

DA DA DA
1995

Questions and Answers

with

His Holiness

Suhotra Swami

The name of the conference is: (Have) Danda (Will Travel)

ENMITY IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

*Question from Aprameya dd
January 11, 1995*

Recently in the text 60742 - Jiva strategy you quoted the following from Srila Prabhupada's book "Reincarnation Through Wisdom": "Although He is the source of unlimited potencies, He eternally exists in His transcendental, personal form. This form manifests in three aspects, namely, as He sees Himself, as a loving devotee sees Him, and as He is seen by His competitors and enemies." Than you explain that "that was a very clear indication that competition and enmity toward the Lord begins on the eternal platform in relationship with His "transcendental personal form". Is it to be understood that the competition and enmity are existing in Goloka Vrndavana, but how is it possible if as I know, even the slightest envy causes one's fall down from the spiritual world? Or the actual explanation is that this seeming enmity is not real but it is simply like a role in the Krsna's pastimes?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 12, 1995

There is envy and enmity in Goloka Vrndavana, for instance between the two wings of gopis headed by Srimati Radharani and Srimati Candravali respectively. But this is envy and enmity in pure love of Krsna. It pleases Krsna. It does not displease Him. Therefore this envy and enmity is transcendental. It arises from an attitude of service to Krsna.

In the quote you've cited from Renunciation Through Wisdom, Srila Prabhupada distinguishes between the way the loving devotees see the Lord and the way His enemies and competitors see Him. So the envy and enmity that is ascribed to such enemies and competitors (who are classified separately from the devotees) must be material. They are trying to become the Lord, not serve the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada stated in 1972, "As soon as we try to become the Lord, immediately we are covered by Maya. Formerly we were with Krsna in His lila or sport."

The vision of those who would become Krsna is instantly covered by Maya. Even when the Lord is directly before their eyes, they cannot see Him as the loving devotees do. They see Him as a competitor, and they see His spiritual opulence as objects of their own enjoyment. Therefore they must leave the spiritual world, which is the abode of the Lord's devotees, and enter the abode of Maya, the abode of His enemies.

Evidence: on Feb. 19, 1976, a disciple asked Srila Prabhupada, "In Krsna Book it says there were some color fighting in Dvaraka. They were throwing color. And some men became lusty seeing the women. So is ... will that be the first part of their falldown, to be in Vaikuntha and think of personal lust with Krsna's associates?" Prabhupada answered, "Yes."

Of course this is a controversial topic. As a result of hearing from Vaisnavas outside of ISKCON, some devotees have developed the opinion that when Srila Prabhupada said these things, he did not really mean them. They have heard that the jiva fell from the Brahmajyoti, or from Mahavisnu, or that he was always in the material world. There is evidence from the sastra supporting each of these points of view.

I have already replied to the argument that Prabhupada's statements were provisional, only for Westerners etc. Regarding sastric statements that seem to contradict that the jiva originates with Krsna, Srimad Bhagavatam states, vadanti tat tattva vidad tattvam yaj jnanam advayam brahmeti paramatmeti bhagavan iti sabdyate, that various authorities in various Vedic writings have described the non-dual Absolute Truth as Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan. These three different aspects of the Absolute Truth are thus admitted, and each includes the jiva -- either as the spark floating in effulgence; the emanation from the first manifestation of Paramatma, Mahavisnu; or as the servant of the Personality of Godhead. Some devotees think the right way to solve to the controversy surrounding the jiva's fall is to say that all three features are advayam (nondifferent), so whether one says the jiva fell from Brahman or Krsna-lila is really not important.

But, of the three aspects of the Absolute Truth, only one is said to include the other two. The other two are partial. So it follows that scenarios of the jiva originating in Brahman or Paramatma are only partial explanations of his origin.

Comment by Mahanidhi das

After having read your concluding paragraph in connection to the controversy surrounding the jiva's fall from Brahman or Krsna-lila:

>But, of the three aspects of the Absolute Truth, only one is said to include
>the other two. The other two are partial. So it follows that scenarios of the
>jiva originating in Brahman or Paramatma are only partial explanations of his
>origin. ,

I got confused over your using the term "jiva's originating" as a synonymus for "jiva's fall down".

I have never thought that there was some controversy over what might have been his actual origin, since both Brahman and Paramatma have Their origin in Krsna, as well as all nitya-shidas in the Spiritual World. So, if "origin" becomes synonymus for "fall-down", it gets really even more confusing for me. What did I miss in your explanation?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 12, 1995

I am referring to scenarios that I have read offered by persons who favor the idea that "marginal potency" must mean the jiva originated in the Brahmajyoti or from Mahavis, Who is the presiding Deity of the tatastha (marginal region) between the spiritual and material worlds. Since these scenarios are not my own, I don't see why I should explain them further.

But to just dot the i's and cross the t's of my answer to your question, the basic argument drawn from these scenarios is that because the jiva ORIGINATED in Brahman or the marginal region of Mahavisnu, it can (or must) fall. If it is actually originated with Krsna, then it could not have fallen, because "In Vaikuntha, Not Even The Leaves Fall."

