CHAPTER II

The concept of Karma and transmigration in the Medieval Indian thought.

So far we had a discussion on the subject of Karma and transmigration, as it is revealed in the ancient scriptures i.e. the 'Vedas', the 'Brahmanas', the 'Upanishads', the 'Gītā', and in the religious systems of Jainism and Buddhism. In the medieval period, the religious and philosophical Indian thought, which dominates the other systems, is 'Vedānta' or the concluding portion of the 'Vedas'. Although the sources of 'Vedānta' philosophy are found in the 'Upanishads', the 'Bhagavad Gītā' and the 'Brahma-Sūtra', yet the different interpretations and commentaries on the major metaphysical thoughts, i.e. 'Brahman', 'Jagat' and 'Jīva', - by the exponents of 'Vedānta', have led this system split up into many schools. The chief systematic interpretations of 'Vedānta' philosophy are the 'Advaita', 'Visistadvaita', 'Dvaita', 'Bhedabheda' and 'Suddhadvaita', associated with the names of Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbārka and Vallabha respectively. Commenting upon the above mentioned scriptures, they have succeeded in putting forth the original and varied interpretations in accordance with their own attitudes and temperaments.

Sankara (A.D. 788-820)

Sankara's philosophy is known as 'Advaitvād'. According to him 'Brahman' or the Supreme Spirit is real; the world is unreal; the individual self is only the Supreme self
and no other. He is the 'only intelligence (Chaitanya), which is without form, without qualities, without any limitations of time, space or causality, and everything else without exception is unreal, phenomenal, superimposed upon the self-existing self-refulgent intelligence. Thus the unity of the Brahman or the Supreme Self is absolute, without the slightest trace of plurality.

Sankara regards the world as 'Maya'. The world does not exist in reality and its manifestation disappears when the reality is known at the rise of true knowledge. Similarly, the individual soul, which appears different from other souls and also from 'Brahman' is in fact nothing but the one unitary 'Brahman'.

Karma theory has been accepted by Sankara. According to him, the individuality is due to Karma, which is the product of 'avidya' or wrong knowledge. We are born into this world according to the deeds done by us in our previous lives. Sometimes the works of a single existence have to be atoned for in several succeeding ones. In every organism, the jīva exhausts its stored Karmas but he also gathers fresh Karmas which continue to accumulate. This process of getting successive organism on the basis of Karmas goes on until the jīva exhausts all his Karmas and gets final emancipation.

The nature of Karma, for Sankara, is predominantly evil. It is just a phase of 'avidhya'. To get rid of

1. Brahma styaṃ jagaj mithya, Jīvo Brahmacaiva Nāparah.
' avidyā', is to be freed from the law of Karma. He says, 'freedom from subjection to the law of Karma is the end of human life. This freedom can be attained only when a perfect knowledge is gained. True knowledge consumes the seed of Karma and makes rebirth impossible'. Sankara also believes that all the acts done with an expectation of reward yield the fruits in accordance with the law of Karma, while those done with no selfish interest, in the spirit of dedication to God, purify the mind.

The holy scriptures of Indian religions have suggested three means of attaining perfection, i.e. Karma or action; 'jnāna' or knowledge and 'Bhakti' or Devotion. According to Sankara the action primarily purifies the mind and devotion contributes to its concentration, but the veil of ignorance is removed only by true knowledge. Salvation can, therefore, be attained through knowledge and not through action or devotion. Works are only a means to knowledge.

The liberation cannot be attained through Karmas, firstly, because the Karmas done in a life make an effect on the next life to come and secondly, the bad deeds may be exhausted, even then to get reward for the good deeds, one will have to be born again. Again, practically, it is not possible to avoid work throughout the existence. Sankara argues that if liberation or 'Nukti' is depended upon the work, then it would be a transitory one owing to the

5. Ibid. p. 60.
6. M. Hiriyanna, The Essentials of Indian Philosophy, p. 3.
consumption of the work. This leads to contradiction to the 7
eternal and permanent concept of liberation. So freedom is 8
not the direct result of action. Karma only helps us to remove
the hindrances to 'Jnana' or wisdom. Sankara is not even, in
favour of combining knowledge with action. The opposition of
knowledge and action, in his view, stands firm like a moun-
tain. "Those who talk of combining knowledge with action,
says Sankara, have perhaps not heard the 'Brahadāraṇyaka'
nor are they aware of the glaring contradiction repeatedly
pointed out by the Shruti and the Smriti'. Works are only a
means to knowledge.

Sankara holds that the path of work (Karma) and
the path of wisdom (Jnāna) are intended for different classes
of people. The two cannot be pursued together. The scrip-
tures, he says, have prescribed action only for those who
are still labouring under ignorance, and 'Jnana' or wisdom
is the path pursued by the higher class of aspirants who
have no desire for earthly prosperity or heavenly joy.

