Chapter I

THE CONCEPTS OF KARMA AND TRANSMIGRATION IN ANCIENT INDIAN THOUGHT

The earliest source of our knowledge concerning the ancient Indian religious thought and civilization is the 'Vedas'. They are the 'Rig Veda', the 'Yajur Veda', the 'Sama Veda' and the 'Atharava Veda'. According to the major chanes in the development of thought, the Vedic literature is divided into four parts i.e. the 'Mantras', the 'Brahmanas', the 'Aranyakas' and the 'Upanishads', each representing the dominant thought as the nature-gods worship, sacrifices and rituals, meditation and philosophical speculations respectively.

Regarding the determination of exact chronological limits of the Vedic period, the scholars hold different opinions. Some Indian scholars assign the Vedic hymns to 3000 B.C., others to 6000 B.C. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in his book 'Indian Philosophy' believes them to be of fifteenth century B.C.¹ Dr. Winternitz, in his 'History of Indian Literature', fixes the beginning of the period somewhere between 2000 and 2500 B.C.² Max Muller supposes the date to be 1200 B.C.³ and Haug 2400 B.C.⁴

Of all the 'Vedas', the 'Rig Veda', is thought to be the oldest and the most important one. It contains a collection (Samhitas) of hymns, the earliest documents of human mind representing, according to most scholars, the religion of an unsophisticated age. It is the creation of inspired poets and seers.\(^5\)

The first rudiments of the doctrines of Kama and transmigration can be traced out, to some extent, in the early Vedic literature. There are scholars who believe that the doctrine of transmigration does not owe its origin and early growth to Indian soil, but it had been prevalent among the primitive civilizations, stretched in many parts of the world. Commenting upon the concept, Henry Haigh, remarks that 'probably no theory has ever had a longer life or wider acceptance than the theory of transmigration. How it began and where, no body quite knows; but it has been discovered in varying forms among people of North American Indian, the Negroes, the Egyptians and the Jews'.\(^6\)

J.W. Rhys Davids, observes that 'the doctrine is entirely absent from the Vedas; and the question naturally arises, where did it come from? Anthropologists seem to be of the opinion that it was world wide in its distribution, and it may be found everywhere in the lower stages of civilization'.\(^7\) He quotes an Irish legend recorded

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5. Max Muller, What India can teach us, p. 32.
in the book of Dalmote in which the concept of transmi-
gation is strongly accepted. It is also opined as
Dr. Farquhar believes that, 'it was not the Aryans who
brought the theory of Karma and transmigration along with
them, when they first entered the Indian land and settled
thereafter. For, if they were conversant fully with the
idea of transmigration for the centuries ahead, it would
have been found grown up in the Vedas. It is most note-
worthy that in those days, men were believed to die

('Here the poet is excusing himself for beginning his
history a thousand years before his hero was born. It
seems that his hero was really alive all the while'.)

1. Tuan, son of Cairill, as we are told,
was freed from sin by Jesus;
He lived in booming manhood.

2. Three hundred years in the shape of a wild ox,
He lived on the open extensive plains;
Two hundred and five years he lived
in the shape of a wild boar.

3. Three hundred years he was still in the flesh
in the shape of an old bird
One hundred delightful years he lived
in the shape of a salmon in the flood.

4. A fisherman caught him in his net,
He brought it to the king's palace;
when the bright salmon was there seen,
The queen immediately longed for it.

5. It was forthwith dressed for her,
which she alone ate entire;
The beautiful queen became pregnant,
The issue of which was Tuan'.
but once, and thereafter, to enjoy immortality. No thought, at all, resembling transmigration occurs in the hymns. 9.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his 'Indian Philosophy' while giving reasons as to why the concept is nearly absent, remarks, that 'The Vedic Aryans entered India in the pride of strength and joy of conquest. They loved life in its fullness. They therefore showed no great interest in the future of the soul. Life to them was bright and joyous, free from all the vexations of a fretful spirit. They were not enamoured of death. They wished for themselves and their posterity a life of a hundred autums'. 10 They had no special doctrine about life after death, though some vague conceptions about heaven and hell could not be avoided by reflective minds. Rebirth is still at a distance'.

We are having but a scanty record as to find out the possibilities of the belief in Karma and transmigration in the people of aboriginal tribes of India. The only available source of information, regarding earliest religious thought in India, belonging to the pre-Aryan civilisation, is archaeological evidence, such as seals, statuettes and other materials, discovered in the Indus Valley near 'Mohenjo-daro' and 'Harappa'. So far, the conclusion drawn by the scholars, from these discoveries, is that the then people of Indus

11. Ibid., p. 115.
Civilization attached religious significance to certain animals, such as tiger, buffalo, crocodile and trees as well as the auspicious symbols like the 'Swastika'. They also developed a worship of a divinity similar to the God Shiva. But it has not yet been understood fully as to what beliefs and practices they had developed in their religion. Since the doctrines of Karma and transmigration find a little place in the early Vedic literature and appear in its complete form later on, in the 'Upanishads', it is assumed by some people that the pre-Aryans occupants of Northern India were the believers in some thing of the kind and that the first Aryans derived the principle of the idea from them.

If we accept this idea that the emigrants found the doctrine among the aborigines, then we reach the conclusion, that, firstly, the doctrine was in its vague form and secondly, the Aryans were slow to adopt it and slower still to elaborate it.

Whatever may be the origin of the theory of transmigration, it can be stated undoubtedly that:

1. Irrespective of the variations in determining the Vedic period from 6000 B.C. to 1500 B.C., the belief is much more ancient in its quite primitive form.

2. The concept is not developed in the philosophy of any other civilization in the world, till the early Vedic

12. Sources of Indian Traditions, Introduction.
13. 'In the 'Nehenjodaro excavations, we have a statuette in the form of Siva seated on a bull, surrounded by animals. This is perhaps 'Siva as Pasupati'. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Brahma Sutras Introduction; p. 6.
literature emerges.

3. No ancient civilization has developed this
doctrine, to such a systematic and complete form, as it is
developed in the Indian Philosophy. This way, the doctrine
occupies a unique place in the Indian thought.

The concept of Karma in 'Samhitas'

The first seed of the law of Karma is found in the
Samhitas portion of the Vedas in the form of prayers,
sacrificial ceremonies and rituals, performed by the people
individually or collectively, before the various gods of
nature. The early Vedic people were closely associated
with nature and the divine deities, to whom they worshipped. 15-16

The gods were nothing more but primarily personified powers
of nature like Sun, Air, Earth, Fire etc. The other important
gods to whom the home are attributed are 'Indra', 'Pusan',
'Soma', 'Vitru' and 'Varuna'. 'Varuna' is considered to be
the controller of moral and cosmic order commonly known as
Rita. This conception of 'Rita' is of a great significance,
for, here we anticipate the first signs of the law of Karma.

Literally 'Rita' means 'the course of things' 17. This word
(Rita) is also used as, Woodwell observes, to denote the

15. 'The Vedas assume a very close and intimate relationship
between man and gods'. Dr. C. Radhakrishman Indian
16. 'No where in the world is the process of god making so
clear as in the Rig Veda'. Max Muller, 'What India
can teach us', p. 94.
17. Dr. Radhakrishman, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 78.
order in the moral world as 'truth' and 'right' and in the religious world as sacrifice or 'rite' and its unalterable law of producing effects'.

The conception of 'Rita' with its upholder the god 'Varuna', along with other familiar gods of Vedic mythology, also finds place in the ancient religious and philosophical thought of Iranians. For the first Aryans, settled in India and Iran, come from the common stock and represent great resemblance in their religious. Dr. Mill says, 'The 'Avesta' is nearer the 'Veda' than the 'Veda' is to its own epic Sanskrit' J.N. Farquhar observes: 'The 'Veda' (Zoroastrian documents) and the Rig Veda when read side by side enable us to form a picture of the common life lived by the ancestors of the Persians and Indo-Aryans while they were still a single people'.

In the early Vedic theology, god 'Varuna' stands very high. 'Varuna is the embodiment of law and order and is the most moral of Vedic gods.' Though god of gods, 'Varuna' obeys the universal moral law, which he himself has established. He is the Protector and Helper of the people. He is the lord of human morality. He sternly punishes the sinner and blesses the righteous. He is to see that there is no

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18. Vedic Mythology; p. 11 of S.R. Das Gupta; Indian Philosophy, p. 22.
19. cf. Dr. Radhakrishnan; Indian Philosophy; Vol. I, p. 75.
22. Ibid; V. 67.4.
transgression of law, cosmic or human. 23 All the gods are to follow the path of 'Rita'. 'Rita', originally, meant 'the established route of the world, of the Sun, Moon and stars, morning and evening, day and night'. 24 But gradually, it covered the moral aspect of human life. Here, in the following two verses, people pray to 'Varuna' that they should be forgiven if they had done anything wrong.