DEITIES

Question from Aprameya dd

January 11, 1995

Often I hear different devotees to say that the Deities are smiling or are very serious, or for example that Lord Nityananda did not allowed to be dressed in a certain way. However, I personally have never seen such things. My question is what is this level of advancement or realization on which one can actually perceive this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 12, 1995

The Deity reveals His feelings to the devotees. That is a fact. And He may even reveal Himself differently to different devotees at the same time. When Sanatana Gosvami expressed his doubt to a Vrndavana brahmana about his allowing his children to play with the Madana-Mohan Deity in the sand, that night Lord Madana-Mohan appeared to Sanatana saying, "He is my intimate devotee who loves me as a father, so you should not have said this to him. Go tomorrow and apologize." At the same time, He appeared to the brahmana and said, "Let me go with Sanatana tomorrow so that I can be worshiped according to the rules and regulations."

If you are not receiving intimations from the Deity, that's all right. He is being grave with you, so that you will try harder to serve Him seriously without offense.

There is another side of the answer to this question. And that is, neophyte devotees should be cautious about advertising their "special perceptions" of the Deity in a sentimental or prideful way ("Oh, Krsna smiled at me!" "Krsna showed me that He does not like your service, Prabhu!").

Krsna can and does reveal insight of Himself even to persons who have hardly taken the first step in spiritual life. Even if the insight is a "conjunction" of the mind (instead of a vision of spiritual eyes), still we know that the Deity can appear through the mind-energy, just as He appears through wood, stone or brass. So even if the devotee only "thinks" he saw the Deity smile, it need not be rejected as insubstantial. Still, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati warned about the worship of a perverted, imaginary Visnu by cheap pseudo-devotees.

Is there a way to distinguish between a real insight and a false one?

The simple answer is that the insight should be verified by the spiritual master.

Once at a preaching program in India, a man told Srila Prabhupada about a vision he had of Krsna. Prabhupada said, "So, if you have seen Him, serve Him."

Here, Srila Prabhupada did not question the veracity of the vision, though he did not confirm it, either. He just that "if" the man had seen Krsna, he would serve Him. In other words, if the man took up servány Krsna, that would be confirmation enough that he had seen Him. Whether he had seen Him by direct spiritual revelation or in a mental way need not be debated IF the man's life changed from sense gratification to devotional service.

I recall when I was still a rather new devotee, two boys visited the temple one morning as they were coming down from LSD intoxication. Both were in a state of complete awe. They told us they had both seen Krsna simultaneously in their LSD hallucination. I remember that we (myself and the other devotees preaching to these two) did not challenge the vision. We wanted to see what these boys would do. It turned out that one of them joined ISKCON and accepted initiation from Srila Prabhupada. "If you have seen Him, serve Him."

Similarly, in an ISKCON temple, a devotee may see the Deity smoking more than usual. That insight need not become subjected to debate over whether it is "only mental" or "purely spiritual" -- as long as the devotee goes on serving the Deity under the spiritual master's instructions.

But, if the insight or vision is used to justify unspiritual sentiments and to inflate pride, resulting in a disturbance to or an interruption of pure devotional service, then the veracity of the insight or vision should be questioned. Prabhupada once a little sarcastically referred to an Indian woman who told him that "Krsna snatched my cloth" -- i.e. Krsna stole her clothes, as He stole away the clothes of the gopi viros bathing in the Yamuna. This is apasiddhanta (a wrong conclusion). Krsna is saccidananda vigraha, and so are His nitya-siddha devotees, the gopis. Krsna is transcendently eager to see the pure forms of the gopis because these forms are forms of spiritual bliss. Why then should the Lord come to the material world to snatch the cloth away from a body made of flesh, blood and bone, which is temporary, ignorant and full of suffering?

This is the perverted, imaginary Visnu-worship of the sahajiyas that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati warned of. Sahajiyas provoke "mystical" visions by agitating their minds to the point of madness, by drugs, by Tantric meditational methods, and so on. Then they advertise these visions in speeches, songs and writings to draw attention to themselves as being highly advanced, and to ward off any doubts about their own fallen behavior ("No, even if Babaji eats fish, still he sees Krsna's rasa-lila every night").

But this is not service to Krsna. Therefore such claims of visionary experiences of Krsna should not be considered.

If one advertises his insight of the Deity, he immediately brings doubt upon himself in the assembly of pure devotees. Truly advanced devotees are grave about such insights. When Madhavendra Puri realized that the Ksirachora-Gopinatha Deity had stolen a pot of condensed milk for him to taste, he immediately made plans to quietly leave the place, knowing that this event would bring so much attention upon himself. A humble Vaisnava does not like his devotional service to be distracted by sensationalism. And a cheap pseudo-devotee performs his imitation devotional service only to revel in such self-centered sensationalism.

