

PODCAST 184: REINCARNATION, ONE LIFE FINAL

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh welcomes you to the Podcast episode number 184.

Let us talk about the concept of reincarnation, or in common terms, rebirth.

This rebirth or reincarnation is not accepted by all religions. They have their own views. They do not accept. This reincarnation seems to be quite new to them. Take for example Jesus. Jesus knew perfectly well about reincarnation. There are indirect hints spread all over the gospels.

Just the other day Jesus was quoted by somebody, 'I am before Abraham ever was.' 'I am before Abraham ever was.' And Jesus says, "I'll be coming back". And there are thousand and one indirect references to reincarnation. He knew about it perfectly well. But there is some other reason why he did not talk about it or why he did not preach about it.

Jesus had been to India and he had seen what had happened because of the theory of reincarnation. In India for almost five thousand years before Jesus, the theory was taught and it is a truth. It's not only a theory. The theory is based in truth. Man has millions of life. It was taught by Mahavira, by Buddha, by Krishna, by Rama.

All the Indian religions agree upon it. You'll be surprised to know they do not agree on anything else except this theory. Hindus believe in God and the soul. Jains don't believe in God at all, but only in the soul. And Buddhists don't believe in the soul or God either. But about reincarnation, all three agree.

Even Buddhists agree, who don't believe in the soul. It's a very strange thing. Then who reincarnates? Even they could not deny the phenomenon of reincarnation, although they could deny the existence of the soul. They say the soul does not exist but reincarnation exists. It is very difficult for them to prove reincarnation without the soul. It seems almost impossible.

But they found a way. It is very subtle and very difficult to comprehend but they seem to be closer or the closest to the truth. It is easy to understand that there's a soul and when you die the body is left on the earth and the soul enters into another body, into another womb. It is a simple logical mathematical thing.

However Buddha says there's no soul, but only a continuing one. It is like when you light a candle in the evening, and in the morning when you are blowing it out, a question can be asked of you. Are you blowing out the same light that you started in the evening? No, it is not the same light and yet a continuity is there. In the night when you lit the candle that flame is no more; but that flame is continuously disappearing. It is being replaced by another flame. The replacement is so quick that you cannot see the gaps. But with sophisticated scientific instruments it's possible to see the gaps - one flame going out and immediately another coming up. In that 'going out and another coming up,' there are bound to be small intervals, but you cannot see them with your bare eyes.

Buddha says that just as the candle flame is not the same, it is changing constantly, but in another sense it is the same because it is the same continuum. Exactly like that, there is no soul eternity in you like a thing, but one like a flame. It is continuously changing. It is a river.

But why did Jesus, Moses, and Mohammed, who are the sources of all three religions that have been born outside India, not talk about reincarnation directly?

Moses was aware of reincarnation because Egypt and India have been in constant contact. It is even suspected that once Africa was part of Asia but that the African continent has slowly shifted away. So India and Egypt were joined together, hence there are so many similarities. It is not strange that South India is black. It has partly Negro blood in its veins. It is negroid, though not totally.

Moses must have been perfectly aware of India. You'll be surprised that Kashmir claims that both Moses and Jesus are buried there. Their tombs are there - one tomb for Moses and one tomb for Jesus. They saw what happened to India through the theory of incarnation.

Because of the theory of reincarnation, India became very lethargic. There's no hurry. India has no sense of time. Not even now. Even though everybody is wearing a wristwatch, there's no time sense. If somebody says I'll be coming at five o'clock in the evening to see you, it can mean anything. He may turn up at four, he may turn up at six, and he may not turn up at all! It's not taken seriously. It's not that he is not fulfilling his promise. No. There's no time sense.

How can you have a sense of time when all eternity is available? When there are so many, many lives, why be in such a hurry? One can go slowly. One is bound to reach some day or other. So the theory of reincarnation made India very lethargic and dull. It made India utterly unconscious of time. It helped people to postpone, and if you can postpone for tomorrow, then today you'll remain the same as you have been. So then tomorrow never comes. So India knows how to postpone not only to tomorrow, but even to the next life.

Moses and Jesus both visited India. Both were aware of reincarnation. Mohammed never visited India, but was also perfectly aware because he was very close to India and there was constant traffic between India and Arabia. They decided that it was better to tell people there's only one life and this is the last chance, the first and the last. If you miss it, you miss it forever. This is a device to create intense longing, to create such intensity in people that they can be transformed easily.

Then the question arises, were Mahavira, Buddha and Krishna not aware? Were they not aware that this theory of reincarnation would create lethargy? They were trying a totally different device and each device has its time. Once it is used, it cannot be used forever. People become accustomed to it. When Buddha, Mahavira and Krishna tried the device of reincarnation, they were trying it from a totally different angle.

India was a very rich country in those days. Yes, it was thought to be the golden country of the world and the richest. And in a rich country the real problem, the

greatest problem is boredom. That is happening now in the West. Now America is in the same situation and boredom has become the greatest problem. People are utterly bored - so bored that they would like to die.