"Absolve us from the sins of our fathers and from those which we committed with our own bodies" 25

"If we have deceived like gamblers in a game of dice, and whether we really knew it or not, all that do you unbind from us, like loosened fetters, 0 god. Thus may be dear unto you, 0 'Varuna'!". In almost all the hymns, addressed to 'Varuna', prayers are offered for pardon and release from punishment. 26 So the idea of reward and punishment is there prevalent among the people in the early Vedic period. The sacrifice is performed thinking it as a sacred duty (duty is also called Karma or 'Kriya'-action) with the belief that the mystical ceremonies are sure to produce the required effect with whatever the native behind.

In the subsequent period of the 'Brahmanas', when the rituals grew in importance, the position of god 'Varuna'

23. Ibid. V. 5.85.
24. Ibid. IV. 29.9. See also Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 79.
26. Rig Veda. 5.85 tr. from Sources of Indian Traditions, p. 12.
27. Rig Veda. 6.36 and 7.88.
became less prominent and the concept of 'Rite' was taken as a symbol of 'Yajna' or sacrificial ceremony.

**Karma in the 'Brahmanas'**

The 'Brahmanas' form a second part of literature attached to the 'Vedas'. They are theological treatises and are written in prose. The 'Brahmanas' are significant, apart from other reasons, for furnishing the information dealing with the rituals and guiding the priests, of complicated procedure in the sacrificial rites. 'They reflect', says Professor Macdonell, 'the spirit of an age in which all intellectual activity is concentrated on the sacrifice, describing its ceremonies, discussing its value, speculating on its origin and significance'.

The ritualism is extremely glorified in the 'Brahmanas'. There are three principal categories of sacrifice, which are believed to be, the cooked food sacrifice, to be offered on the domestic fire; the oblation sacrifice and the Soma sacrifice. The 'Brahmanas' texts are mostly concerned with the last two categories. The gods, to whom the sacrifice is offered, are almost the same as mentioned in the Vedic hymns, except the one 'Prajapati' (Father of gods) who comes into prominence and occupies the first position in the

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28. Sanskrit term 'Brahmanas' means 'relating to Brahma 'prayer' and Brahman 'prayer'. The Brahanas can be considered as either referring to the knowledge of Brahma or as belonging to priesthood ('brahmanas') though the former interpretation seems more likely. *Sources of Indian Traditions*, p. 21. See also S.N. Das Gupta, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 19.


30. *Sources of Indian Traditions*, p. 22.
'Brahmanas'. He is the lord of living beings and governs the whole universe. A mention is made in one of the 'Brahmanas', that there are thirty three gods and 'Prajapati' is the thirty fourth: including them all.  

Early Vedic rituals were very simple in nature and the motive behind was also a simple one. The ordinary material like milk, grain, ghee or rice was offered to the deities and prayer in hymns were made for getting favour of material blessings such as long life, success in life, children, cattle and horses, gold, prosperity or to get one's enemy out of the way, or for getting victory over in small battles. Women of the Vedic period also gained superiority in the religious matters. Her consent or taking part in the sacrifice was considered essential. Prayers as S. Basu Gupta observes, 'for the advancement of the inner spiritual achievements of man; for righteousness or moral greatness; prayers expressing a passionate longing for the divine or humble submission of the mind to the divine will; were not so frequent'. So the idea behind the prayers and sacrificial ceremonies was, more or less, worldly benefits.

But the process of ritualism and the simple form of worship, as we observe in the 'Brahmanas', gradually grew complicated in its details. Here we find that the

31. Seth Path Brahmana, v.1.2, 10 and 13. of M. Hiriyanna; Outlines of Indian Philosophy; p. 4.
32. See also Rig Veda, 1.45.
33. Rig Veda, 1.27
34. Tmd, 1.31.
people were grossly absorbed in 'karma-kanda'. It was particularly specified in the 'Brahmanas'35 as to what hymns were to be uttered and under what ritualistic conditions. This went to such an extent that the observance of certain fixed rule of sacrifice was thought of more importance than showing reverence to the gods to whom the sacrifice was offered. The cause of blessings or benefits was attributed not to the divine powers of benevolence of gods, but to the complete set of ritualistic performance, executed in the proper order. The slightest discrepancy in the procedure of sacrifice, say in pouring butter on the fire, placing utensils to be used for the purpose or the misplacing of mere straw would delay the sacrificer of its required effect.36 But if the 'mantras' uttered in correct accent at the sacrifice with the proper observance of all other ritualistic details, there was no power which could check or delay the fruition of the object. This supremacy and increased dominance of the idea of sacrifice, over the powers of gods, created a distinctive class of priests and helped to raise the position and powers of the priests. Gradually this professional priesthood developed a hereditary one. The idea of caste and class in early Indian Religion, owes its origin to this period. In the religious matters, only the priests could control the whole

35. Sat Path Brahmana; 2.1.1; 1-14
36. Rig Veda. 1.32.
S. Das Gupta: Indian Philosophy Vol. I, p. 21. He gives an example to this effect: 'Thus when Ivastr performed a sacrifice for the production of a demon who would be able to kill his enemy Indra, owing to the mistaken accent of a single word the object was reversed and the demon produced was killed by Indra'.
state of affairs. They by their professional proficiency established the claim of being the custodians of the religious and moral life of the people. Sometimes, the sacrifice was conducted on such a large scale that it lasted for a very long period and several priests were to be put on duty to recite the hymns.37

Here we find a noteworthy change that came over the spirit with which the offerings were made to the gods in this period. Whereas, in early Vedic period, the nature-gods were thought of possessing vast powers at their command, the gods of the 'Brahmanas' were no more regarded higher to the authority of priests. The sacrificer was in no way incited to perform the sacrifice with the idea of securing goodwill of the gods, but the sacrifice itself was bound to produce the desired results, if it was done correctly. This mystical or magical effect of the sacrifice had such an impact upon the minds of the people, that they developed a belief, that certain actions done at the time of sacrifice, were destined to produce their effect immediately or after the lapse of some time.

Some modern thinkers of Indian Philosophy are of this opinion that the general tendency of 'Vedic' and 'Brahmanic' literature was not to exalt the position of priests in comparison to the Vedic gods, but the emphasis was laid on the text of the 'Vedas'. Mr. Hiriyanna thus

37 Seth Path Brh. 2.1.1.1-14
observes, 'The power of conferring good thanas seems then to have transferred from the gods not to the priests but directly to the Vedas itself'.

Whatever the other tendencies of the period may be, the main thoughts, from which the complete form of law of Karma would emerge later on are as follows:

1. The Vedic hymns express the simple faith and devotion of the people in the form of prayers, towards a group of deities—personified powers of nature.

2. The conception of 'Rita', the cosmic and moral order, has a strong impact in controlling and shaping the social, religious and moral life of the people.

3. Ritualism in its extreme form is the predominant teaching of the later Vedic period.

4. A belief that the sacrifice when performed with perfect accuracy, produces the desired effect in this life or hereafter.

Transmigration in Samhitas

It has already been pointed out about the absence of the doctrine of transmigration in its developed form in the 'Samhitas'. Yet the ideas we gather about death, or what after death, in this period, would help us in reaching at the conclusion that it is the early Vedic literature only, which is preserving the first seeds of the doctrine of transmigration...
eschatology—rebirth. However in the following hymns of
the 'Rig Veda', a reference to the belief regarding rebirth,
though vaguely, has been made.

"Let your eyes go to the Sun, your life to the wind,
by the meritorious acts that you have done, go to heaven
(for rebirth) to the earth again, or resort to the waters
if you feel at home there, remain in the herbs with the bodies
you propose to take. The belief is prevalent in the
'Vedas' that the human soul is distinct from the body and is
separable from it. The soul survives death. It is mentioned
in the 'Rig Veda' that the soul of an unconscious man is
invited by his fellows, to come back from the trees, the sky
and the Sun. This belief, as Dr. Radhakrishnan puts in,
"may have come from the aborigines, who believed that after
death their souls lived in an animal bodies."

The idea of heaven is also conceived in the
'Vedas'. It is the abode of gods and the dead blessed fathers
(pitris). There are indications that the Vedic Aryan
believed in the possibility of meeting his ancestors after
death. 'Yama' and 'Yami' are regarded to be the first mortals
who entered into heaven. 'Yama' is the ruler of heaven. When
a man dies he is supposed to reach 'Yama's' kingdom. It is
also believed that the dead enter into the paradise after
passing over water and a bridge. After leaving this earth,

39. Rig Veda, X.16.3.
40. Ibid, 10.53
41. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, p.136.
42. Rig Veda 1.24.1/43. Ibid, vii.56.24.
43. Ibid, I.6.40; And II.41.2
the man is supposed to join the gods or the ancestors permanently. The idea is, that man dies only but once. A reference is made as to which path should be followed by the fathers and gods for reaching the heaven. The departed soul lives with 'Yama' with all the joys and happiness.

The reference to Hell is not made explicitly in the 'Rig Veda'. But there are several hints of it. We learn of god 'Varuna' imposing punishment to the evil doers and putting them down into the dark abyss forever. At many instances, prayers are made to god 'Indra' for pushing those, into the lower darkness, who make injuries to his worshippers. Upon whom the gods are pleased, enjoys bliss in the heaven permanently and with whom the gods are displeased, is put into the hell for ever.