Actions are to be performed only until true knowledge dawns.

8. Anusṭhaya-karma-phala-vilakṣeṇam. (Sankara Bhasya 1.1.5).
9. 'Jnana-karma-virodha parvatavadi kṣeṇya' (Sankara Bhasya 2).
10. 'Brahadāraṇyaka - Bhasya'; II.4 c.f. Chandr Sekhar Sharma:
Indian Philosophy: Introduction.
11. "Bhim the Brahman seek to know by Vedic study, by sacri-
fice, by alms, by penance, by fasting" from which
it may be gathered that pious works are a means to the
attainment of that knowledge. (Sankara Bhasya, p. 100 8.8)
of Paul Deussen: The System of the Vedanta; p. 411.
13. Shankara Bhasya on Gita; p. 455.
They have no value for a man of knowledge just as the digging of a well has no value for a man who finds himself in the midst of a deluge. A liberated sage, however, performs actions without any attachment and works for the uplift of humanity.

**Transmigration:**

From the conception of rewards in heaven and punishment in a dark region contained in the hymns of *Rig Veda*, there arose the theory of 'Samsāra', teaching rewards and punishments in the form of a new birth on earth. In Śaṅkara's *Vedānta*, it is admitted that those who perform good deeds, sacrifices etc., follow the path of the fathers (pitr-yāna) and are born again; those who worship the qualified 'Brahms' or 'Īśvara' follow the path of gods (deva-yāna) and are on their way to final deliverance; and those who are evil doers have a third place (tritiya-sthāna) reserved for them. In his introduction to the commentary on the *Bhāgavad Gītā*, Śaṅkara observes, "Chief and defusion are the cause of Samsāra (Transmigration). Their cessation can not be brought about except by means of the knowledge of the self preceded by the renunciation of all works".

**Nārāyanā (A.D. 1140)**

Next to the school of Monism of Śaṅkara is the school of Qualified Monism (Viśistadvaita) of Rāmānuja.

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According to Ramanuja, God is the only reality. He is Omnipotent and Omniscient. Within Him there exist Conscious Soul (Cit) and Unconscious material objects (Acit). Because of these realities within Him, objects created are also real. The individual, for Ramanuja, lasts for ever and even in release enjoys its individuality.

Like Sankara, Ramanuja has also accepted the law of Karma and transmigration. Regarding the importance of action or Karma, Ramanuja differs from Sankara. According to Ramanuja, action promotes devotion and so it should be performed even by man of knowledge so long as he is alive. In his views the path of Karma has superior advantage over the path of knowledge, because the former is easy to pursue. Ramanuja differs with Sankara, who believes that knowledge alone is the means to attain salvation. For Ramanuja, 'Bhakti' or devotion is the only means of attaining salvation. Karma or action and 'Jñāna' or knowledge are the pre-requisites to the attainment of that 'Bhakti'. He compares knowledge to horse, which though a means of conveyance for his master requires attendants, grooming etc. The horse will of course carry its rider, but a smooth riding requires certain actions on the part of the rider.

Ramanuja describes action as manifold. They are the daily (nitya), the accidental (naimittika), the desired (āmya) and the prohibited (pratisiddha).

17. Ramanuja Bhasya on Gita, 3.6.
18. Shri Bhasya 3.4.2.
19. Ibid. 3.4.12.
The individual selves are separate entities although they depend on God for their existence. There are three kinds of souls: bound, released and eternally free. Though the soul in omniscient in its true nature, the knowledge of the self is restricted due to the encrustations of the past karma. As long as the self is associated with the body, the knowledge functions only in a restricted way. The self undergoes the cycle of births and deaths. It is only after it is emancipated that there is real freedom for the self from bondage.

In order to get rid of the bondage and to attain salvation, the self will have to pursue a certain means. According to Ramanuja, 'Shakti' or steadfast contemplation of God is the true means of attaining the supreme goal.

People who are engrossed in worldly enjoyments and those who worship God for worldly success have to tread, after casting off their mortal coil, on the path of darkness or ignorance. They follow the path of 'Praavrtti'. Only those who are capable of concentrating their minds on the true self, or of meditation upon God, are alone fit to proceed on the right path (nivrtti), the path of knowledge and devotion. The dark path is associated with transmigration and a man of ignorance is bound to follow this path.

But a man of knowledge and devotion lives in the world in a state of detachment just as a lotus remains in water. The activities of such a man aim not at the

21. Ramanuja Bhasya on Gitas, p. 76.
realization of selfish ends but at the general good of the world. If he happens to do anything wrong, he is unaffected by its consequences. On his attainment of true knowledge and devotion, all the accumulated (Sancita) actions of a person—actions both good and evil—are at once rendered inactive, and he realizes God. Ramanuja holds that God's Grace is necessary to achieve the real goal. Hence he has advocated the doctrine of self surrender (Prapatti) to God.

