



Transmigration (in Pre-Buddhist Vedic literature)

Saṃsāra

संसार saṃsāra [saṃ-sāra] see [saṃ-√ sṛ]
see Maitri Upanishad (Post-contemporary).

√ सृ sṛ (cf. √ [sal])

- to run after, pursue (acc.) RV.
- to cause one's self to be driven , drive (in a carriage) ĀśvGr.
- to wish to run ([vājam] , " a race ") TS.

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He is the creator of everything as well as the knower of everything. He is His own source, He is all-knowing, and He is the destroyer of time. He is the repository of all good qualities, and the master of all sciences. He is the controller of Matter and Spirit, and the lord of the Gunas. He is the cause of liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and of bondage which results in its continuance.

sa viśvakṛd viśvavidātmayonirjñāḥ kālakāro guṇī sarvavidyāḥ ।
pradhānakṣetrajñapatirguṇeśaḥ saṃsāramokṣasthitibandhaḥetuḥ
ŚvetUp. 6.16
ŚvetUp. (post-contemporary)

Punarjīvātu

पुनर्जीवातु punarjīvātu [púnar-jīvātu] f. rebirth TāṇḍBr. (aka PaViBr.)

जीवातु jīvātu f. life RV. AV. MaitrS.

पुनर् [punar] ind.

- again , once more RV.
- again and again , repeatedly RV.

- back , home , in an opposite direction RV.

- further , moreover , besides RV.

In the Panchavimsha Brahmana (aka Tandya Mahabrahmana [TāṇḍBr. or TāṇḍyaBr.] or Praudha Brahmana [PaViBr.]), Yama, the god who controls the Pitṛis and the spirits of the dead - who is also considered the first man, coming from the sun (vaivasvata) - comes repeatedly (punar) to life (jīvātave).

Yan me yamaṃ vaivasvataṃ mano jagāma dūragās tan ma āvartayā punar jīvātave na
martave 'tho ariṣṭatātaye

PaViBr. 1.5.18

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Apunarāvartana n. final exemption from life or transmigration (Jain) & Up.

Apunarāvṛtti (idem)

आवर्तन āvartana n.

- turning , turning round , returning RV.

- revolving TS.

पुनर् punar - ind.

- back , home , in an opposite direction RV.

- again , once more RV.

- again and again , repeatedly RV.

‘Do you know where created beings go above from here ?’ No, revered sir’. ‘Do you know the place of parting of the two paths – the path of the gods and the path of the fathers ?’ ‘No, revered sir’.

*Vettha yadito'dhi prajāḥ prayantīti na bhagava iti vettha yathā punarāvartanta iti na bhagava iti
vettha pathordevayānasya pitṛyānasya ca vyāvartanā - iti na bhagava iti*

ChUp. 5.3.2

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Mokṣ

- to detach, extract, draw out of AitBr.

mokṣa (Up.)

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Pitryāna & Devayāna

पितृयान pitṛyāna

Pitṛis [pitṛ-yāna] - leading to the Pitṛis (पितृ pitṛ)

देवयान devayāna

Deva [devá-yāna] - leading to the gods

In the Vedic doctrine, the eye of the dead man goes to the sun, his breath to the wind, his speech to the fire, his limbs to the different parts of the universe.

Then in the Veda appears the notion of good & bad deeds; so it occurs in certain passages, that the human soul blends into trees, etc.

However, the story of Śvetaketu and Pravāhaṇa Jaibali in BrĀr.Up., leads to the fact that the transmigration doctrines, the way of the gods (devayāna) and the way of the fathers (pitṛyāna) had been initiated among the kṣatriyas.

The doctrine of Devayāna tells us that those who performed asceticism (tapas/śraddhā) and were faithful, went by the way of the gods through successive stages never to return to the world and suffer rebirth.

While the way of the fathers (pitṛyāna), those who performed ordinary virtues, such as general altruistic nature, had the dead recompensed (for a time) in another world and then had to suffer rebirth.

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Note:

All rebirths are effected by the desires of the self, and if it ceases to desire, it suffers no rebirth and becomes immortal.

It is not karma per se that is involved.

Emancipation, or Mukti is the state of infiniteness that a man attains when he knows his own self and thus becomes Brahman.