According to the Vedic theory a man has three births, the first as a child, the second by spiritual education and the third after death. The worship of ancestors known as 'pitris', is apparently clear in the Vedic hymns. Cremation is the most prevalent method of disposal of the dead. The hymns sung at the funeral bid the soul to go to the 'Yama' without any fear and enjoy blessed immortality in the company of his loved ones, who have gone before him.

45. Ibid. X. 85, 45.
46. Rig Veda. X. 132, 4; IV. 5, 5; IX. 73, 8; X. 152, 4. cf. Dr. Radhakrishnan; Indian Philosophy, p. 115.
47. Ibid. p. 116.
Ammocation in the 'Brahmanas'

In the 'Brahmanas' the concept of rebirth undergoes certain changes and makes progress towards the development of doctrine in its complete form. But still, here we do not find the concept fully developed. The ideas are quite scattered. Sometimes there are contradictory statements regarding death and rebirth. The dominant thought is, that, a man by performing sacrifice and doing good deeds goes to the abode of gods and obtain immortality. "He who sacrifices thus obtains perpetual prosperity and conquers for himself a union with the two gods, 'Aditya' and 'Agni' and an abode in the same sphere." 49. In the 'Brahmanas' immortality or at least longevity is promised to those, who rightly understand and practice the rites or sacrifice, while those who are deficient in this respect depart before time to the next world where they are weighed in a balance, 50 and receive good and evil according to their deeds. The more sacrifices anyone has offered, the more ethereal is the body he obtains. In another text, on the contrary, it is promised as the highest reward that the pious man shall be born in the next world with his entire body, 'SAJNA SAMUH.' 51. Thus far, the difference between the Vedic and Brahmanical views is, that, while according to the 'Rig Veda', the sinner is reduced to nothing while the virtuous obtain immortality; in the

49. Sat Path Brahmanas, X, 6, 2, 5.
\[\text{Brāhmaṇas}, \] both are born again to undergo the results of their actions. The idea is, that, there is only one life after this and its nature is determined by our conduct here. Then we are born into the world which he has made.

\[\text{Whatever food a man eats in this world by that food he is eaten in the next world.} \] Good and evil deeds find their corresponding rewards and punishment in a future life.

Gradually the thinkers thought on the lines that it was inconsistent with the concept of reward and punishment that the wicked suffers eternal punishment and the good enjoys eternal bliss. Then we experience our rewards and punishment, it is suggested, that we die to that life and are reborn on earth. The natural rhythm by which life gives birth to death and death to life leads us to the conception of a beginningless and endless circuit.

**Karma and Transmigration in the 'Upanishads'**

The 'Upanishads' are the concluding portion of the 'Vedas' and they also represent the final stage in the development of Vedic religious thought. Rewards the end of the 'Brāhmaṇas' (about 600 B.C.) and prior to the 'Upanishads', there appeared another class of religious text books known as 'Aranyakas'. (Forest books) which, it is considered, were

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52. Ibid., p. 134.
53. See Path Brāhmaṇa, VI. 2, 227.
54. Ibid., XII. 9, 11.
55. Itiberya Brāhmaṇa, III. 44.
56. The Aranyakas were so called because their teaching was to be imparted in the seclusion of the forest (Aranya). H. Niziyarn, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 48.
the works recited by the hermits living in the forests. These books, being in the transitional period, contain on the one hand, the mythology and rituals of the 'Vedas' and the 'Brahmanas', and on the other, the philosophical speculations of the 'Upanishads'. These books are the starting point of the Upanishadic philosophy.

The 'Upanishads' 57-59 have dominated the Indian philosophy, religion, and life of the people for nearly three thousand years. The 'Upanishads' — speculative treatises as they are, mainly discuss the philosophical aspects concerning life i.e. 'Brahman', Self and Universe. The old nature — gods of the 'Vedas' and the 'Brahmanas' do not come in the forefront in the 'Upanishads' although a reference is made somewhere or the other. The monotheistic conception of 'Brahman' emerges in the 'Upanishads'. There is one God (Brahman) of whom all the Vedic gods are manifestations.

The 'Upanishads' reacted strongly to the glorification of Vedic ceremonialism, and ritualism of the 'Brahmanas'.

57. The word 'Upanishad' is derived from upa—near, ni—down, and sa—to sit. Groups of pupils sit near the teacher to learn from him the secret teaching (truth) by which ignorance is destroyed.

Dr. C. Radhakrishna, Source book in Indian Philosophy, p. 37 and Charles A. Moore.

58. There are more than two hundred 'Upanishads'. Dr. Dass Gupta. (Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 23) has given a list of 112 'Upanishads' out of which the following 11 are most important: 'Isa', 'Kena', 'Katha', 'Prasna', 'Sundaka', 'Markandeya', 'Taittiriya', 'Aitareya', 'Chandogya', 'Brihadaranyaka', and 'Kushavatara'.

59. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 2.3.
The rituals and sacrifices were given symbolic meanings and the knowledge of these became more important than the actual performance of the rites. In 'Brihadaranyaka Upanishad' the horse sacrifice (ASVAYANA) is given the cosmological significance by equating the parts of the horse in the sacrifice to the elements of the cosmos. Again in 'Sundaka Upanishad' the sacrifice is given a place only for religious discipline in man's life and not as a means to the knowledge of the highest reality (Brahman). It is again argued that 'the ritualists never know the truth on account of their attachments, and therefore, when the fruit of their works is exhausted, they sink down and are miserable.

Considering sacrifices and good works as most important, these deduced men know no higher good and having enjoyed on the heights of heaven, the reward of their good works, they enter again this world or even a lower one.'

60. Ibid. 1, 4, 1. See also sources of Indian Tradition, p. 27. *Pavan verily is the head of the sacrificial horse. The Sun is his eyes; the wind, his breath; the universal sacrificial fire (agni-vaivahvanaka), his open mouth; the year is the body (akha) of the sacrificial horse. The sky is his back; the atmosphere, his belly; the earth, his underbelly; the directions, his flanks; the intermediate directions, his ribs, the seasons, his limbs, the months and half months, his joints; days and nights, his feet; the stars, his bones; the clouds, his flesh; sand is the food in his stomach; rivers his entrails; mountains, his liver and lungs; plants and trees, his hair; the rising sun, his forepart; the setting sun, his hindpart. When he yawns, then it lightnings; when he shakes himself then it thunders; when he urinates, then it rains. Speech (Vak) is actually his reigning (Vak).*

61. Mundaka Up., 1, 2, 1, 2, 7-13.
62. Ibid. 1, 2, 6-7.
The doctrine of Karma, though not discussed with its complications and details, appears in the 'Upanishads' in its fully developed form. However, some details and different interpretations to this were added in the later ages by different schools of thought. In the Vedic hymns the forces of nature—specially god Varuna—were the guardians of the important conception of 'Rita', a symbol of cosmic and moral order. Mysterious and magical effect of sacrificial ceremonialism and the belief of reward and punishment, by the external deities, corresponding to the good and evil deeds appeared in the 'Brahmanas'. But the 'Upanishads' did not approve of the outwardly rituals and sacrifices of the 'Brahmanas', and asserted that it was not the sacrifice but the deeds that would effect the life of a man. "He law of Karma as operates in the 'Upanishads' is that 'nothing can happen without a sufficient cause in the moral as in the physical world—that each life with its pains and pleasures, is the necessary result of the actions of past lives and becomes in its turn the cause, through its own activities, of future births'. Man is the maker of his own fortune and no longer subject to the chance or at the mercy of God. His character becomes his destiny. 'Man is a creature of will. According as he believes in this world, so will he be, when he is departed'. Here we find the law of Karma in similarity to the oft-quoted line 'we reap what we sow'.

63, N. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 79.
64, Chhandogya Upanishad, III. 14.1.
A man becomes good by good deeds and bad by bad deeds. Every little action which has an effect on character, is the outcome of our desires. If our desires are satisfied, then we can realize Brahma. The 'Brihadaranyika Upanishad' says, 'According as a man acts, according as man conducts himself, so does he become. The door of good becomes good and door of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action and sinful by sinful action. Some say that a man is made of desires only (and not of acts). But as is his desire so is his will, as his will so is the deed he does, and whatever deed he does, that he will reap — so much for the man who desires. But as the man who does not desire, who is without desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose desire is the self only — his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere. Being Brahma, he goes to Brahma'. Some Upanishads hold that we cannot get out of the wheel of Karma as long as we perform selfish work. By disinterested work or by doing social service, we reach freedom.

The 'Upanishad' is the earliest Indian literature in which we meet with the doctrine of transmigration, developed in its complete form. The idea is not borrowed from outside. It has grown up in its natural course from the philosophical thinking of Upanishadic scholars. The Vedic hymns express a belief in the immortality of soul, the two ways of gods and fathers and the idea of 'Rite' or moral order.