MAHARAJA HUHU

*Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
January 14, 1995*

While reading in the SB 8.4.4-5, I became puzzled about Maharaja Huhu's future life. In the purport to text 4, Prabhupada writes:

Because king Huhu was cursed by Devala rsi, he became a Crocodile and in only one life he was fortunate enough to see the SPG face to face and be promoted to the spiritual world. In verse 5 it is mentioned that M. Huhu went to Gandarvaloka. No purport. How is this seeming controversy to be understood?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 15, 1995

In the introduction to Chapter Four of Canto 8, Srila Prabhupada writes as follows.

"There was a king on the Gandharva planet whose name was Huhu. Once this King Huhu was enjoying with women in the water, and while enjoying he pulled the leg

of Devala Rsi, who was also taking a bath in the water. Upon this, the sage became very angry and immediately cursed him to become a crocodile. King Huhu was very sorry when cursed in that way, and he begged pardon from the sage, who in compassion gave him the benediction that he would be freed when Gajendra was delivered by the Personality of Godhead. Thus the crocodile was delivered when killed by Narayana."

In the purport to verse 1 of this chapter, Srila Prabhupada states: "Indradyumna, in his birth as an elephant, attained salvation and became a personal associate of the Lord in Vaikuntha, and the crocodile regained his status as a Gandharva."

As you point out, the purport to verse 4 says Huhu was promoted to the spiritual world, while verse 5 states that when his crocodile body was destroyed, Maharaja Huhu resumed his original form as a Gandharva and thereafter returned to Gandharvaloka.

So two things are at work simultaneously. One is the curse of the sage, and the other is the mercy of the Supreme Lord. After being cursed, Maharaja Huhu begged the sage for forgiveness and thus the chance to resume his former identity as a Gandharva. So the sage blessed him that he would be freed from the crocodile form when Miller by the Lord. Thus Huhu would return to Gandharvaloka after the curse had run its course. The Lord does not contradict the blessings of the rsis. Therefore when Huhu was delivered by the Lord, the Lord accepted him as a resident of the spiritual world but let the sage's blessing also take effect, by which Huhu was returned to Gandharvaloka.

In the case of Maharaja Indradyumna, Sage Agastya did not make a provision for the lifting of the curse because Indradyumna did not ask him to, since the king accepted the curse as the will of the Lord. So the result was that Indradyuma lived out all his karmic reactions in the form of Gajendra and then went straight back home, Back to Godhead, when he was delivered by Lord Narayana.

Comments by Diviratha das

January 16, 1995

Your mentioning of the introduction of Chapter 4 of the 8th Canto reminds me of another question. Is it right that these introductions or summarizations were written by a sannyasi disciple of Srila Prabhupada? That is what I heard from a devotee, who worked closely with this sannyasi as he was preaching in Central and Northern Europe.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 16, 1995

I do not know. If I were you, I would direct this question to a BBT Trustee, or a BBT editor like Jayadvaita Maharaja or Dravida Prabhu.

But actually, if I were really you I wouldn't consider this question worth asking. The cover of any volume of the Srimad Bhagavatam states very clearly who the author of the book is. We know that Prabhupada had assistants in preparing the Bhagavatam, i.e. in the matter of checking the Sanskrit-English synonyms, English editing, etc. But the final produkt is credited to Srila Prabhupada alone. That includes the chapter summaries. Perhaps a disciple of Srila Prabhupada wrote the summaries under his direction. I don't know. All I know is the final credit goes to Srila Prabhupada.

This line of inquiry -- who really did what in putting together the Srimad Bhagavatam or any of Prabhupada's BBT publications -- seems innocent and may

even be well-intentioned (let the credit go to who really deserves it), but in fact it can have a sinister aspect as well. I remember a sannyasi who used to preach in E. Europe, and who was a BBT translator, who wanted to translate directly from Srila Prabhupada's dictated tapes of the Gita and Bhagavatam because he did not trust the work done by Srila Prabhupada's disciples in rendering the final published BBT editions. So rather than open the door for such doubts about the fidelity of the published editions of Prabhupada's books, why not just take at face value the cover credits: "His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada." I think that is what Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krsna want us to do. That's why the credits are as they are.

MEDICAL SCIENCE IN THE VEDAS

*Question from Aprameya dd
January 14, 1995*

Thank you very much for your elaborated answers. Now I have possibility to ask you some questions on COM.

SB 2.7.21.p: "...it is therefore understood in this verse that medical science or knowledge in medicine was also inaugurated by the Personality of Godhead in His incarnation Dhanvantari, and thus the knowledge is recorded in the Vedas." Where exactly it is recorded -- in Ayur Veda or somewhere else? Is this knowledge in medicine stil available nowadays? Was it possible in the past by using this medical science to change one's karma (for example when one is deadly ill and he could die at every moment but by expert treatement his life is prolonged), or this also depends on the karma whether one will be cured or will die?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 15, 1995

In a talk in Bhubanesvara on January 21, 1976, Srila Prabhupada said as follows.

"There are books, Ayurvedic books. They are very nice. Everything can be done. Dhanvantari. It is given by Dhanvantari avatara, incarnation of Krsna."

Regarding whether the knowledge of Vedic medicine is available nowadays, everything deteriorates in Kali Yuga. The books are still there as far as I know, but it is hard to find a qualified practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine nowadays. Also Ayurveda cures depend greatly on herbs, and the potency of these is much reduced in this age.