Madhva, (A.D. 1197-1273)

The philosophy of Brahman expounded by Madhva, is popularly known as 'Dvaitavada'. For him, the Supreme God is 'Vishnu'. The world is real. The different and many individual souls are God's servants. The 'Jivas' are of three kinds: 'Deva', 'Manusa' and 'Dahanva'. Madhva says that karma is to be performed, since the 'Sastras' require it. Karma are to be performed without any desire or fruit. The only desires we may have are for greater knowledge and greater devotion. Madhva holds that without 'Bhakti', only the performance of duties do not help. Love of God and His Grace are the pre-requisites for the devotee to get nearer to God.

Individual souls are self-luminous in themselves, but their intelligence become veiled by 'avidya'. When the direct knowledge of God arises, the ignorance is dispelled.

22. Shri Shasaya, 4.1,13.
23. M.Kiriyaama, The Essentials of Indian Philosophy, p. 386.
Bondage is due to attachment and liberation is attained by direct realisation of God. The state of liberation is achieved by different ways; i.e.

1. the experience of the sorrows of worldly existence;
2. company of good men;
3. renunciation of the desire for the enjoyment of pleasures in this world or in another;
4. self control and self discipline;
5. resignation to God.

The best men attain salvation through knowledge and grace of God; ordinary men pass through cycles of births and rebirths and the worst are damned in hell. The eternally liberated and those cursed in hell are not subject to birth and rebirth. There is no hope for the wicked in hell. Only in Madhva's system do we have the doctrine of eternal damnation.

Madhva has described the state of liberation of four kinds. It is 'Salokya', 'Sampya', 'Sarupya', and 'Sayujja'. 'Sayujja' is the entrance of the freed souls into the body of God where they share in the enjoyment of God in his own body. Only deities have this kind of liberation. They can at will come out of God and remain separate from Him. 'Salokya' is residence in heaven where the freed souls have the satisfaction of the continual sight of God.

25. aproksa-jnanam-vishnoh; Ibid. p. 66.
26. Ibid. p. 66.
27. Ibid; p. 66.
'Śarūpya' is continual residence near God as enjoyed by the sages. 'Śarūpya' is enjoyed by God's attendants who have outward forms similar to those which God possesses. The freed souls are different from one another.

**Nimbārka**

Nimbārka's school of philosophy is known as 'Dvaitadvaita' or 'Bhedabheda'. According to Nimbārka there are three equally real and co-eternal realities (tri-tattva) 'Brahma', 'cit' and 'acit'. While 'Brahma' is the controller (niyantara) 'cit' is the enjoyer (bhoktr) and 'acit' is the enjoyment (bhogya). The highest Reality or 'Brahma', he calls, 'Krāنا' or 'Hari'. The soul or 'cit' according to Nimbārka, is consciousness in essence and a conscious knower, a doer of deeds and an enjoyer of the fruits thereof. The souls are infinite in number. They are identical neither with one another nor with 'Brahma'. Even the free souls retain their individuality or separateness and are not merged into God.

Nimbārka speaks of five 'Sadhanās' or spiritual means, viz. work (Karma), Knowledge (Jnāna), Devotion and Meditation (Bhakti and Upāsana), Self surrender to God (prapatti), and Self surrender to guru or spiritual preceptor. Works by themselves do not lead to salvation, but when performed in an unselfish spirit, they purify the mind and help the rise of knowledge and devotion in it.

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29. Adhakrishnan; History of Indian Philosophy; Eastern and Western; p. 348.
Human individuals undergo experience in accordance with their past conduct. There are three kinds of destiny for the soul, 'savgarga' or heaven, 'maraka' or hell and 'apavarga' or release. The sinners go to hell; the virtuous go to heaven and the knowers go to the world of 'Brahma' and are not bound to return any more to 'samsara'. They are the released souls. Souls in bondage are attached to material bodies and are subject to rebirth according to their past deeds.

Release is possible only after death. There is no 'jivan-mukti', according to Nimbarka. So long as the material body persists, release is not possible.

Vallabha (A.D. 1478-1521)

Vallabha's school of 'Vedanta' is known as 'Suddhavaita'. The highest reality, according to Vallabha, is 'Arana' known as 'Brahma'. He is one and one only without a second; possesses all divine qualities. He is existence, intelligence and bliss (sac-cid-ananda). He is eternal, unchanging, Omnipresent, Omiscient and Omipotent. He is the Creator of everything and is both the material and efficient cause of the world. Vallabha accepts three forms of 'Brahma'.