66. Ibid., 4, 3-4, 33, 34, 35.
67. Isa Upanishad 11.
The 'Brahmanas' speak of reward and punishment according to good or bad deeds, and one of the serious punishments is 'repeated dying' (puruṣar ṛṛtyu) which is said as taking place in another world. The aborigines of India supplied us with the idea of migration of human souls into trees and animals. So what the 'Upanishads' contributed is that, the cycle of births and deaths goes on in this world and not in any other world. According to the 'Upanishads' the doctrine of transmigration of soul, is a belief, that the soul passes at death into another body whose character is determined by its former deeds. Man is born and dies many times. It is inconsistent with the earlier thought that a man joins his ancestors permanently in the heaven. If at all he goes to heaven after death, his stay there is limited, for, he must return to earth to be born again. The majority of the people, as says one 'Upanishad', are born again. The earliest form of this idea occurs in the 'Sat Path Brahmana' where the notion of being born again after death and dying repeatedly is coupled with that of retribution.

The earlier passages in which we find the doctrine of transmigration, are from 'Chhandogya Upanishad' and 'Brhadāraṇyaka Upanishad'. Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a 'Brahman', a 'kṣatriya' or a 'Vaśya'. But those whose conduct is evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a hog or dog or a 'candalī'.

68. Chhandogya Upanishad, V, 10, 3.
69. Dr. C. Radhakrishnä, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 249.
70. Chhandogya Upanishad, 7, 10, 7.
The "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad" has given a detailed description of the manner in which a man dies and is born again.

"When a body grows weak through old age or through illness, the person after separating himself from his organs, as a mango or a pip, or a pippala fruit separates itself from its stalk, hastens back again, as he came, to the place from where he started to new life;"

"And as a caterpillar, having come to the end of a blade of grass and having made an approach to another, draws itself together towards it, even so does this Self, having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance and having made an approach towards it."

"Just as a heavily loaded cart moves breaking, even so does this corporeal self, oppressed over so by the intelligent Self, move along groaning when a man is about to breathe his last."

"And as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold turns it into another shape - a newer and more beautiful one - even so does this Self, having thrown off this body and dispelled all ignorance, make for itself another shape, a newer and more beautiful one, whether it be like that of the 'Pitris', or of 'Prajapati' or of 'Brahma', or of other beings' [1]."

From the description given above, we note that the soul finds its future body before it leaves the present one. At every change of life, the soul takes a newer form and the state of each existence of soul is conditioned and determined by its knowledge (vidya), its conduct (karma) in the previous existence. In the famous dialogue between Vajasravasas son Sachiketas an 'Yama' occurred in 'Katha Upanishad', 'Yama' reveals to Sachiketas that ignorance is the cause of deaths and rebirths. "Steepled in ignorance men engage themselves in

led by the blind men led by the blind going round and round in the cycle of births. Those who are ignorant would go, after death in the world of 'assumes' enveloped in blinding darkness. The good souls go up to the sorrowless regions through the air, sun, and moon. The Chhandogya Upanishad speaks of two ways, the bright and the dark. Those who practise penance and faith enter the path of light and they never return to the cycle of human existence. Those who are only ethical, performing works of public utility, travel by the path of smoke, dwell in the world of fathers till the time comes for them to fall down, then they are born again according to their desert.

The doctrine of rebirth gets mixed up with the original Vedic belief of reward in heaven or punishment in hell in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and 'Chhandogya Upanishad'. In 'Kausitaki Brihadaranyaka Upanishad' the belief in transmigration is also united with a notion that souls go first to the moon. All who depart from this world go to the moon. In the bright fortnight the moon is gladdened by their spirits, but in the dark fortnight it sends them forth into new births. Verify the moon.

73. Isa Upanishad. 3.
74. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad V. 10. 1
75. Chhandogya Upanishad, IV. 15.5-6.
76. Chhandogya Upanishad, V. 10. 1-6 cf Dr. Radhakrishnan, Principal Upanishads, p. 116.
77. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, VI. 2 and Chhandogya Upanishad V. 9. 10.
is the door of heaven. His who rejects it sends on beyond, but whose rejects it not, him it rains down upon this world. And here is he born either as a fish, or a worm, or a bird or a lion, or a bear or a serpent or a tiger or a man or some other creature, according to his deeds and his knowledge.

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In Mundaka Upanishad birth is said to be the cause of man's desires. Desire leads to action and action determines the rebirths. So it is the desire that causes rebirth and not Karma. 'He who knowingly desires is born by his desires in those places (accordingly) but for him whose desires have been fulfilled and who has realised himself, all his desires vanish here'.

Karma and Transmigration in Jainism.

Jainism is one of the heterodox systems of Indian

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71. Mundaka Upanishad VII, 2. 2.
72. Systems of Indian thought are distinguished into 'astika' (Orthodox) and 'nastika' (Heterodox). The former schools are six in number, 'Sankhya', 'Yoga', 'Vedanta', 'Mimamsa', 'Nyaya' and 'Vaishnava'. They all accept the authority of the 'Vedas'. The 'Nastika' systems do not regard the 'Vedas' as infallible. It is said that the 'nastikas' are the deniers of a world beyond the present. Commenting upon Patanjali makes out, that the 'astika' is one who thinks that it exists. Jayaditya makes out that an 'astika' is one who believes in the existence of the other world, a 'nastika' is one who does not believe in its existence. Manu holds that he who repudiates Vedic doctrines is a 'nastika'.
73. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Brhadaranyaka Sutra, p. 2.
whj^ja built up its metaphysics, mainly, on the belief that there are two eternal substances in the universe. The one is inanimate, lifeless matter (ajIva) and the other is animate, living soul (jIva). This system does not recognise God, or any ultimate reality.

The lifeless (a,jIvakas) are divided into five parts, that is Space, Time, 'Dharma', 'Adharma' and Matter (pudgala).

The matter is eternal and consists of atoms. All the material things are produced by the combination of atoms.

Jainism divides all living things into five categories according to the number of senses they possess.

The highest group possessing the five senses (sense of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing) and manan (mind) includes men, gods and higher animals, notably monkeys, horses, elephants, parrots and snakes etc. The lowest group covers one-sensed beings. Between the two come other three categories with two sensed (touch and taste) beings, like worms, leeches etc; three-sensed (touch, taste and smell) beings, such as ants, fleas and bugs, moths etc; and four-sensed (sense of touch, taste, smell and sight) beings, such as flies, butterflies, wasps etc. The lowest class beings with the sense of touch only is again divided into five sub-classes.

They are termed as vegetable bodies, earth bodies, water bodies, fire bodies and air bodies.

31. Mahapurana 4.16-31 'Some foolish men declare that Creator made the world. The doctrine that the world was created is ill-advised and should be rejected'. Sources of Indian Traditions, p. 79.

32. Ibid., p. 79.
The doctrine of Karma and transmigration which is the back bone of this system, finds a new interpretation over here, unlike in any other religious thought of Indian Philosophy. Karma, according to Jainism, is of material nature (Pauḍgalika). The particles of the subtle matter, when come into contact with the soul, form Karmas. These Karmas, then, build up a special body called 'Karmasarīra'. Thus Karma is the cause of soul's bondage. The 'Karmasarīra' does not leave the soul till its final emancipation. The whole process occurs in five stages. The soul which is considered as consciousness.

84. "when Karma penetrates the soul it is transformed into eight kinds of Prakṛti which make up the 'Karmasarīra'. These eight kinds of Karmas include the 'jñanavārāṇi', or that which obscures the inborn knowledge of the soul, producing different degrees of knowledge or ignorance, and 'darsanavārāṇi', or that which obscures right intuitions; 'vedāniya', or that which obscures the blissful nature of the soul and produces pleasure, pain, and 'mohāniya', or that which disturbs the right attitude of the soul with regard to faith, conduct, passions and emotions, and produces doubt, error and other mental disturbances. The other four deal with the status of an individual being: 'ayuska', or that which determines the length of life in one birth; 'Kṣana', or that which produces the various circumstances or elements which collectively make up an individual existence, the body with its general and specific qualities; 'gṛha', or that which determines the nationality, caste, family and social standing of an individual; and 'antaraya', or that which obstructs the inborn energy of the soul and prevents the doing of good even when there is a desire for it'.
DR. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, p. 280.
85. According to Jain classification 'Tattva' or 'facts' are seven: Souls, non-souls, the influx of karmic matter into the soul (Asrava), the bondage of the soul, arising from this (bandha); the stopping of the influx Karma (saśvara), the destruction of karmic matter previously absorbed (nirjara), final emancipation from bondage of Karma (Moksa). DR. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 288. These seven principles together with 'Punya' and 'Pāpa' constitute the nine categories of Jainism.
Outlines of Indian Philosophy, M. Hiriyanna, p. 170.
and illuminated, is surrounded by the subtle matter (Karma). The inflow of karmic matter into the soul continues constantly. This is known as 'āsrava'. This karmic matter has got the peculiar property of developing the effects of merit and demerit. The inflow, thus, of karmas is of two kinds; good or meritorious Karmas; bad or demeritorious Karmas. The soul because of its natural tendency and passion, having assimilated the Karmas, is known as the soul in bondage (bandha). The causes as ascribed to the bondage of the soul are wrong belief, non-renunciation, carelessness, passions and union (yoga) of the soul with mind, body and speech. The falling away of Karmas is also thought of in two stages. The soul can never gain liberation until it has got rid itself of its whole accumulation of Karmas. The first step towards liberation would be the stoppage of the inflow of karmic matter into the self. This is called 'Samvara'. Acts of selfishness and cruelty result in the influx of heavy in-suspicious karma while good deeds have no such serious effect and reduce the inflow of Karmas. So the inflow of karmic matter can be reduced to a large extent by practising meditation, conquest of suffering and good conduct. The second stage is the shedding of karmic matter, already accumulated, and this is known as 'Nirjara'. By austerities (tapas), right