It is not medicine, whether Vedic or Western or Chinese or Arabian medicine, that changes karma. It depends upon who is administering the cure, and how the patient takes the cure. If the cure is given by a pure devotee, and if the patient takes the full cure by taking up pure devotional service, then only can karma be changed. Change of karma means changing from material karma to spiritual karma: kecit kevalaya bhaktya vasudeva parayana (SB 6.1.15). Then only are even the seeds of material karma destroyed. Otherwise, there are Vedic prescriptions that suspend the reactions of karma. But because the seeds of karma remain, one gradually takes up the same sinful habits which result in the same reactions again. Prabhupada gives the example of venereal disease. A person may be cured of it by medicine, but so long as the seed of illicit sexual enjoyment remains in the heart, he'll be attracted again to engage in illicit sex, putting himself at risk of getting the same disease again.

THE REFLECTION OF RASAS IN MATERIAL WORLD

Question from Rucira-avatara das
January 14, 1995

Next question: SB 1.1.3.p: "Therefore, one who attains full knowledge of these different rasas which are the basic principles of activities, can understand the false representations of the original rasas which are reflected in the material world." Which are these false representations of the original twelve rasas in the material world?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 15, 1995

There are 5 main rasas (beginning with awe and reverence and ending with conjugal love) and 7 supportive rasas (like chivalry, comedy, shock and anger). They exist in perfection in the spiritual world in the loving exchanges of the Lord and His associates, and are reflected in the material world in the lusty exchanges of the conditioned souls.

APPEARANCE OF LORD NRSIMHADEVA

Question from Aprameya dd
January 14, 1995

In "Transcend. Diary", vol. 2, p 135 I read that Srila Prabhupada didn't think that Lord Nrsimhadeva have appeared on this planet. I have heard also that HH Indradyumna Maharaja have visited the supposed appearance place of Lord Nrsimhadeva. Can you please give some more information about this? Which avatars actually have appeared on the Earth?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 15, 1995

Indradyumna Maharaja is on COM. You should better ask him your first question.

Regarding which avatars appear on earth, what is important is that They appear in the pages of Srimad Bhagavatam. Thus if we hear Their glories with a pure heart, They will appear in our hearts. Your concern about where They appeared within the universe is only of secondary importance. When Srila Prabhupada visited Simhacalam (the original Jiyada Nrsimha Ksetra near Vishakapatnam in Andhra Pradesh), the temple brahmanas recounted a detailed history of the Deity, but Srila Prabhupada did not seem very interested in these facts and figures. He told his disciples that this Deity is important just because of Lord Caitanya's visiting the Simhacalam temple. Similarly, the importance of the avatars to us is that They are glorified in the Srimad Bhagavatam, which Lord Caitanya said is the amala purana (spotless purana). Your relationship with the avatars should be through the Srimad Bhagavatam and Lord Caitanya, not through geography and cosmology. Geography and cosmology are subject to distortions of time and space.

THE PERSONALITY OF KALI

Question from Jahnu das
January 15, 1995

Who is he actually. Is he also existing in the other three ages? Would he be our equivalent to Satan? Is it a position like some principal Devas or is he an eternal demon. He couldn't be a devotee like Durga, could he?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 15, 1995

The geneology of the personality of Kali is found in SB 4.8.2-5.

Yes, he exists and is active in other ages. That is confirmed in the story of Nala and Damayanti. Maharaja Nala was ruined by the personality of Kali, although this did not occur during the Kali Yuga.

Is Kali equivalent to Satan? I suppose you could say that and get away with it, as long as it is understood that Satan can never actually challenge God's authority, but works within God's plan. Kali is the embodiment of sinfulness. His position is called technically "yuga-purusa". Each yuga is also a person, whose consciousness predominates over mankind during the period of time associated with that yuga- purusa. So one of the 4 ages is reserved by the Lord as the time for the unchecked display of sinfulness. Kali, sin incarnate, is given free reign to pollute humankind during that period.

Question from Vraja Kishor das

June 15, 1995

You once posted a text to this conference discussing the nature of personified kali. I have a question in this regard:

Is kali a jiva? If not, what is he?

If he is a jiva, does he incur sin for his nefarious acts - or is it considered his dharma?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 16, 1995

Is the personality of Kali a jiva, as opposed to ... ? What other possibility is there?

From the sastras I know of 4 categories of personalities who appear in this universe: Visnu-tatta (the Personality of Godhead); sakti-tattva (the Lord's eternal associates who descend with Him, for example Laxmi- devi); Siva-tattva (the personality of Lord Siva, who is a tattva of his own); and jiva-tattva, including all living entities in the cycle of birth and death beginning with Brahma. I don't have a precise reference that ascribes the personality of Kali to the category of the jivas. But he is certainly not Visnu or Siva tattva, and since there are no demons in the spiritual world, he can't be sakti-tattva either.