Krishna, Mahavira and Buddha used this situation. They told people this is nothing. One life of boredom is nothing. You have lived for many lives. And remember, if you don't listen, you are going to live many more lives. You have lived for many lives and remember if you don't listen you are going to live many more lives, yes. You'll be bored again and again and again. It is the same wheel of life and death moving.

They painted boredom in such dark colours that people who were already bored with even one life became really very deeply involved with religion. One has to get rid of life and death. One has to get out of this wheel, this vicious circle of birth and death. It was relevant in those days.

Then India became poor. Once the country became poor, boredom disappeared. A poor man is never bored. Remember, only a rich man can afford boredom. It's a rich man's privilege. It is impossible for a poor man to feel boredom. He has no time. The whole day he is working. When he comes home, he is so tired he falls asleep. He has no other entertainment. Television, movies and music, art museums - he doesn't have all those things. What should be done? He cannot have them then. His only entertainment is biological, sensual, a natural thing inbuilt. That's why poor countries go on reproducing more children than rich countries.

The moment India became poor, the theory of reincarnation became an escape, a hope rather than boredom. It became a hope, yes, and a possibility to postpone.

'I am poor in this life. It's nothing to be worried about. There are many lives. Next life I'm going to strive a little harder and I'll be richer.'

'This life I have got an ugly woman. It's nothing to be worried about. It's only a question of one life. Next time I'm not going to make the same mistake again.'

'This time I am suffering from my past karmas. This life I will not commit any wrong thing so that I can enjoy the coming life.'

So it became a postponement. Jesus saw it. That the device was no longer working. It was no longer working in the way it was meant to work. The situation had changed. Now Jesus had to create another device. There is only one life. So if you want to be religious. If you want to meditate, if you want to become a *sanyasi* or celibate, be one right now because tomorrow is not reliable. There will be no tomorrow. Hence the west has become too conscious of time. Everybody is in a hurry. The hurry is because of Christianity.

The device has come, and has again failed. No device can work forever. While the master is alive, because he is the soul of it, he manages in such a way that it works. Once the master is gone, the device falls out of use or people start finding a new interpretation for it. So masters may suggest, but once they leave, a different interpretation steps in.

Now with the west, the devices failed utterly. It has become a problem. People are in a constant hurry, full of tension and anxiety because there's only one life. Jesus wanted them to remember because there's one life. Remember God, remember God. And what are they doing? Seeing that there's only one life, they want to drink, eat and be merry because there is no other life. So indulge as much as you can. Squeeze the whole juice out of life right now. Who cares about what will happen on Judgement Day? Who even knows whether Judgement Day is there or not?

So a great hurry has arisen in the west about everything because there's no other life. Such a hurry! Speed is the mania, speed is the mania. It's very strange to find this kind of temperament and this way of life. Nobody is bothered where you are going, but you have to go fast. You have to invent speedier vehicles.

This whole thing has happened because of the device. It worked in Jesus's time. He was continuously telling his people to be aware, be aware. The day of judgement is very close by. You are going to see the end of the world in your very life, yes. There's no other life and if you miss this, you will be thrown into hell for eternity.

Here you're simply creating a psychological atmosphere. It worked when Jesus was alive and it worked for a few more days when he was gone. It continued to work for a few days because of the closest disciples who had something of the climate of Jesus with them, some aura. But then it created just the opposite effect. It has created the most worldly civilization the world has ever known.

The desire was that the idea of one life would make people so alert and aware that they would seek and search for God and they would drop all other desires and all other occupations. Their whole life would become a one pointed search, an enquiry for God. That was the idea behind this device.

But the ultimate result is that people have become absolutely worldly because there's no other life. So as there is only one life, enjoy it the most you can. Enjoy it. Don't postpone it for tomorrow. The Indian device failed because people became lethargic.

It worked with Buddha. He really created one of the greatest movements in the world. Thousands of people renounced their lives and became celibates. Renunciants devoted their whole energy to the search for truth because he created such an atmosphere of boredom that you'd be bored if you missed it.

Jesus knows perfectly that life is eternal. Reincarnation is a fact. He mentions it in indirect ways and maybe to his very close disciples he mentions it. But he did not mention it to the masses for the simple reason he has seen that it failed in India. Something else had to be tried.

Therefore, to sum up in brief, there are two views now: the Indian view of reincarnation, and the western view of only one life which is the present life. The Indian view of reincarnation led to lethargy and postponement of things, while the western view that there's only one life. That perspective about this life made them hurry up, being very time conscious, and negatively made them take to merry-making and sensual enjoyments because there's no next life.

On the other hand, it may promote serious contemplation, meditation and realization as this is the only life, while on the other hand, this being the only life it may promote the attitude of, 'Let me enjoy in full', which is the other extreme.

Thus in this brief talk I wanted to bring your attention to both the Indian concept of reincarnation and the western concept of only one life.

Thank you.