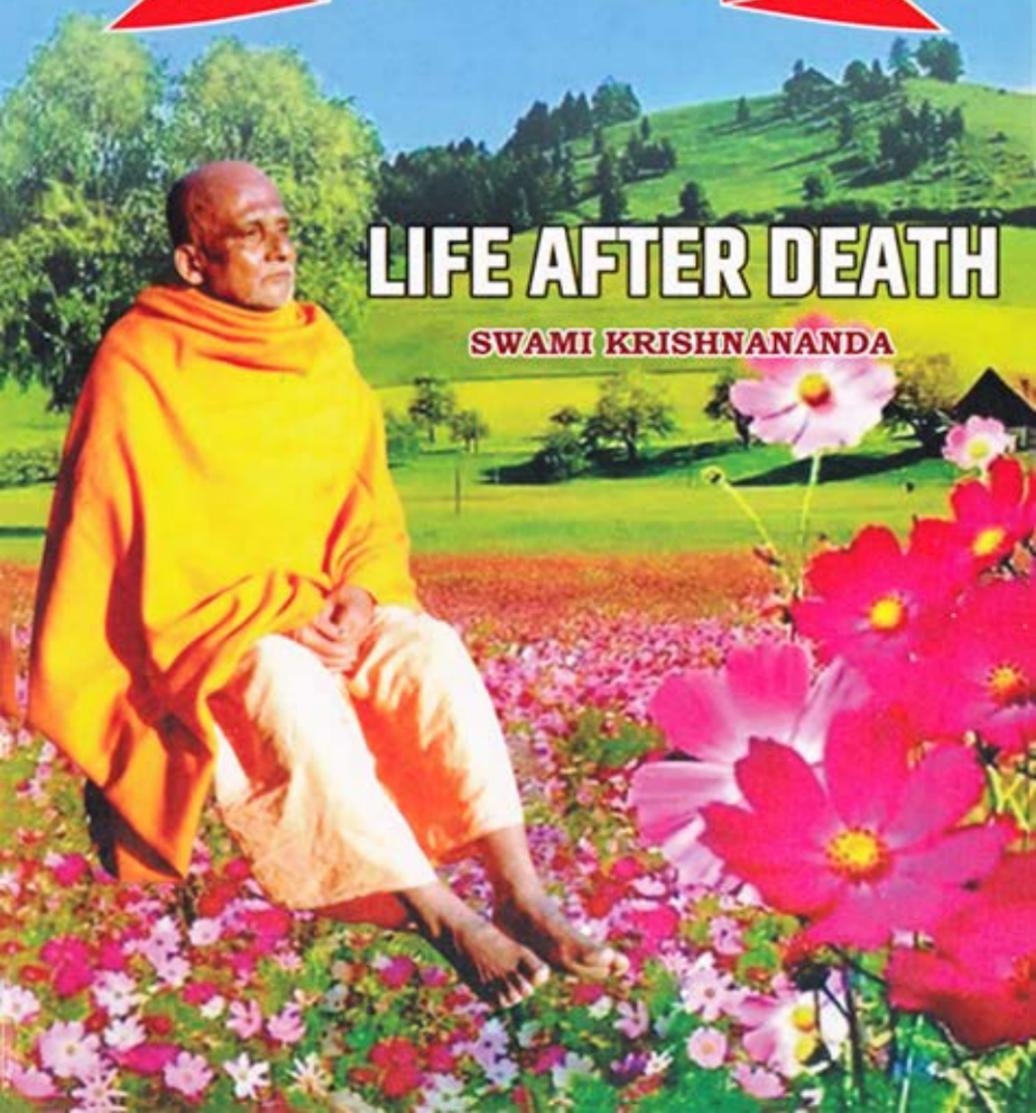




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LIFE AFTER DEATH

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthanami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.

The present booklet, '**Life After Death**', consists of Sri Swamiji Krishnanandaji Maharaj discourse on the cause and process of reincarnation.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The conditions that determine the state of life of an individual after death are studied in a branch of knowledge called Eschatology. The birth of an individual into the world of space and time is the concentration of consciousness in a spatio-temporal pressure-point, which is tantamount to the universal essence of the soul delimiting itself into a focussing process of itself, whereby it is channelised into a stream-like movement along a given direction of its intention. The particular kind of physical individuality into which one is born is the direct effect of the purpose or the intention that motivates the consciousness to streamline itself into that particular area or field of operation, and the kind of experience which it is expected to have in that conditioned field of life. The process begins generally with an obliteration or screening out of the universal sense in consciousness and a simultaneous beaming out of itself through that aperture of self-willed movement in the particular condition which has been chosen for experience. The environment of

the birth of an individual, the duration of its life in that form, and all its experiences through life, are determined by the original intent that is behind the very purpose of coming into embodied existence.