The reference from which I infer that Kali is a jiva is the beginning of SB Canto 4 Chapter 8, where the genealogy of Kali is described. He is a demon descended from Brahma. His family line has the service in the universal scheme of things to be the cause of devastation. So Kali and his clan are not human-category demons. Therefore the duty of Kali is not understandable in terms of human karma. A human being who takes it upon himself to be an agent of destruction will soon be punished by the laws of nature, because he violates the duty given to humanity by the Vedic acaryas, of whom Brahma is the chief. But Kali destroys as a duty given to him by Mahajana Brahma.

I think it is safe to make a comparison to the Yamadutas. They are certainly inauspicious beings. But do they generate sinful karma for what they do? I don't see how we can speculate like that, because they are servants of Mahajana Yamaraja. How one gets the chance to become a Yamaduta in his next life, I

don't know. I've sometimes thought that the religionists who go around condemning others to hell and preaching that God is our judge and that we must fear Him may get that chance. Anyway, the Yamadutas are "just doing their job" for Lord Yama, so how are they blameworthy?

TWO QUESTIONS

Questions from Aprameya dd
January 18, 1995

Sorry for my thoughtless questions. But at least last two questions until I am in Plovdiv (where is my only possibility to use COM) will be about the devotional service.

1. *SB 2.9.23.,p: "One cannot, however, be engaged in the penance of devotional service without being completely free from all sins." How to understand this since I'm not free from all sins and it is said also that the only means for one to get rid of his sins is the devotional service?*

2. *In your last Vyasa-puja offering -- the wonderful poem - you write: "In spiritual things there's no exhaustion", Prabhupada said... " However, sometimes at the evening when I'm coming back I'm tired. Is that means I'm performing my service as a material work?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 18, 1995

1. Though one comes to the association of devotees in a sinful state, faith in the power of sadhu-sangha marks the beginning of one's good fortune. From sadhu-sangha comes bhajana-kriya, devotional service under regulation. And from bhajana-kriya, anartha-nivrtti arises. Anartha-nivrtti means the overturning of sinfulness. Srila Prabhupada said, "Up to anartha-nivrtti, you have to struggle very hard with determination, then automatically everything will come" -- unflinching faith (nistha), taste (ruci), attachment to Krsna (asakti), ecstasy (bhava) and pure love (prema). So all 9 stages constitute devotional service. The stages up through anartha-nivrtti free the devotee from sin. The stages beyond that establish him in his eternal position of loving service to Krsna. So when you read about devotional service as the means to get free of sin, that means the beginning stages. And when you read that one must be free of all sin to be really established in devotional service, that means the advanced stages.

2. "Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura comments that although the devotees of the Lord become fatigued after repeated diving into the endless waves and undercurrents in the ocean of the Lord's pleasure pastimes, these devotees never desire any happiness other than the Lord's service, even the happiness of liberation. Rather, their fatigue becomes pleasure for them, just as the fatigue produced by sex indulgence is pleasurable for those addicted to sex." (From SB 10.87.21, purport)

VAMPIRES

Question from Labangalatika dd
January 21, 1995

In the Bhagavatam we meet many different life forms, but what do the Vedas have on vampires? Do they exist?

Comment by Vipramukhya Swami

I've met two devotees who have sworn to me that vampires exist, one of whom claims to have personally seen one. I'll tell the story when I get a chance.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 24, 1995

To my understanding, the creature referred to by the Sanskrit word "vetala" is what is known in Europe as a "vampire." Vetalas are mentioned in the Bhagavatam, but Srila Prabhupada does not give an English definition of the meaning of the word. In Krsna book Chapter 62, Prabhupada lists vetalas as one of many kinds of "powerful ghosts and denizens of the inferno."

MATERIAL CONCEPTION OF EGO

Question from Manupriya das

January 25, 1995

In Srimad Bhagavatam 1.9.21 Srila Prabhupada explains about the Lord when He exhibits Himself as chariot driver of Arjuna. Srila Prabhupada explains in the end of the purport that

"The material conception of ego is equibalanced in Him."

And he goes on to explain that the Lord does not feel inferior as the chariot driver.

Could you give me a hint how I should understand this explanation. I can not understand how material conception of ego can be equibalanced in the Lord.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 25, 1995

Reading over this verse and purport, I conclude that the word "equibalanced" (which also appears in the verse translation, as well as in the sentence you cited from the purport) is linked to the Sanskrit word sama-drsah, which in the word-for-word meanings is translated as "of one who is equally kind to one and all." There is no word in the Sanskrit verse that is directly translated as "equibalanced." Yet it is there in the English verse.

