

Reincarnation

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Diana: I am confused about my next life. If I do not attain *moksa* in this life, will I reincarnate so that I can continue my work?

Arlindo: Hi, Diana. In my earlier days, on a rare occasion I read Ramana answering this same question. He said that reincarnation exists only to the mind. At the time, I couldn't clearly grasp what he was trying to say. But because Ramji is a great Vedanta teacher, he explains it very simply and clearly.

Ramana was trying to say that only the *vasanas* reincarnate, the same way our thoughts appear and disappear, only to reappear again in our conscious mind. And since *vasanas* are not conscious thoughts, there is nothing personal about them.

On the other hand, *jiva* is his conscious mind, or subtle body – he/she cannot reincarnate, because he is not conscious of his causal body material, and for that reason, he cannot own what goes on there. Only *vasanas* reincarnate, and there is nothing personal about them.

Reincarnation is only meaningful if it is taken to be personal: “my reincarnation.” If it is impersonal, it is not meaningful. It is not personal in the sense that *vasanas* are not self-conscious thoughts. Their function belongs to *Isvara's* jurisdiction.

As you can see, neither the physical body, the subtle body nor the self reincarnates. Only the individual impersonal causal body (one's *vasana* load) does so. When the *vasanas* (which are very subtle mental-emotional energies seeking expression) begin a totally new body-mind apparatus, they do so, but only to become altogether another person/*jiva* who does not remember its previous experience of *jiva*-hood. The previous *jiva* does not reincarnate, because *jiva* does not come back as the same *jiva* as before – and moreover he would not know how. 😊 It all happens on an unconscious, impersonal level.

All subtle phenomena of *jivas* accessing past life mental material are subject to the interpretation of the content of such experiences. But let's suppose that some of these interpretations may be accurate and the *jiva* in a state of trance really accesses some of those past life mental materials. In retrospect, he may be able to say that WAS one of my past life experiences. Only in retrospect the past life would exist – but always in reference to the *jiva*/person incarnated now, the only experiencing entity there is.

All experience can only exist in reference to the incarnated *jiva* with its three bodies in proper function. The *jiva* may be able to access some memories of past lives, but he cannot reincarnate. The construct which constitutes what we call the *jiva* is totally finished once the physical body dies. The *vasana* load will survive to produce a new and fresh *jiva*. Isn't it marvelous! 😊

The self, or consciousness, is not the three bodies (they are only *upadhis* for the self). In *mithya* we can also say that the causal body (the body of *vasanas*) is not the self-conscious *jiva*. *Jiva* is characterized mainly by its subtle body, which produces

what we may call personified consciousness, or RC (consciousness reflected in a subtle body). Once we accept that only the *vasanas* reincarnate, we also need to accept that there is no reincarnation for self-conscious *jivas*.