86. Dr. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore; A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 257.
87. Ibid, p. 258.
88. Ibid, p. 258.
89. Ibid, p. 259.
knowledge of the self and self-restraint, the shedding of\(^*_1\) karma takes place. 'The condition which results thereafter is 'Moksa'. Liberation is the freedom from all karmic matter, owing to the nonexistence of the cause of bondage and to the shedding of karmas,'. All the soul is released, there remains perfect right belief, perfect right knowledge, perfect perception and the state of having accomplished all.

Apart from the belief in the transmigration of soul, the Jainism holds that the soul is not a substance of a limited size. It expands or contracts depending upon the greatness or smallness of the space or the body in which it is incorporated for the time being, similar to that of the light of a lamp which spreads out in the room irrespective of the size. The 'Jīvas' are infinite in number and are of different kinds. 'Nityasiddha' or the ever perfect; 'Mukta' or the liberated and the 'Buddha' or the bound. The natural qualities of the soul are perfect knowledge (jñāna), intuition or faith (darsana), highest bliss and all sorts of perfections, but these inborn qualities of the soul are weakened or obscured in mundane souls, by the presence of karma. 'Buddha' or mundane souls are the embodied souls of living beings in the world and still subject to the cycle of birth. The liberated soul (Mukta) will be embodied no more, they have

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90, Ibid. p. 269.
91, Ibid. p. 269.
92, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Volume III, p. 469.
93, Ibid. p. 469.
accomplished absolute purity; they dwell in the state of perfection at the top of the universe (aloka) and have no more to do with worldly affairs; they have reached 'Nirvāṇa'.

The ever perfect or freed souls are absolutely pure and free from any taint of matter. 'In them the partnership between soul and matter is dissolved'. An enlightened soul (person) may lead an active life, but his activity does not taint him and he is termed as 'Ahrant' or 'Siddha' - the perfected.

Jainism also believes that the liberation or 'Nirvāṇa' can only be achieved on the human plane. Like human beings and other 'Jīvas', gods are also subjected to the wheel of transmigration and they can attain 'Nirvāṇa' only if they are born as human beings.

This doctrine of Karma and transmigration of soul is the governing force in shaping the ethics of Jainism. 'Jainism', as said by Dr. Thomas, 'is the most extreme form of 'Kīrīyavāda', the doctrine, that salvation is attained through works'. In conclusion, the Jainas observe that the path to 'Nirvāṇa' lies through right faith (in'Jina'), right knowledge (of the doctrine) and right conduct. This is known in Jain ethics as three gems (Triratna).

95. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 320.
97. The Living Religions of the Indian People, by Nicol Maanisoli, cf. Dr. S.S. Kohli; Ibid., p. 283.
98. samyag-darsana-jnana-caritrani moksa-margah.
Dr. Radhakrishnan and Moore, A Source Book in Indian Philosophy; Chapter I, p. 282.
The chief characteristic of Jainism is 'ahimsa', or respect for and abstinence from every thing that has life. The faith in the doctrine of 'ahimsa' leads the monk to undergo extreme austeritys, while becoming a 'Sramana' (Wandering monk), a Jaina takes the following vow, "I shall become a 'Sramana', who owns no house, no property, no sons, no cattle, who eats what others give him. I shall commit no sinful action. I renounce to accept anything that has not been given".

Karma and Transmigration in Buddhism.

The doctrines of Karma and transmigration take a very prominent place in the Buddhistic philosophy. The law of Karma, as followed by to its extreme, thus, becomes a substitute for God as well as for the Self. On the one hand Buddha repudiated the authority of the 'Vedas', Brahmanical sacrifices and rites; he denied the existence of world soul (God) and individual soul (âtma), on the other hand he holds a strong belief in the 'Vedic' and 'Upanishadic' thought of transmigration (samsâra) and retribution (Karma). He disconnected the celeration of Karma theory to the concept of soul. He stressed upon the idea that the ultimate aim of the human being is to get release from the wheel of transmigration, which can be achieved by means of renunciation.

100. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. VII. p. 231.
In Buddhism it is the law of Karma that performs the function of God and no necessity is felt for the working of Providence. The law of Karma joins happiness with virtue and misery with vice. It awards rewards and punishments according to the merits and demerits of action. The law of Karma is the law of cause and effect - that every thing that happens is the result of a previous cause and will itself cause a further result and so on. The law is not merely applied to the outer sphere of life, but it also controls the human behaviour and explains moral retribution. Karma is the link between one life and another and the belief, that, a man reaps what he sows and, that, what he is suffering or enjoying in this life is all due to his past actions in another life and that his actions in the present life will determine his happiness or misery in future lives. 'Gotama Buddha held', observes Rhys Davids, 'that after the death of any being whether human or not there survived nothing at all but the 'being's Karma', the result that is of its mental and bodily actions'. According to Buddhism when a being dies, a new being is born and inherits his Karma. What transmigrates is not a person, but his Karma. The effect of Karma is never lost. In 'Kokaliya Sutta', it is said that 'no man's deeds are blotted out, each deed comes home. The doer finds the results of his deeds awaiting him sooner or later.

102. Ibid. p. 89.
104. Ibid. p. 89.
The law of Karma— the combination of moral and physical order, is thus the stern ruler that allows no exception or any leniency in favour of any one. The inevitable effect of Karma is fully illustrated in 'Dhammapada' and 'Khandha Samyutta'.

The diversity as seen in the universe, is justified by the law of Karma. It is argued in the 'Milinda Panna' that men are different because of their karmas.

In Buddhism, the concepts of Karma and transmigration are closely associated with most important concept of Four

105. G.P. Allen; Buddha's words of wisdom, p. 43. "Not in the sky, not in the middle of an ocean, not in a mountain cave, nor anywhere in the world, can man escape the effects of his ill deeds". Dhammapada, p. 43.

106. Ibid. Khandha Samyutta, p. 34."Come a time when the mighty ocean dries up and vanishes, come a time when the mighty earth be devoured by fire and perishes. But never will come the time when the sufferings of beings will cease, the sufferings of those obstructed by ignorance and ensnared by craving, of those who hustle on through this round of rebirths".

107. In the 'Milinda Panna', we find 'Nagasena' saying, "it is through a difference in their Karma that men are not all alike, but some long lived, some short lived, some healthy and some sickly, some handsome and some ugly, some powerful and some weak, some rich and some poor, some of high degree and some of low degree, some wise and some foolish".

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Noble Truths. The Truths are:

1. All that exists is subject to suffering.
2. The origin of suffering is human passion;
3. The cessation of passions releases from suffering;
4. The path that leads to the cessation of sufferings is the eightfold path. 109

109. Four Noble Truths:

'And this is the noble truth of sorrow. Birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow, contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow, every wish unfulfilled is sorrow — in short all the five components of individuality are sorrow;

'And this is the noble truth of the arising of sorrow. It arises from cravings, which leads to rebirth, which brings delight and passion, and seeks pleasure now here, now there — the craving for sensual pleasure, the craving for continued life, the craving for power;

'And this is the noble truth of the stopping of sorrow. It is the complete stopping of that craving, so that no passion remains, leaving it, being emancipated from it, being released from it, giving no place to it;

'And this is the noble truth of the Way which leads to the stopping of sorrow. It is the noble eightfold path."

[Sangutta Nikaya, 5.431],
Tre. from Sources of Indian Tradition, p. 102.

109. The sources of Indian Traditions, p. 102.
"It is the Noble eightfold Path — Right views, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration".
The suffering, as described, is due to thirst (trṣṇa or taḥṣa) or the desire of life, which, until it is destroyed, leads to continued transmigration. The origin of suffering is explained by the formula of link chain forming twelve stages of cause and effect.

110. "The factor motivating rebirth is 'Upādhi'; attachment, that which makes us cling to life. Attachment which leads to rebirth is the cause of sorrow. The fool who forms attachments brings sorrow upon himself. Unless ending this, be wise and do not add to your sorrow by forming attachments". Sutta Nipata vs 1060-1, cf. G.R. Allen; The Buddha Philosophy; p. 37.

