

Reincarnation: The Soul's Journey To Perfection
Phoenix Temple, Brother Balananda, August 26, 2012

(Disclaimer from our generous and devoted notetaker: "Here's a transcript of Brother Balananda's recent talk at the Phoenix Temple on the topic Reincarnation. Please remember that these notes are not necessarily complete, but I have tried to capture the essence of the message as best as possible.")

Brother started by telling us that our Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, talked on this subject in the San Diego Temple on June 11, 1944. And he began by saying: "Our subject today is to help you understand why you are here on earth, so that you can free yourself from compulsory future incarnations." And then he added: "Reincarnation is not compulsory.... unless you make it so."

There was a girl in France who, from earliest childhood, made some astonishing comments - she would use Hindu words or references; when playing with another child she said "that's only worth 3 rupees" and once used the word "Bapu." Her parents knew that this was a nickname given to Mahatma Gandhi, and started to collect a variety of pictures from India. One of those was of our Guru. Little Terese said, "I know Yogananda, he stayed with us at the house with Bapu."

Master reminded us that "life is a vast school. There is a lesson to be learned in everything. But just as naughty boys in school engage in mischief, try to distract the other children, pay no attention to the teacher, and then fail to graduate and have to take the same class again, so it is with most people. They are "bad boys" in the school of life, always getting into trouble because they don't listen to the teacher. Life is teaching you all the time; you are a bad student if you don't pay attention. Think about that; it is the sum of what I want to tell you."

Well, just as children who do not learn their lessons are held back and have to repeat the class, we too have more lessons to learn until we get our diploma. And that diploma is freedom, bliss consciousness. Most people do not know, deep down, what the purpose of life is. Merely existing is not living. Our address isn't where we live - our real address is omnipresence but we have forgotten that.

"The soul, being immortal, outlives the body. But this immortal soul, while in the physical body, puts on the mask of the ego and its imperfections. The soul cannot go back to Spirit until it has removed those delusive imperfections. Since they cannot be done away with in one life, the soul must reincarnate in order to conquer them."

Now, these are the bad news: it takes a million years of disease-free living to advance naturally to cosmic consciousness. And the good news? Once we have Kriya and practice it faithfully, we have perhaps one half to two lives left.

The fact that we may not remember our former lives does not mean that we did not exist before. We do not remember the nine months in our mother's womb, nor do we remember when we were six months

old. It is even less likely that we would remember when we had lived in a different body with a different brain and nervous system, and a different appearance.

And who would want to remember all the struggles and trials of our previous lives? It would be enough to make one despondent.

There was the case of James, a young boy who kept drawing pictures of fighter planes from WW2. He drew them exactly, knew the names (Corsair), and kept drawing as they were shot down by the Japanese. He had frequent nightmares. His parents researched and found veterans from the USS Natoma Bay, a ship that was in those wars. When James was meeting these men he not only recognized them but knew their names and details about the war. This experience was cathartic for him.

The belief in reincarnation is widespread, not only by Hindus, Buddhists and Asian religions, but almost all the major religions have references to life before life. More than half of humanity believes in reincarnation. (See details on the phoenixtemple.org website under "Quotes from Sunday Morning Lectures).

If this were our only life, it would be cruel - some being born smart, pretty, rich - others ugly, or crippled children - where is the justice in this? We are what we are because of our own past actions.

The law of karma works also in a good way for us, it responds in the same way as we behave - life goes smoothly, we are joyous, and if we live with joy we are going to attract more, and we make our final travel through the tunnel Master will meet us and introduce us to a very happy family! He reminds us now: "The idea is that if you haven't changed yet, it is now time that you should. Otherwise you will carry your present state into your next life too. When death comes you want to feel that you have passed that particular 'grade' of life, and that you are free to go on to higher grades. Therefore you should change your life now."

We want to become shooting stars. How? through meditation. Constantly finding ways to go deeper. Start by looking forward to it. We need to put more into our meditations to get more out of it.

Here are three keys to help us:

- Looking up into and through the spiritual eye. It is three-dimensional. This brings us closer to superconsciousness, and creates devotion. Make it a strong habit to keep the eyes up.
- Keeping the body totally still. Do not move for at least 15 minutes. We are trying to bring the consciousness into the spine from the outer part of the body, and movement takes it right out again just because you moved. Ignore an itch - it will go away by itself. Stay still.
- The biggest obstacle is the barrage of thoughts; they are our spiritual ruin. See thoughts as being outside of yourself. They do not belong to us, do not entertain them. Thoughts are maya's minions,

chase them out. Thoughts during meditation are our spiritual ruin.

If you practice these key points, the Techniques will work! It starts with peace, then morphs into love, joy - more and more ...

Master says, "Meditate. Be steeped in meditation. This morning I hardly remembered sleeping last night; and when I lifted my eyes upward, they became fixed in the state of samadhi. The world, like an ocean, was moving in me. I felt the whole universe throbbing within myself."

Learn the lesson that you are not a man nor a woman, but a soul made in the image of God. Otherwise, God will have to send you here again and again until you outgrow your ignorance and realize your true Self. Become so conscious of God that you know He is the only Reality. The more you meditate, the more that thought will be paramount. Try as it may, the world will not be able to take that consciousness away from you.