The quality of sama-drsah or sama-darsana is explained in the Bhagavad-gita, most notably in 5.18 and 9.29. In the latter verse Krsna says, na me dvesyo 'sti na priyah, "I envy no one, and no one is dear to Me." The division of living entities into categories of dear and feared takes place on the platform of the false ego. So when the Lord says that He fears no one and holds no one dear, He is saying that this dualistic function of the ego is equibalanced in Him. That is spiritual ego. Therefore the Bhagavatam verse we are discussing says Krsna is anahankrteh, "free from all material identity of false ego." There is a spiritual ego, just like there is a spiritual intellect and spiritual mind. And the difference between them and the material ego, intellect and mind is seen in the way they function. After all, these three are aspects of consciousness, and consciousness is the same "stuff" whether it is in the spiritual world or material world. That which we know as material consciousness is ego, intellect and mind functioning differently from spiritual consciousness. And because of that different function, the original and pure ego, mind and intellect become covered by the modes of nature. How this happens is described in SB Canto 3 Chapter 26, beginning with verse 21. In the Vasudeva- sattva state of pure goodness, consciousness is called citta. In the purport to verse 21, Srila

Prabhupada calls this Vasudeva state or citta "Krsna consciousness." But as this citta functions in association with the 3 modes, material mind manifests through goodness, material intellect through passion and false ego through ignorance.

So, in conclusion, the statement "the material conception of ego is equibalanced in Him" means "the material function of ego is equibalanced in Him." In other words, there is no material function of ego in Him. The material ego is never equibalanced. By definition it functions dualistically. Yet there is always ego in the Lord: spiritual ego (pure identity), which is sama-drsah or equibalanced.

SUKSMA SOULS

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
January 27, 1995

From text 21627 I learned about suksma jivas. When from a part of a plant or a lower animal develops a new one, can we understand it from this point of view - that one of suksma jivas took a position of "normal" soul? If yes, how it happens?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 28, 1995

Sorry, I do not understand your question. And I think you are speculating. Therefore I would rather not answer the question, even if you make it clearer, because it is going outside of the bounds of sastric reference.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

I am sorry to disturb by my unclear question. Yes, it was a spekulative connection of two different things. But this parthenogenesis (I hope it is right name) is a fact and it was one of my first questions to myself when I learned about soul at the first time. And I heard this question from several other people, mainly students.

My another question is from SB 4.19.38: "religious principle comes down through disciplic succesion in TWO FORMS." Could you explain, please, what are these forms?

This is Suhotra Swami's comment on the last text of Bhakta Jan's.

(I sent this comment through the account of Aja Prabhu because of a bug in COM on my account. At this time, early in the morning, the COM sysop cannot be reached to correct it.)

Though I know what the word parthenogenesis means, I do not know what you understand about it, and how you are trying to apply the information about the suskma-jiva to it. All I can say is that if there is some evidence you are thinking of that supports parthenogenesis, that does not prove nor disprove the existence of suksma-jivas. Since the jiva cannot be perceived by our senses, you can just as well say that the living entity who is produced by parthenogenesis came from a samsaric form in its last life. Why must you invoke the suksma-jiva? This is speculation. I therefore am not going to confirm your speculations. You can just be satisfied with them yourself.

As far as the two forms of descent of religion through disciplin succession, they are vani (the instruction) and vapu (the personality of the instructor,

i.e. his visible form). In the previous verse (text 37), the vapu is referred to.

BILA-SVARGA PLANETS

*Question from bhakta Jan Mares
January 31, 1995*

I heard that any of bila-svarga planets are supposedly situated INSIDE of the Earth. It doesn't fit in the known scheme of the universe, as far as I know. Could you please explain this point? Is there anything interesting in the Earth?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 31, 1995

The best advice I can give you is that you should read Sadaputa's book, Vedic Cosmology. If you still have a question after that, I can try to help you.

KRSNA'S PARENTS

*Question from Mundita Mastaka das
February 3, 1995*

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Since Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yasoda are Krsna's eternal parents, how it is possible that they were Drona and Dhara in their previous life?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 3, 1995

Arjuna is Krsna's eternal friend. He appears in that relationship with Krsna even in other incarnations of the Lord. For instance, in Krsna's incarnation as Narayana Rsi, Arjuna is Nara Rsi. In the Puranas another incarnation of Arjuna is mentioned, named Raktaja. Arjuna, Nara Rsi and Raktajare not sequential reincarnations. They are simultaneously expanded throughout the universes along with the Lord Himself in His different forms. And so it is with Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda Devi. The Lord empowers His devotees with His own potency. They are not limited to one particular incarnation in one place and one time.

SIDDHALOKA & NARADA MUNI

*Question from bhakta Jan Mares
February 4, 1995*

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. It is indicated in Brhad Bhagavatamrta that there is (besides Siddhaloka in this universe) another Siddhaloka in spiritual sky. There is also generálky known that Narada Muni is an inhabitant of Vaikuntha. Therefore I was pretty confused by SB 4.29.80 p. which indicates that Narada Muni is an inhabitant of Siddhaloka within this universe. Could you please explain what is understood by Siddhaloka in spiritual sky and where is Narada Muni actually coming from?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 4, 1995

Do you think that Narada Muni cannot be an inhabitant of Siddhaloka and Vaikunthaloka at the same time?

Krsna resides in Divya Vrndavana (in the spiritual world) and Bhauma Vrndavana (in the material world) at the same time. So do all the devotees of Vrndavana. That is made very clear in the Brhad Bhagavatamrta. Those residents of Bhauma Vrndavana who have pure vision see that there is no difference between the two even now.