1. 'Para-brahma' or 'Purusaottama'
2. 'Antaryamin' and
3. 'Aksara Brahman'

30. 'jivan-mukti', according to Nimbarka.
31. 'Suddhavaita', the highest reality, according to Vallabha, is 'Arana' known as 'Brahma'. He is one and one only without a second; possesses all divine qualities. He is existence, intelligence and bliss (sac-cid-ananda). He is eternal, unchanging, Omnipresent, Omiscient and Omipotent. He is the Creator of everything and is both the material and efficient cause of the world. Vallabha accepts three forms of 'Brahma'.

Individual souls come out of 'Aksara-Brahma' like sparks from fire. When the Lord desires to grant liberation through knowledge, He makes the 'Aksara-Brahma' appear in four forms, viz., 1. 'Aksara', 2. Time (kāla), 3. Action (Karma) and 4. Nature (svabhāva).

Vallabha says that the world comes out of the very essence (sva-rūpa) of 'Brahman', and not from the 'Māyā', as found in the system of Saṅkara. The creation of the world is mere Līla (sport) on the part of God who is absolutely self-sufficient.

Vallabha tells us that action, knowledge and formal devotion (maryāda bhakti) do not find favour with God in attaining perfection, unless one is absolutely 33 depended upon His Grace.

Vallabha has divided the souls into three classes in the descending order, viz. 'Pusti', 'Maryāda' and 'Pravaha'. Souls which are aimlessly moving in the world, which are completely engrossed in it and which never think of God, belong to the class of 'Pravaha' (the current of the world) while those who study the scriptures, understand the real nature of God and worship Him accordingly form the second class of 'Maryāda' (law of scriptures). The 'Pusti' souls are however, the chosen people of God who worship Him most ardently out of their boundless love for Him. The souls are called 'Pusti' (grace of God) as they are blessed enough...

32. Radhakrishnan, History of Indian Philosophy, Eastern and Western, p. 349.
33. Ibid. p. 354.
34. Ibid. p. 363.
to enjoy the divine grace, which enables them to realise the highest ideal.

Persons who live an objectionable life have to suffer and to move in the cycle of the world. Those who perform sacrifices for the fulfilment of desires or get their rewards accordingly and go to heaven, if desired, by the path of manes and have to return to the world of mortals when their merit is exhausted. When a person performs ‘Vedic sacrifices without any desire, he enjoys spiritual happiness (atmasukha) and later on when his life is over, assumes a new body accordingly. In this new birth he gets the knowledge of God, and ultimately qualifies himself for union with Him by passing through the different stages of the path of Gods. ‘Vedas’, for Vallabha, are the highest authority. He believes that in the ‘Vedic’ sacrifices, God manifests Himself in the forms of rituals, and those who worship the ritual power of God by performing these sacrifices and possess at the same time the knowledge of God, enjoy liberation in the form of divine joy.

The concepts of Karma and transmigration in Medieval Indian thought:

(Islam and sacrifice): So far we have traced the development of the theory of Karma and transmigration in the orthodox as well as in the heterodox systems of Indian Philosophy. The religion

35. Ibid. p. 362.
36. Radhakrishnan: History of Indian Philosophy, Eastern and Western, p. 382.
37. Ibid. p. 382.
of Islam and its philosophical thought owes its origin in Arab countries, with Prophet Mohammad as the founder, in the first half of seventh century A.D. The coming of Muslim people into India in the eighth century and subsequently, the growth of Muslim dominion in the land, brought a major change in the Indian society. The ideals of Hindu or 'Vedanta' philosophy and the upsurge of 'Bhakti' tradition, a popular movement of the time, made an impact upon Muslim theology and while, on the other hand Islamic religion and culture also made an influence upon the social and religious life of the inhabitants of India. By the end of fifteenth century A.D. the Islamic and Sufi thought was well established and was being preached all over India by the Sufi saints as well as by the Muslim Political authority.

Although the basic tenets of Hindu and Muslim philosophy remain, to large extent, unchanged, yet the religious reformers of both the religions influenced the people alike in their common beliefs and practices.

The holy book of Muslims is Quran. It is not a philosophical treatise, although it contains the Muslim creed, the fundamental religious beliefs and basic principles of ethics, law and polity. The central doctrines of Quran are the Unity of Godhead, complete dependence of man on God and the necessity of Prophethood.

The Qur'anic concept of God is 'There is no God save Allah. He is the One, the Living, the Exalted, the
Comprehensive, the Powerful, the Self-sufficing, the Absolute Originator, The Eternal, the Mighty, the Dominant, the Haughty, the Great, the Laudable, the Glorious, the Generous, the Strong, the Firm, the Knower, the Subtle, the Aware, the Wise, the Hearer, the Seer. He is also the Creator, the Shaper, the Giver of life and the Giver of death, the Assembler of All at the Last, the Strengthener, the Guardian, the King, the Governor, the Lord of Kingship, the Prevailer and the Tyrant.