111. 'The suffering in life is due to (2) birth, which is due to (3) the will to born, which is due to our (4) mental clinging to objects. Clinging again is due to (5) thirst or desire for objects. This again is due to (6) sense experience which is due to (7) sense object contact, which again is due to (8) six organs of cognition, these organs are dependent on (9) the embryonic organism (composed of mind and body) which again could not develop without (10) some initial consciousness, which again hails from (11) the impressions of the experience of past life, which lastly are due to (12) ignorance of truth. (An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, S. Chatterje and D. Dutta, p. 322.)

112. The twelve links are interpreted to cover the past, the present and the future life which are causally connected.

**Past Life**
- (1) Ignorance (avidya).
- (2) Impressions (Sāṅkāra).
- (3) The initial consciousness of the embryo (vijñāna).
- (4) Body and mind, the embryonic organism (nāma-rūpa).
- (5) Six organs of knowledge.
- (6) Sense contact (Spāra).
- (7) Sense experience (vedana).
- (8) Thirst (Trṣṇa).
- (9) Clinging (Upādāna).
- (10) Tendency to be born (bhava).

**Present Life**
- (1) Birth (gati).
- (2) Old age death, etc. (Maṣa-maraṇa).

Ibid, p. 123.
The root-cause of Karma which ultimately leads to rebirth is desire - 'trana' and which again is because of ignorance. Karma gives fruit or effects rebirth as long as it is performed through desire. And the way to eliminate desire, attachment, is by following the golden mean path, the Noble Right-fold Path. When the desire or craving has once ceased, the sage becomes an 'Arhat' and the deeds that he may do after that, will bear no fruits of whatever he does. With the cessation of desire all ignorance, antipathy and grasping cease and consequently there is nothing which can determine rebirth. An 'Arhat' may suffer the effects of the deeds done by him in some previous births, but inspite of the remnants of his past Karma an 'Arhat' was an emancipated man on account of the cessation of his desire.

In 'Atthasalini', the Karmas are stated to be of three kinds i.e. of body, speech and mind (kāyiks, vācike and manaks). For, all Karmas originate in the mind; hence in Buddhism, special stress is laid upon the mental Karmas. If the mental Karma is absent, as in the case of an 

112. "The way to eliminate desire - attachment is by following the middle-way, the Noble Right-fold Path: Ariya Saṅga IV., cf. Buddhas Words of Wisdom, G. F. Allen, p. 3c.

There are four classes of Karma from the point of view of effect:

1. Those which are bad and productive of impurity;
2. Those which are good and productive of purity;
3. Those which are partly good and partly bad and thus productive of both purity and impurity;
4. Those which are neither good nor bad and productive neither of purity nor of impurity but which contribute to the destruction of Karmas.

According to a few thinkers, there arises a difficulty in accepting the theory of Karma and transmigration without having belief in the doctrine of soul. But

115. 'The root of the Karmas done by the body, speech and mind, is volition (cetana) and the states associated with it. If a man wishing to kill animals goes out into the forest in search of them; but cannot get any of them there even after a long search, his misconduct is not a bodily one, for he could not actually commit the deeds with his body, so if he gives an order for committing an similar misdeed, and if it is not actually carried out with the body, it would be a misdeed by speech (Vācika) and not by the body. But the merest bad thought or ill will alone whether carried into effect or not would be a Karma of the mind (manasika)', S.Dass Gupta, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 106.


117. Deussen, for instance, writes 'This Karma must have in every case an individual bearer and that is what the 'Upanishads' call the 'Atma' and what the Buddhists inconsistently deny.' Indian Antiquary (1900) p. 298. cf. M.Hiriyanal, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 158.
as M. Hiriyanna observes, "There is no justification for such a criticism. He says, 'The belief in the Karma doctrine really presents no difficulty to Buddhism, for if there can be action without an agent, there can well be transmigration without a transmigration agent!"

Furthermore the Buddhistic belief in the concept of Momentariness, reveals that there is nothing in the universe which is eternal or permanent or above change. All existence is momentary. The changes take place from moment to moment. It is not at the end of one life that the next life takes shape but the transmigration occurs at every moment. 'The Karma belonging to an individual may transmit itself at death as it does during life. So Rhys Davids has put it that 'it is character that transmigrates and not any soul or self. When a person dies his character lives after him, and by its force brings into existence a being who though possessing a different form, is entirely influenced by it."

118. Ibid. p. 183.

119. 'Change, impermanence is a characteristic of life'. Anoca Lakkhana, of Buddha's words of wisdom, C.R. Allen, p. 16.

120. 'Even the everlasting hills are slowly being worn away and every particle of the human body, even the hardest is replased every seven years. There is no finality or rest within the universe, only a ceaseless becoming and a never ending change. 'From a granite cathedral to a china vase, from a code of laws to an empire, all things rise to their zenith and then bowsever slowly decay towards inevitable end'. Humphreys Christian, Buddhism of Bahadar Mal, The religion of Buddha, p. 80-81.

121. M. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p. 163.
A being thus composed is regarded as not in a permanent condition, but always in a state of becoming, personality being only a sum of perpetually successive moments. The final beatitude in Buddhism is known as 'Nirvāṇa'. It means the extinction of Kamma, the extinction of the cycle of births and deaths which arise from desires. So when 'Nirvāṇa' is attained, old Karmas are exhausted and no new Karma is produced. With the cessation of this karmic process the being achieves perfect peace, bliss and perfect knowledge. The 'Nirvāṇa' is of two kinds, representing two stages of release. The first stage is that during life time, the extinction of desires (trāṣa) results in the cessation of ignorance. The enlightened man produces no more karmas, released from rebirth but the deeds he has done before enlightenment, will have to be suffered, while he is still alive. The second stage comes when a man is finally released from the cycle of rebirth forever. This is known as 'Pari Nirvāṇa' or complete extinction.

122. According to Buddhism a human being consists of five Skandhas or aggregates but they are all impermanent and nonsubstantial. The Skandhas are:
'Ṛupā' - form, matter or the body.
'Vedana': feeling or sensation of both.
'Saṃgnā': it means both perception and abstract ideas i.e. all objects of knowledge.
'Samkāra': volitions, volitional aspect of human nature.
'Viṣṇī': consciousness or soul.
The Religion of Buddha Sahasur Hal; p. 88.
The process of reaching to the height of an 'Arhat' (attaining Nirvana) undergoes four stages of holiness, called the four states. The existence of lives is classified into five 'gatis' ('courses' modes of life') - the heavenly life, the human life, the animal life, the ghostly life and the purgatorial (or hellish) life; or into six by adding the 'asura' (or furious spirits). This belief is prevalent in Buddhism that some persons claim to have the faculty of remembering their past lives. This idea is also connected with the Buddha himself. In Buddhist literature we find a mention of three special faculties, the divine vision, the divine hearing and the clear recalling of one's former lives (pubbenivasa). In Buddhism the last thought of the dying receives a prime importance with regard to the future life. The people who believe in God meditate upon it the

125. Four Paths: 1. 'Gota-sayanna' (he who has joined the stream) is one who has become a member of the community with a vow that he will obey the commandments. Such one is freed from rebirth in the hells or in the world of ghosts and of animals, but he must be born again seven times. 2. The 'sakrd-agamin' (who returns once) is one who having overcome desire, hate and delusion, will be born again only once in this world. 3. The 'anagamin' (who return not again) is one who is born again only once in one of the worlds of the gods before attaining Nirvana. 4. The 'arhat' (the saint) being free from all sins and desires and enjoying perfect mental calm, has attained earthly Nirvana. Ibid. p. 213.


127. The Buddha, according to 'Asvaghosa', remembered his past births: 'In recollection all former births passed before his eyes, born in such a place, of such a name, and downwards to his present births, so through hundreds, thousands, myriads, all his births and deaths he knew'. Buddha-Capital: Samuel Beal's E.T. c.f. Dr. Radhakrishnan; Brahma Sutra: p. 201.

last moment with the desire to secure a better organism.

Since the Buddhism does not believe in God, it explains that at the time of death, all that exists is the 'dying thought' (ahyutichitta) and the 'Skandhas' (disposition). The rebirth thought and the 'Skandhas' are determined by the 'dying thought' which continues. Hence it follows that if the mental state at death is good, a pleasant birth will take place, if it is bad, an unpleasant one. Since there is a retribution of Karmas performed in the whole of life, the last thought can well be described as the resultant of ideas which are responsible for shaping the future life.