The Siddhaloka in the material world has a similar relationship with the spiritual Siddhaloka as does Bhauma Vrndavana with Divya Vrndavana. Those who are pure devotees among the mystics of the Siddhaloka within this universe (like Devarsi Narada) can freely shift between both realms.

DASYA RASA

Question from Lomancita das
February 4, 1995

Some devotee says, that when we are performing a devotional service now, we are already on the platform of dasya rasa. But I have found in the end of a purport to 8. mantra in Nectar of Instruction, that this relationship with Krsna (santa, dasya, sakhya, etc) can be achieved on the level of raghanuga bhakti. But we are now on the level of sadhana bhakti proces with following regulative principles. So how can one consider himself to be in dasya rasa relationship with Krsna?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 5, 1995

One thing is that in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement, all devotees are engaged in raganuga-bhakti, even while following vaidhi-sadhana. I explained this elaborately in an article about raganuga-bhakti published in this conference in March of last year. Below is a quote from that article.

"In summary, according to Srila Jiva Gosvami there are two kinds of raganuga-bhaktas: jata-ruci (those whose taste has come about) and ajata-ruci (those whose taste has not yet come about). It is not that ajata-ruci devotees in ISKCON only deserve to be called `vaidhi-bhaktas.'" On the strength of Srila Jiva Gosvami's explanation of raganuga-bhakti, all ISKCON devotees may be called raganuga-bhaktas. Cc Madhya-lila 22.156-157 also confirms that vaidhi-sadhana is to be accepted by Lord Caitanya's followers as the external aspect of raganuga-sadhana, not as something separate from the practice of raganuga." [End of quote]

It is true that the members of ISKCON who are properly initiated and engaged in sadhana-bhakti are "Krsna-dasa" or "Krsna-dasi", but until they come to the jata-ruci stage, or in other words the stage of awakened transcendental taste in sadhana bhakti (especially taste for hearing and chanting), they will not be able to appreciate dasya-rasa on the transcendental platform. Vaidhi-sadhana means sadhana bhakti without taste, and raganuga-sadhana means sadhana bhakti with taste. That taste is internal. Externally the two kinds of sadhana look the same.

In any case, devotional service must include dasya or servitude. There is no question of bhakti without service. As Srila Prabhupada writes in SB 10.9.21, purport: "real bhakti begins with dasya-rasa." There is only a question of whether a devotee's taste for servitude has awakened or not. How transcendental rasa awakens is explained as follows by Srila Prabhupada in his introduction to the Srimad Bhagavatam.

1. The self-realization stage just after liberation from material bondage is called the santa, or neutral stage.

2. After that, when there is development of transcendental knowledge of the Lord's internal opulences, the devotee engages himself in the dasya stage.

3. By further development of the dasya stage, a respectful fraternity with the Lord develops, and above that a feeling of friendship on equal terms becomes manifest. Both these stages are called sakhya stage, or devotional service in friendship.

4. Above this is the stage of paternal affection toward the Lord, and this is called the vatsalya stage.

5. And above this is the stage of conjugal love, and this stage is called the highest stage of love of God, although there is no difference in quality in any of the above stages. The last stage of conjugal love of God is called the madhurya stage. [End of quote]

So dasya-rasa means the mood of servitude manifested on the liberated platform. This is nicely explained by Srila Prabhupada in the first chapter of the Teachings of Lord Caitanya.

"If one can fix his mind on Krsna without deviation, he can attain a steadfast position in Krsna consciousness, santa-rasa. When one attains santa-rasa, unflinching faith in Krsna is established, and all material desires cease. These specific characteristics of santa-rasa--unflinching faith in Krsna and cessation of all desires which are not connected with Krsna--are common to all other rasas as well, just as sound is generally present in all other elements (air, fire, water and earth) because it is produced from the sky. Similarly, these two characteristics of santa-rasa are present in other transcendental relationships, such as dasya (servitorship), sakhya (fraternity), vatsalya (paternal affection), and the madhura-rasa (conjugal love)."

Until the mind is fixed on Krsna without deviation, until there is unflinching faith, until all material desires have vanished, a devotee cannot really be said to have attained dasya-rasa, or any rasa--because he has no taste. But every living entity is a servant of Krsna at all times. At the stage of vaidhi-sadhana bhakti, this constitutional servitude is cultivated by following the regulative principles. When the devotee's transcendental taste awakens and becomes steady, rasa can then begin.

FIRE-BALL

*Question from Mahakirti das
February 5, 1995*

Dear Maharaja,

' " The mystery of FIRE-BALL is definitively resolved " claims boldly Prof. Joshiko Ohcuki from Tokio. Prof. Ohcuki is now travelling with his small laboratory all around the Japan and showing what nobody had seen until now. Before the eyes of interested public and reporters he is manufacturing within glass tube small samples of FIRE-BALLS.'

This is head of the text from one article published in Czech famous magazin. Fortunately cheating bussines of this Prof. is so obvious that even writer of this article refused his childish effort played with 5kW mikrowave generator.