In relation to mankind Allah is the compassionate, the Forgiver, the Pardoner, the Clement, the Kind and the Loving. He is the Giver, the Provider and the Answerer of prayer. Man's relation to Allah is one of utter submission and dependence.

The following quotation from Quran gives us a glimpse of the prominent beliefs of Islam.

'It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and west. But righteousness is this that one should believe in Allah, and the Last Day, and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets; and give away wealth out of the love for him, to the near of kin and orphans and the needy and the wayfarers and the beggars and for the captives, and keep up prayer and give alms...'

39. Sources of Indian Tradition, p. 304.
40. Ibid. p. 386.
41. Quran, 11, 177.
As regards the doctrines of Karma and transmigration, the Muslim philosophy does not recognise the concepts, the way, these have been accepted in all the schools of Indian philosophy, with the exception of Charavak, but it (Muslim philosophy) has a firm belief in the eternal soul, i.e. the life after death, and the importance of the effect of actions (deeds) in the shape of rewards and punishments. In spite of all this we find a few quotations in the Quran indicating a vague reference to the theory of transmigration.

'God generates beings and sends them back over and over till they return to Him'.

Again

'How can ye withhold faith from God? You were dead and He gave you life;
Next He will cause you to die;
Next He will restore you to life;
Next shall ye return to Him'.

And again

'He it is who gives ye life;
Then He causes you to die;
Then He will bring you to life;
And it is He who will give you life once again;
Verily man is ungrateful'.

44. Ibid. 2.66.
According to Islam, the creation of soul and the universe of multiplicity is only due to the grace (Fais) of God. It is through His Divine Grace that He enters into creation.

His eternal knowledge is the creative cause of all existence, other than Him. His ideas are His acts.

In Muslim faith, the perfection of the soul is associated with the Day of Judgment. Islam does not take the soul as a different entity that descends from somewhere and mixes with the body. The soul at its inception, lies concealed in the animal consciousness of man, it comes to the surface at a later stage, after which further development makes it perfect. Another exponent of Islam states that the soul is created and comes into being during the period of gestation. The soul once created is never destroyed and is granted an unending period of time for its development. The soul manifests its power always through a body and whenever the body becomes unfitted for this purpose, the soul quits it. This flight of the soul from the body is called death.

The chief and predominating idea in Islam regarding future life is founded upon the belief that 'in a state of existence hereafter, every human being will have to render an account of his or her actions on earth, and that the

45. According to Quran-Allah, when He created the first man, breathed into him the soul (nafs) or the spirit of life. Quran: XV. 29.
46. History of Indian Philosophy: Eastern and Western, p. 494.
47. William Loftus Hare: Religions of the Empire, p. 66-67.
happiness or misery of individuals will depend upon the manner in which they have performed the behests of their creator. Although the mercy and grace of Allah, considered as His distinctive attributes in Islamic faith, are unbound and will be bestowed alike upon His creatures, yet He is the Stern Ruler, and hence, no body can escape the fruits of the actions performed by him or her in the life on earth.

The belief in future life was not a new conception for Islam. The Persians, before the time of Prophet of Arabia, had a strong and developed conception of future life. In the religion of Zoroastrians, it is held that after a man's death, the demons take possession of his body. On the third day, after death, the consciousness again returns. Then there is a bridge known as 'Chimavad'. Souls that in their life-time have yielded to the seduction of evil cannot pass the terrible bridge, to which they are conducted on the day following the third night after their death. The good souls successfully pass it and entering the realms of bliss join 'Ormusd' and the 'Anshaspands' in their abode, where seated on thrones of gold, they enjoy the society of beautiful fairies (Boor an-l-bahshat) and all other manners of delights. The

50. Among the various descriptions of woman in Paradise is the word hur. The description of hur as given in the Qur'an, contain the best qualities of a good woman, purity of character, beauty, youthful appearance, restrained eyes and love for her husband. The relationship of the company of men and women in the Resurrection has quite a different meaning than the sexual relationship, as understood in this life. "In them (i.e. the gardens are) goodly women, beautiful ones (hur) confined to the pavilions" (Quran 56, 70-72).

"Surely the righteous are in a secure place, in gardens and springs and we will give them the company of pure (hur) beautiful ones (Quran 44, 51-54)."
wicked fall over the bridge or are dragged down into the gulf of 'Dusakh', where they are tormented by the 'Devas'. The duration of this punishment is fixed by 'Ormusd'. Towards the end of the world a prophet is to arise, who is to rid the earth of injustice and wickedness. After this a universal resurrection will take place; friends and relatives will meet again. After the joys of recognition there will follow a separation of the good from the bad. The torments of the unrighteous will be horrible.