**Karma and Transmigration in The Bhagavad Gita.**

Gita, the most influential work in Indian thought imparts lessons of philosophy, religion and ethics. It is a religio-philosophical treatise, the main spirit of which is that of 'Upanishads.' Of all the Hindu scriptures Bhagavad Gita is the most widely read and for many of the people it is the solace of life and of death. The central teaching of Gita is that God is the Supreme Self (Paramātmā) whose lower nature is revealed as the physical world including mind, intellect and ego and whose higher nature constitutes the world of individual selves (jivas) but who transcends both these worlds and is therefore called the Supreme

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person (Purusottama). It teaches that the Supreme Self can be realised, and thereby perfect and eternal life attained, by following any one of the four main paths of religion viz., 'Jnana' (yoga) or concentration, 'Karma' or work, 'Bhakti' or devotion and 'Jnana' or philosophic knowledge. These major paths which lead to final emancipation, find a prominent place in Indian thought and are well discussed in the Gita. There are a number of commentators who by their own experience and temperament toward the one path or the other prove the supremacy of the path they follow. Mrs. Annie Besant observes that the so-called three paths are really one, the paths that are known as knowledge, devotion and action, all ultimately tend to the realization of God. She says, "he sees the three paths within the one and according to the dominant temperament, will be the path that is chosen". For him, who is full of emotion, the best way is the way of devotion; for him who is by temperament inclined to wisdom, the way of knowledge is the best; and for him, who is temperamentally inclined to action, the path of action will be the best. The reputed commentator of 'Vedanta Sutra', 'Sammkaracharya' stresses the path of knowledge. In his book 'B.Gita and modern life' Sh.K.Munshi

131. The idea of God as immanent is very well expressed in the verse in the Gita which means, "God. Thou art the beginning and the end of the world, its creator, preserver and destroyer, its eternal ground, its protecting and presiding spirit, its ruler and moral governor, its support and final resting place, its friend, guide and saviour". Gita: 7.4-6; 15.36-38.
132. Mrs. Annie Besant; Four lectures on Gita; Adyer, p. 79.
133. Ibid. p. 96.
remarks that, Sankarcarya leads the world thought in laying emphasis on knowledge and renunciation. By reason of this emphasis, the human gospel of Gita has come to be understood as the message of knowledge and renunciation. The 'Bhakti-yogi Vedantists' are of the opinion that all actions are to be surrendered to God and thus 'naiskarmya' is to be attained. They consider the path of 'Bhakti' as the sole and dominant path for the Realisation of God. This doctrine is advocated by 'Suresvara'. In the outstanding work of A.G. Tilak - 'Gita Rahasya', he wants to prove that the 'Karma Yoga' is the supreme of all other 'Yogas' and it is the essence of ' Bhagavad Gita'. All procedures of his interpretations are directed toward that end. According to him, 'Jnāna' points to it, 'Bhakti' points to it, 'Yoga' points to it, - all these procedures of attainment point to Karma as the ultimate goal of life". Tilak argues that 'Jnāna' is the means to the achievement of Karma whereas according to Sankara 'Karma after Jnāna is an impossibility'. Tilak contradicts it and says that Karma must be done even after 'Jnāna'. According to Sankara, it is not possible for us to combine the two (Jnāna and Karma). On the other hand, to Tilak combination of 'Jnāna' and Karma is possible and it is essential. 'Bhakti' as well as 'Yoga' are also essential for the achievement of any great Karma, so Tilak points to the real

135. R. De, Ramade, Bhagvad Gita, p. 112.
136. Ibid, p. 130.
137. Ibid, p. 130.
138. Ibid, p. 121.
Maniac of Oita, as consisting in spreading the gospel of 'Karma Yoga'. According to him, "with 'Karma Yoga' 'Gita' begins, with 'Karma Yoga', 'Gita' ends and it is 'Karma Yoga' which pervades 'Gita'.

In the 'Gita', Karma assumes more or less an ethical aspect of life. While in Buddhism Karma is to be absolutely annihilated, in the 'Gita' it is to be sublimated, surrendered and consecrated to God. In his exposition of the Gita, says 'Jnânevara', your karmas are like flowers which should be placed at the feet of God. Making out the difference in the concept of Karma, Dr. Radhakrishnan points out that while Buddhism aims at a life of contemplation, 'Gita' aims at a life of action. Mahatma Gandhi interprets the philosophy of Gita as the non attachment or renunciation - the renunciation of the fruit of action. He calls it also the doctrine of 'Anasakti'. "Anasakti' is the central Sun round which revolve the three planets of devotion, knowledge and works".

To follow the law of Karma, a stress on three points is laid down.

1. Desireless action,
2. The dedication of all the actions to God,
3. Surrendering oneself to God, body and soul.

Mahatma Gandhi says, "That great matchless remedy consists in desireless action, in dedicating all activities to God.

140. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 322.
142. Ibid. p. 109.
143. Ibid. p. 109.
that is by surrendering oneself to Him, body and soul. Apart from this the Gita also teaches that the actions should be done thinking as a duty and only for the sake of duty. The person who performs the duty without keeping in mind the fruits thereof, achieves his goal. "He who performs his duty, understanding the secret of work rises above good and evil" and "In work alone lies the duty, never in the fruits thereof. Do not work for the fruit nor should you desist from work." The Gita insulates selfless, disinterested actions (niskama karma) dedicated to God. Duties performed without attachment lead to "Moksha." The works or Karmas performed, should be free from egoistic desires, from the sense of 'I' and 'mine' and also free from success or failure, victory or defeat, good or evil, pleasure or pain. All work should be done as service to God. They should be dedicated to Him and they should be done for the sake of God. Since the world process is dependent upon the Lord, so we can call Him the Lord of Karma. What binds a man, is not the work but the spirit in which it is done. So all the work has to be done in purity of motive. Good Karmas which purify the mind and lead us to wisdom, should be performed in this spirit.

145. Gita, XII, 13.
146. Gita, XII, 47.
147. Gita, XII, 19.
149. Gita, XIII, 8-33. XII, 13; XVIII, 17; 26; 63.
150. Gita, XII, 33; 43; 67.
151. Gita, XIX, 30; IV, 6; V, 10, 13; IX, 27; XII, 10.
152. Gita, XIX, 22.
Karma is said to be beginningless and the exact manner, how it works is hard to understand. "Even the wise are perplexed to know what is action and what is inaction."

The Gita draws a distinction between 'Samyāsa' and 'Tyāga': "Samyāsa is renouncing all interested works; Tyāga is giving up the fruit of all works".

Karma is described to have been interpreted in the Gita in three different ways:

1. Sometimes disinterested actions for the good of mankind are regarded as the direct means of liberation.

2. Sometimes they are described as the means of self purification (atmasudhi) or purification of the mind.

3. And sometimes they are said to result in the dawn of integral knowledge.

In the Gita, karmas are divided into three kinds. 'Sanchita', 'Kriyāmaṇa' and 'Prarabdha'. By 'Sanchit' we mean that kind of karma which remains accumulated and has not begun to yield any result. By 'Kriyaman' we understand that kind of karma which is being done every day along with the experiencing of the 'Prarabdha' karma and which is to produce an accumulated force for the future experiences. 'Prarabdha' karma on the other hand means that part of accumulated karma which has become to fructify and according to the nature of

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154. Gita. IV. 17.
155. Gita. IV. 16.
156. Gita. VIII. 2.
157. Gita. III. 20; II. 51
158. Gita. V. 11.
159. Gita. IV. 23.
which the particular organism has come to be assumed. The Gita believes in rebirth or the doctrine of transmigration. The process of birth and death remains continued until the ultimate state of is reached. This state or the final emancipation from birth and rebirth is reached only when all the types of Karmas i.e. 'Sanchit', 'Kriyaman' and 'Prarabdha' are exhausted. Birth and death occur as infancy, youth and age occur to a man's frame.

May, but as when one layeth His wornout robes away And taking newones, sayeth "These will I wear today" So putteneth by the spirit Lightly its garb of flesh And passeth to inherit A Residence afresh.

So when the body dies the soul is supplied with the new body. The Gita teaches that, "Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body, the wise man does not get deluded about this" Under the influence of 'Avidya', the 'lingasarira' or subtle body enters into the organism of various beings. The three constituents of 'Avidya', namely, 'Sattva', 'Rajas', and 'Tamas' are the root cause of all the differences in the performance of actions and consequently in their results. The 'Jivatma' under the influence of 'Tamas', 'Rajas' and 'Sattva' enters the organism of lower creatures to the higher organism of 'Isis' and gods according to the

So the kind of birth depends upon the character we have developed. We are born in celestial region, or as men on earth or in the animal world according as we develop character in which 'Sattva', 'Rajas' or 'Tamas' predominates. The Gita explains how the last thought of a person determines his future after death. The Lord Himself says, 'O Son of Kunti, thinking of whatever objects one leaves this body at the time of death, that and that alone he attains, being ever absorbed in its thought'. Since the last thought of a person is what we can say, the aggregate of thoughts or the dominant thought which kept him engaged during his life time, the person therefore, makes efforts to do good deeds throughout his life with the hope of getting nearer to the Lord.

The last thought of a person is generally desired to be related with God. In the Gita we find the Lord saying, "Think of Me at all times and fight with your mind and intellect having thus surrendered to Me; you will doubtless come to Me" and again, "He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone, even at the time of death, attains my state, there is no doubt about it".