The blocking out of the consciousness of universality in the process projects at once the consciousness of an external atmosphere, that is, the Universal is externalised and particularised, externalised as regards the kind of world into which it is born, and particularised as regards the kind of individuality or personality into which it is born. When birth takes place into a new form, there is, in the beginning, a practically unconscious development of the causal body into its new extensions in the form of the intellect, the mind, the sense-organs, the vital forces and the structure of the physical body. At birth the child is almost like an inanimate substance with only the body there invigorated slightly by the vital forces, as if it is like a vegetable existence with body and breathing processes becoming palpable. The instincts are manifest subsequently in the form of the sensations of heat and cold as well as hunger and thirst. The sensations of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching develop themselves gradually in more and more intensified forms and the baby begins to know

itself as an individual by itself. With biological longings and fears consequent upon them, the growth of the child into adolescence and youth is the gradual strengthening and intensification of the demands of the physical body, the vital forces, the instincts and sensations, and all the idiosyncrasies characteristic of the very form of individuality. The finitude of such individual existence places the whole individuality in a precarious state of anxiety, a sense of limitation from every side, and a fear of everything. This unhappy condition is attempted to be overcome by social relations with persons and things outside oneself, in love for those which are considered conducive to one's psycho-physical security and development, and dislike for those which are either not so conducive or even totally opposed. The struggle of life now begins as that of a soldier in an active battlefield, trying to protect oneself on the one hand and overcome others on the other.

As observed, the length of life of a person in this state can be only so long as the purposes for which one is born are fulfilled. When the purpose is accomplished, the particular body which was manufactured for the said purpose becomes a redundant burden to consciousness, and the body

is shed as old unserviceable clothes are cast away. This is the death of the person. But it is the death only of the physical body, not of the vital forces, the sensations, the mind, the intellect or the causal body. The blend of these covering sheaths internal to the physical body is carried forward into the next life, the next life being the condition prepared and necessitated by the remaining portion of the original intent of being born at all, a part of which gets congealed into the production of a new body in a new environment, similar to the manner in which the earlier birth took place. This process goes on almost endlessly, since desires are endless, because the desire of a consciousness which is essentially universal cannot be limited to any computerised numbering. An infinite one can have only infinite desires. If this process continued, there would be no chance of returning to the original state of universality, except by the magical touch of the miracle-working technique called Yoga.

The condition of life into which one will be reborn is determined by the thoughts that the person entertains consistently throughout one's previous life. Though it is said that the last thought at the time of death decides the nature of the next birth, the last thought is actually not just one thought among the

many that occur to the mind of a person in one life, but it is actually a cream of all the thoughts, feelings and actions which characterised the entire life of the person. It would, then, mean that one cannot expect to have a different kind of fruit from the kind of tree of which it is the product. The way in which one lives throughout one's life in the world is the determining power of what is known as the last thought, which is the total essence sucked out of the person at the time of the subtle body extracting itself out from every pore of the physical body. The pain generally felt at death is due to the nature of the intensity of the desires with which one continued to live in the physical body. The more is the love for the Universal Being entertained in life, the less would be the pain and agony of departing from the body.

In the reincarnation process one can be reborn in any of the realms or planes of existence. Mostly, the rebirth will be in this world only in the case of those who are attached to physical desires, material needs, social status or family relations. Those who have been more unselfish in their lives and lived a life of charity, philanthropy, service and real goodness may not come back to the earth plane again, and may be reborn in better worlds in the higher order of the scheme of creation. But everyone has to be

reborn somewhere or the other to undergo some experience, until the Absolute Being is realised as identical with oneself.

Heavens and hells, regions of a variety of differing experiences and such areas of conditioning the individual to specified experiences are the degrees of cosmic creation reacting precisely in accordance with the attitude entertained, the thoughts projected and the deeds done by the individual concerned in terms of the feelings entertained in respect of the cosmic whole. No one is exempt from the consequences of any ignorance of the law embodied in creation.

The Buddhist psychology of 'Dependent Origination' highlights the process of birth in embodied-existence. Firstly, there is ignorance of the universal reality (Avidya). Secondly, there is the rise of the separate individual will or affirmation of oneself as different from others (Samskara). Thirdly, there is the urge to enter a body or formation of characters belonging to oneself alone (Vijnana). Fourthly, there is the concretisation of this will as the name-form-complex, the psycho-physical structure (Nama-rupa). Fifthly, there is the desire to go out for contact of 'others' through thinking, hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting in order to gain the pleasure of sensations (Shadayatana).

Sixthly, there is actual contact of the individual with the desired object by means of thinking, hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting (Sparsa). Seventhly, there is emotional feeling as a response to these sensations of contact with the object (Vedana). Eighthly, there is intense craving to repeat this experience of pleasure of contact, again and again, continuously (Tanha). Ninthly, there is grasping of the object with greed and passion and a redoubling of the effort to possess the object for purpose of contact, as mentioned above, with anxiety, toil and frenzy of emotional feeling (Upadana). Tenthly, there is the seed sown for rebirth, since the heart which is boiling with craving for grasping cannot be satisfied through the instrumentality of one body alone, which is subject to death on the exhaustion of the group of karma-forces which have created it (Bhava). Eleventhly, there is rebirth into another body, after death of the present one (Jati). Twelfthly, there is, lo, this momentum pushed on of sorrow and endless dissatisfaction through the chain of transmigration, repeated births and deaths, cycling like a wheel (Jara-marana-duhkha). Reverse is the process of attaining freedom from bondage.

The conditions that determine the state of life of an individual after death are studied in a branch of knowledge called Eschatology. The birth of an individual into the world of space and time is the concentration of consciousness in a spatio-temporal pressure-point, which is tantamount to the universal essence of the soul delimiting itself into a focussing process of itself, whereby it is channelised into a stream-like movement along a given direction of its intention. The particular kind of physical individuality into which one is born is the direct effect of the purpose or the intention that motivates the consciousness to streamline itself into that particular area or field of operation, and the kind of experience which it is expected to have in that conditioned field of life.

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