'Ahriman' will run up and down 'Chineva'; bridge overwhelmed with anguish. A blazing comet, falling on the earth, will ignite the world. Mountains will melt and flow together like liquid metal. All mankind, good and bad, alike will pass through this glowing flood, and come out purified. Even 'Ahriman' will be changed and 'Dusakh' purified. Evil henceforth will be annihilated, and all mankind will live in the enjoyment of ineffable delights.

The details of the souls contained existence after death, have not been discussed elaborately in the Quran.

It is not definitely stated in the Quran, that what shall become of the departed soul during the period from death to the Day of Judgment. There are different opinions and traditions of Mohammad about the departed soul. In regard to martyrs there is a tradition of the prophet that they shall rest in the corps of green birds. With reference to other souls different opinions are expressed as to their stay until the day of resurrection. Some say they shall stay near the Sepulchers. Others imagine they shall be kept in the lowest heaven. Others fancy that they shall remain in the well 'Nizam' in the sacred temple at Makka. Some conjecture that they shall stay near the graves for seven days and where they go afterwards is not clearly stated. The most established opinion is that they shall be kept in Amanat (in trust) until resurrection.' (Khasan Singh: The philosophy of Sikh Religion Vol. II, p. 31).

'After death every soul passes into a state, the details of which are little known. It shall remain in this intermediate state (Barsakh) till the dooms day when every human being created from the beginning of humanity will be summoned into a new life again. The resurrected man will not be exactly the same man of this world, but the identical with him to the extent necessary for the future life of retribution' (Punjabi University, Patiala Publication: Islam, p. 21).
These have come down to the people from the old Zoroastrian and Persian religious traditions. In the Quran, the emphasis is laid down only in the belief of Last Day (The Day of Judgment).

The importance of the belief in future life, in Islam is next only to faith in God. The reason for giving this great importance to a life after death is clear enough. The constant repetition of the idea of requital of deeds, undoubtedly impress on the mind the reality of a future life, when every deed shall find its full reward. The greater the faith in the good or bad consequences of a deed, the greater is the incentive which urges a man to do or withhold himself from that deed. But more than this, such a belief purifies the motives with which a deed is done. It makes a man work with the most selfless of motives, for he seeks no reward in this life for what he does; his work is for higher and nobler ends relating to the life beyond the grave. It shows that the basis of life, hereafter is laid in this very life on earth. The hereafter is not a mystery beyond the grave; it begins in this life. The present life is for action, the next life is for retribution. It is the same life divided into two phases. For the good the heavenly life and for the wicked, a life in hell, begin even here, though the limitations of this life do not allow most people to realise that other phase of life. The Quran speaks that, "Certainly thou wert heedless of it, but now we have removed from the they veil, so thy sight to day is sharp". So in Islam, it is believed that ever evens and a Day and does g, they shall have their reward from Aliah (Quran: 2.62).

56. Quran: 50.22.
that the life spiritual which is hidden from the human eye by reason of material limitation, will become manifest in the Resurrection, because human perfection will then be clearer, the veil of material limitation having been removed.

According to Islam, the deeds or Karmas done in this life on earth do not make the souls take rebirth in accordance with the result of their good or bad deeds as it is in Hindu philosophy, but here in Islam, these (deeds) form the basis of a higher life leading towards perfection in the other world. The present world has only been ordered with a view to enabling man to pursue any course of action which he may choose. It has never been made for the realisation of the moral consequences of his actions. Consequently the doctrine of repeated births of the soul is ruled out.

One of the arguments, supporting the Resurrection Day, is, that good and evil deeds must have their reward. "Allah does not waste the reward of the doers of good". In another verse, it is said "I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other" and "whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it". The simple law of nature, that every cause has its effect, and every thing done must bear a fruit, is followed in the teachings of Quran. Since the good and evil must bear their full fruit in another life, the continuity of life in another world is advocated in Islam.

56. Panjabi University, Patiala Publication, Islam, p. 22.
Here in Quran we find the description of the day of Resurrection. The old order of things, i.e. the world, the heaven, the hell would be changed giving place to the establishment of new one.

"The day of decision is a day appointed: the day on which the trumpet shall be blown, so you shall come forth in hosts; and the heaven shall be opened so that it shall be all openings, and the mountains shall be moved off so that they shall remain a mere semblance".

"Dost thou not see that Allah created the heavens and the earth with truth? If He please, He will take you away and bring a new creation and this is not difficult for Allah and they shall all come forth before Allah".

We find a few passages in the Quran, regarding the book of deeds, in which the good and evil deeds of human souls are recorded.

"Or do they think that we do not hear what they conceal and their secret discourses? We J and our messengers with them write down". 63.

"This is our book that speaks against you with justice; surely we wrote what you did". 64.

"The book shall be placed then thou wilt see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say, Ah, we to us J what a book is this J it does not omit a small one or a great one but numbers them all". 65.