There is also a reference to the paths which a 'Jiva' takes after death according to the nature of its deeds done in the present or in the past births. The one path is of

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165. Gita. XIV. 8-12.
169 gods and if the 'Jīva' happens to take that, leads it to the highest goal of life and wherefrom the 'Jīva' does not ever return to the world. The second path is that through which a 'Jīva' goes to the region determined by its own actions and after having experiencing the fruits of its action there, it comes back to this world again. There is yet another path, mentioned for the sinful spirits.

Karma and Transmigration in Purva Mimansa.

'Jaimini' (about 400 B.C) is the author of 'Mimansa Sutra' and founder of 'Mimansa' system. Apart from the other commentators of this system, 'Kumarila Bhatt' and 'Prabhakara' (both 700 A.D) are most prominent. Their interpretations have led them to establish two different schools of thought of 'Mimansa'. 'Purva Mimansa' interprets the actions, enjoined in the 'Vedas', leading to freedom of the soul, while 'Uttar Mimansa' (commonly known as Vedanta) interprets the knowledge revealed in the 'Vedas' leading to the freedom of the soul. The metaphysics underlying the 'Vedas' and the 'Brahmanas' as explained by 'Jaimini' is different from the metaphysics underlying the 'Upanishads' as explained by 'Badarayana', the author of 'Vedanta Sutra'. 'Purva Mimansa' advocates the life of action while 'Vedanta' pleads

170. Gita IX. 12; XVI. 39,41.
171. The term Mimansa is derived from Sanskrit root 'man' which means to think, consider, examine or investigate. The term is used to signify a consideration, examination or investigation of Vedic text. It is also known as 'Karma Mimansa', because of its principle concept of action based upon Vedic rituals and sacrifices.
for meditation, and renunciation. The central problem of
"Pūrva Mīmāṃsā" is to investigate "Dharma" (duty) and Karma
(action), especially as it is stated in the "Vedas".

"Mīmāṃsā" rejects the notion of God, who creates,
preserves and dissolves the world. It believes in the
eternity and infallibility of the "Vedas" and reject their
divine authorship. Written "Vedas" are the only manifes-
tation of the eternal "Vedas". It accepts the philosophical
concept of other systems. Mainly it believes in the reality
of external world, reality of individual soul, the belief
in the doctrine of Karma and transmigration; heaven and
hell and liberation. The purpose of "Mīmāṃsā" is to enquire
into the nature of right action (Dharma). The fundamental
belief of "Mīmāṃsā" is, that action is the very essence of
human existence. Without action knowledge is fruitless,
without action happiness is impossible, without action
human destiny cannot be fulfilled, therefore, right action
(Dharma) is the spiritual pre-requisite of life. The central
theme of "Mīmāṃsā" is stated in the opening verse of
"Mīmāṃsā Sūtra": "Now is the enquiry of duty". "Mīmāṃsā"
examines all actions enjoined in the "Vedas" by dividing
them under five different headings. They are injunctions
(vidhi), hymns (mantras), names (nāmaḥ), prohibitions
(nīśedha) and explanatory passages (arthavāda). It is,
therefore a general summary of the rules for the inter-
pretations of "Vedic" texts.

173. J. N. Sinha: Indian Philosophy; p. 837.
174. C. Chatterjee and D. Bhatta, An Introduction to Indian Philo-
175. Theos Bernard: Hindu Philosophy; p. 122.
176. Theos Bernard: Hindu Philosophy; p. 45.
177. 'Mīmāṃsā Sūtra' of "Jaimini": 1. 1. 1.
The law of Karma works in 'Mimansa' in an autonomous way. The performance of sacrifices generate an unseen potency (apurva) in the self which generates their fruits without the intervention of God. The 'apurva' is the intermediate agency between the performance of sacrifice and the attainments of heaven. It is the link between the act and its fruit. It is the 'moving force' in the act which leads to its fructification. All Karmas are said to have two effects. One is external, gross or manifested; other is internal, subtle or potential. The internal effect of the action is eternal while external effect is transitory. It is the internal effect or the subtle moving force (apurva) which causes or shapes the life to come according to its favourable or unfavourable nature.

'Mimansa' divides all actions into three kinds.

1. Obligatory: these should be performed because their violation results in sin, although their performance leads to no merit. Obligatory actions are of two kinds - those which must be performed daily (nitya) like daily prayers and those which must be performed on specified occasions (naimittika).

178. Sinha, Indian Philosophy; p. 854.

179. Purva Mimansa Sutra II. 1, 8 (According to Purva Mimansa, the results of sacrifices etc., are due neither to a Supreme Deity, which it does not admit, nor to the particular deities to whom the offerings are made, but to the unseen potency generated by the very performance of the sacrifices etc.). C.f. Radhakrishnan Brahma Sutra, p. 465.
2. Optional actions are called 'Karma karma' which may or may not be performed. Their performance leads to merit e.g. he who wants to go to heaven should perform certain sacrifices. The non performance of these Karma does not lead to sin.

3. Prohibited actions, which must not be performed. Their performance incurs sin and leads to hell. They are called 'Pratisidha'. There are also expiatory acts (prayashchitta) which are performed under certain conditions in order to ward off or at least wash out the evil effect of the performed prohibited actions.

The 'Mimamsikas' hold that the performance of certain sacrificial rites do not mean to please the deity or the purification of the soul or moral improvement, but a ritual is to be performed just because the Vedas command us to perform them. And here the 'Mimansa' ethics reaches, through ritualism, the highest point of its glory, namely, the conception of duty for duty's sake. The concept of 'Dharma' or duty as described in the 'Mimansa Sutra' is 'which is indicated by the means of the 'Vedas' as conducive to the highest good'.

Prabhakara is of the belief that in every voluntary action there is the consciousness of freedom or the knowledge that it can be done by the will of the self. 'If there is...

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180. Dr. Chandersthar Sharma; A critical Survey of Indian Philosophy; p. 236.
181. Prakarana-pancika; pp. 185-86. cf. Chatterjee and Dutta; Introduction to Indian Philosophy; p. 339.
182. Ibid. p. 339.
183. Mimansa Sutra; 1.1.2.
no efforts on its volition, the action cannot be done. The volition is determined by the self’s own free will.

’Himanska’ shares with the general Indian thought that karma is the cause of bondage. When the cause is removed, the effect also ceases to exist. The soul which is chained to ‘Samsara’ because of its association with the body, senses and mind, gets released from these ties, when the karmas are exhausted. It is realised that the performance of actions, meritorious or demeritorious, is dictated by any desire for enjoyment of objects, causes repeated birth. By the disinterested performance of obligatory duties and knowledge of the self, the karmas accumulated in the past are gradually worn out. The highest aim of the earlier ‘Himansika’ was the attainment of heaven (swarga) or a state in which there was freedom and bliss. Heaven was regarded as the usual end of rituals. But gradually the idea of heaven was replaced by the concept of liberation (moksa) or known as ‘apavarga’. It was not Jaimini, the founder-author of ‘Himansa’ system, but ‘Kumarila Bhatt’ and ‘Prabhakara’ who considered the nature of liberation and means of its attainment. Liberation is due to absolute extinction of merit and demerit. When the karmas are completely destroyed the body which is the vehicle of experience is destroyed.

185. Chatterjee and Dutta, Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p. 340.
186. Jaimini did not face the problem of ultimate release’ Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p.322.
The self breaks its relations with the material world and is restored to its original state. The release consists in the total destruction of this three-fold bondage.

1. It consists in the destruction of the present body, the sense organs and the experience of external objects.

2. The non-production of any future body, senses and experience.

3. It can also be brought about by completely wiping of all traces of merits and demerits acquired by past actions.

Kumarila regards action and knowledge both necessary for the attainment of release. This idea paves the way for the 'Vedanta' philosophy and is near to the concept of release as described in the Bhagavad Gita. The knowledge of the self helps in wiping off the merits and demerits accumulated in the past and the performance of certain prescribed acts as enjoined in the 'Vedas' as well as the non-performance of forbidden acts lead to liberation of the soul. It is known as 'jnana-karma-samuchchayaveda' or a harmonious combination of knowledge and action as a means to liberation.

'Prabhakara' and 'Kumarila' both admit that abstention from karma does not mean abstention from all karmas. Only optional (kamya) and prohibited (pratisidha) kinds of karma should not be done. The optional karma produce merit and leads to heaven where as the forbidden karma produce demerit and leads to hell. The seeker of liberation has to

188. Dr. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II. p. 424.
arise above the both, merit and demerit; heaven and hell. But he should do the obligatory (nitya and naimittika) action enjoined by the Vedas.

The 'Mimāṃsa' accepts the autonomous working of the law of karma. But the later 'Mīnāsakas' suggested the concept of God in the system, and conceived Him as the Supervisor of the law of karma, the apportioner of rewards and punishments, and the Moral Governor of the world.

189. Dr. Chandradhar Sharma; A critical Survey of Indian Philosophy; p. 237.
190. J.N. Sinha, Indian Philosophy, p. 86.