporary world. This incompatible combination is the source of all suffering for the living being.

Therefore what state of mind should we be in to transcend this cycle of birth and death? Through the process of loving devotional service to God (bhakti yoga) one can very easily remember God at the time of death. "Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." - Bhagavad-gita 18.65.

Therefore the recommended process for remembering God in this age is nama-sankirtan or the congregational chanting of God's holy names, the Hare Krishna maha-mantra:

3

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3