"So whoever shall do of good deeds, and he is a believer, there shall be no denying of his exertion, and we write it down from him". 66.
From the above quoted passages, we should not mean to understand the book, using the word materially, a collection of pages of some sort written with pen and ink. The significance of this 'kitab' or writing is that God will preserve those deeds for the dead and require him for them.

This brief discussion regarding the subject undertaken, leads us to the conclusion that:

1. Islam does not accept the concept of transmigration, though we find a vague reference to it, but it has a firm belief in future life;

2. The soul, according to Islam, is immortal. It does not end with the death of human body on this earth, but it strives for higher and higher life leading to its perfection;

3. The belief in the Last Day of Judgment or the Day of Resurrection is there;

4. The doctrine of Karma (action) has been admitted with the modification that good or bad deeds must bring fruit according-ly on the Day of Resurrection. This doctrine has got nothing to do with concept of transmigration;

Sufi Mysticism:

The origin of Sufism according to Prof. E.G. Brown, is either from the oral teachings of Prophet Mohammad or from the reaction of the ritual formation of Islam. The school of neo-platonic thought is also considered by some thinkers, as the source of Sufism. But the popular opinion is that Sufism is the mysticism of Islam, although at later stages, it was influenced by Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Neo-platonic thought.

We have already discussed in Islam, that Karma or

action plays an important role in shaping the future life of an individual self. The Sufis have also admitted that different types of Karmas purify the mind and lead the individual self to the higher plane.

The concept of transmigration has not been admitted by Islam. The Muslims believe in the Eternal Day of Judgment. But there are some Sufi saints and poets who express, directly or indirectly themselves for the belief in metempsychosis. We shall make a detailed study of this in the following few pages.

The fundamental teaching of Sufi mysticism is the love of God. The inspirations a sufi derives is from the Holy Quran and the sayings of other Muslim Saints. The reason, why the Sufis have developed the religion of Divine Love, is quite clear. Firstly, Islamic conception of God is that He is the stern Ruler. No body can escape the fate, he deserves, on the Day of Judgement. This conception of God was not encouraging and satisfying for the devotees who wanted to establish the relations between man and God on the emotional level. They craved for the religion in which God appeared as loving friend. So many Muslim saints who were passionately devoted to the religion, quenched their thirst for God and for piety, in mysticism rather than in theology. To avoid the Divine Wrath on the Day of Judgement they conceived the most important attribute of God as Love. The Sufis built up their thesis of Divine Love quoting the Holy Quran.
"We are near to him (man) than his jugular vein". 68.

and

"whenever Ye turn there is the faith of God", 69. 70

"He loveth them and they love Him".

Secondly Majority of muslims neither knew nor understood the true spirit of Islamic faith. For them life was bound by the 'Sharia' and by the round of mosque, pilgrimage, fasting, alms-giving and ritual prayer. It had become a dogma and had lost the true essence of the ritual. The emergence of Sufism it can be said, is the reaction against formalism in Islam.

The mystical element of love and adoration of God overpowered the Sufi saints to such an extent, that many of them proclaimed the non-duality of God and man, and their ecstatic union with God, thus declaring 'Anal Haq' (I am God). A famous mystic Mansur-al-Hallaj, who was prosecuted in 922 A.D. in Baghdad, expressed the intensity of the feeling of complete harmony with God in the following words:-

"I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is L. W. are two spirits dwelling in one body. If thou seest me, thou seest Him, 72
and if thou seest Him, thou seest us both".

The intense feelings of love toward God as expressed by Al-Hasan-al-Basri (643-728 A.D.) show that he serves God only for his love and desire for Him and not for fear of hell or for love of heaven.

Quran.
68. Quran 96.19.
70. Quran 6.23.
71. Sources of Indian Traditions, p. 411.
72. Ibid. p. 418.
"I have not served God from fear of hell for I should be a wretched hireling if I serve Him from fear; nor from love of heaven for I should be a bad servant if I served for what is given; I have served Him only for love of Him and desire for Him". 73.

A woman saint Rabi'a-al-Adawiya (d.801 AD) said in the same love:

"Love of God hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart". 74.

The chief principles of sufism, which form its basis are, that the one reality is God. The Universe is his expression of Himself. He created man after His own image. One of His attributes is love.

The Sufis believe in the purification of heart of all worldly desires, and in the surrender of human will to Divine Will. They believe that a teacher (Murshid) is necessary to guide the pupil along the difficult path of self-realisation.

The concept of Karma or action takes a different shape in sufism. The Sufi endeavours to attain, the 'Love of God' and 'personal contact with Him' - the two major achievements

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73. Sources of Indian Traditions, p. 412.
74. Ibid. p. 412.
75. The Muslim mystics in India were followers of two schools - the extreme pantheists or the moderate pantheists, 'Wujudiah' and 'Shududian'. The first believe that All is God (huma ost), and the latter that All is from God (huma an ost) (History of Indian Philosophy Eastern and Western, p. 503).
76. "God is love and in His love, He created Man after His own image so that man might find that image within himself and attain to union with the Divine Nature". (Sources of Indian Tradition, p. 412).
77. Dr. Mir Validdin, Love of God, the Sufi approach; p. 96.
as the aim of his life. For the accomplishment of this ideal, he is to mentally and spiritually, go through many stages. This journey or a mystic path involves certain kinds of actions, physical, mental, moral or ethical, to be performed on the part of a Sufi to reach the higher plane.

In the beginning the Sufi adheres to the first stage of the code of ethics, as enjoined by the Qur'an. Five times prayer a day, remembering God, reading of Qur'an, keeping fasts, service to the people and going on pilgrimages are some of the duties he is to undergo. The constant practice and observance of these sacred duties help in purifying the mind of the Sufi, thus elevating him to the higher stage where he concentrates more to follow the path of Divine Love. The first thing to which he is awakened, after performing these duties is to abandon the worldly life and to devote himself to the service of God. This conversion is known as 'Ishāb'. For the journey onward to God, he acquires in him gradually, qualities of 'Jihād' means earnest striving after the mystical life; Solitariness (from the fellows) and withdrawal (from the evil habits); 'Ta'wā' (the awe of God) - to strengthen the resolve and escape Divine Chastisement—; 'Zuhd' (renunciation)— even of permitted pleasures; 'Sām' (silence); 'Khās' (fear) — from the consequences of evil conduct in the future; 'Rajā' (hope) — for desired contangency in the future and 'Tawakkul' (trust—in God). He makes further advancement in possessing 'Iqān' (faith)

78. "And they that strive earnestly in our cause, then We surely guide upon our paths". (Qur'an 29, 69).
79. "Whoever believes in God and Last Day let him speak God or else let him be silent" (A.J.Arberry; Sufism, p. 76).
80. "whoso trusteth in God, God sufficeth him" (Qur'an 66, 3).
"Sabr" (patience, Contentment) ; 'Shukr' (thankfulness) - and the 'Hida' (satisfaction) etc. Further he acquires 'Irada' (desire) - the desire to have no personal desire, only seeking what God desires - 1: uprightness; 'Ikhsas' (sincerity) 'Sidq' (truthfulness) - in thought and act; 'Hayah' (shame) - a part of faith (Iman); 'Sirasa' (insight); 'Khulq' (moral character); generosity; bountifulness; 'Dua' (pray); 'Faqir' (poverty); 'Adab' (decent manners); 'Tasawuf' (purity), 'Warifa' (gnosis) and 'Mahabbah' (Love).

Thus it can be stated that all types of good deeds or Karmas performed, provide the basis of spiritual advancement and enlightenment of the individual soul travelling on the mystic path of life. But for the ultimate object i.e. union with Allah, the Sufis consider Love or Devotion as the primary condition.

As discussed earlier, that, in Islam, the concept of transmigration is replaced by the belief in the Day of Resurrection. Man takes birth in this world only but once. The soul, after leaving the human body remains in the intermediate state, known as 'Barzakh', till the doom's day.


82. "If ye are thankful, I will give you fuller measure" (Quran 14.7).

83. "Verily thou are (grounded) upon a noble (Asin) character" (Quran 65.4).

84. "Pray to Me and I will answer you" (Quran 40.62).

85. "He loveth them and they love Him" (Quran 5, 53).
Sufis, whose primary source of philosophical thought is the Quran do not follow the Islamic ideology strictly in respect of the concept of transmigration. There are a few Sufis who, under the influence of other religions like Hinduism or Buddhism, speak of transmigration. Even in the Quran there occur a few verses which give a vague impression of life after death and can, well, be interpreted for transmigration.

Jalaluddin Rumi the greatest mystic poet of Islam, who has accepted the doctrine of transmigration, says in his Mathnawi:

"Seven hundred and seventy incarnations have I known; Like unto vegetation have I been born and reborn". 87,

again in another Mathnawi he says:

"The qualities of the body change; But the soul abides like the bright sun; Why worry over the thought of death, When the soul is deathless". 88,

and again in another Mathnawi:

"I died as a mineral and became a plant, I died as plant and rose to animal, I died as animal and I was a man, Why I should I fear? when was I less by dying? Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar, with angels blast but even from angelhood I must pass on, all except God doth perish when I have sacrificed my angel-soul, I shall become what no mind ever conceived". 89.

86. See foot-notes 42, 43 and 44 of this Chapter.
87. Islamic Sufism - Iqbal Ali Shah; cf. Dr. Sher Singh Philosophy of Sikhism, p. 20-201.
88. Ibid, p. 201.