Please Maharaja can you give some sastric evidence or explanation of the phenomenon which we call FIRE-BALL. Personaly I am interested about this

phenomenon, since I have read in the past many articles about it and also heard many mysterious stories. Mostly I have been shocked by special behaviour (personal) in which the fire ball is dealing with those whom he meet. Sometimes he acts friendly and to those who wants to attack him he acts like an enemy. Or he is simply making different jokes from them.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 5, 1995

Well, Mahakirti Prabhu, I will just open this conference to any member who has something to say about FIRE-BALL. I can't think of any sastric references concerning this subject. But maybe Varnadi das has some. Or someone from among your Czech countrymen who are Danda members, who are often concerned with esotera (Parthogenecist Bhakta Jan, for instance). Maybe Vipramukhya Swami has a story to tell about FIRE-BALL (I think this means ball lightning, Maharaja).

Comment by Varnadi das

Phire ballski? Too esoteric for me. "Sastric" references can be obtained from any local My-little-upside-down-crystal-pyramid shop or the eso-corner of your favorite bookshop. I don't think Tesla thought ball lightnings to be particularly useful, but you might also try his "Palm Spring Notes" to see whether he said something about them.

DEMIGODS

Question from bhakta Jan Mares

February 9, 1995

It is stated that senses are controlled by their demigods and also by the Supersoul. Could you explain their relation and how this process works? What sastra says about personal protective deity (amanava purusa) and family p. deity (kuladevata) mentioned by Sadadputa P.'s book Alien Identities?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 10, 1995

There are ten pranas in the material body. One, known simply as 'prana', is the 'vital prana' or principal prana. The others are subsidiary. The secondary pranas activate the physical senses under the shelter of the vital prana. The vital prana is moved by the Supersoul, who is known as Antaryami (the inner ruler) and Prana-sarira (He who possesses the body of pranas). The individual soul is said to be the ruler of the pranas inasmuch as the soul enjoys the movements of the pranas. The demigods are said to be the rulers of the pranas inasmuch as they define the activities of the senses. For instance, Surya is the lord of sight inasmuch as the light of the sun defines that which is visible to our eyes. But the actual director of the function of the eye is the Antaryami, who is the Prana-sarira, the controller of the pranas.

The amanava-purusa is explained by Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana in his Govinda-bhasya commentary to the 4th Chapter, 3rd Pada of Vedanta-sutra.

There are numerous references to kuladevatas in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. For instance, a kuladevi named Kotara appeared on the battlefield to protect Banasura as he fought Krsna (from KRSNA, Chapter 62). Banasura used to worship Kotara very faithfully, and their relationship was like mother and son. In Chapter 51 of KRSNA we find that Durga was the family deity of Princess Rukmini's ksatriya clan. In the same chapter Srila Prabhupada writes that most

ksatriya families worshiped Radha-Krsna or Laksmi-Narayana as their family Deities. In other words, Krsna becomes the kuladevata of Vaisnava families. And various demigods become the kuladevatas of materialistic families. Another example: Surya was the kuladevata of Satyajit, father of Satyabhama, Krsna's second queen in Dvaraka.

LORD'S DEPARTURES

Question from Komandita das
February 14, 1995

On the appearance day of Lord Nityananda I also heard on the lecture the narration about His departure. But before I had heard that this story was not known. Maharaja, can you explain this, please? And why the departures of Krsna's devotees are mostly introduced and celebrated then the departures of Him in different appearances? Thank you.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 23, 1995

I do not know what story you heard. Lord Nityananda disappeared from this world by merging Himself into the Deity of Bukka Raya, in Ekachakra-grama. Vaisnavas do not discuss very much the disappearance pastimes of the Lord and His pure devotees, because it is a painful subject.

LORD NITYANANDA

Question from Sasvata das
March 2, 1995

In Caitanya-Caritamrta Krsna das Kaviraj Goswami is describing Lord Nityananda, when He appeared to him in a dream, as syama cikana kanti - that He is blackish. And in Adi-lila on the picture He is painted as shyam. In Sri Nityananda-chandrasya-nama-dvadasakam by Sarvabhauma Bhatacarya one of His name is Rakta-gaura-kalevara - He, whose complexion is golden, tinged with red. Was He shyam only in a dream of Krsna das Kaviraja?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
March 4, 1995

Lord Nityananda's pastimes are unlimited. According to His transcendental activities, He displays different forms.

After He departed this world Nityananda Prabhu merged into the Deity of Bukka Raya, Who is blackish and very powerful. This Deity displays lilas in Ekachakra-grama even today. He still appears in the dreams of the devotees. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami dreamed of Lord Nityananda after His disappearance from this world. He dreamed of Him as a cowherd boy. Bukka Raya is a blackish cowherd boy.

SENSE GRATIFICATION ON THE HIGHER PLANETS

Question from Mundita Mastaka das
March 9, 1995

Srila Prabhupada said that there's no sense gratification on higher planetary systems such as Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka.

So, I wonder how living entities take birth on this planets. Does it mean that there're no women up there?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 10, 1995

The Janaloka and Tapaloka planetary systems are said to be the outer regions of Brahmaloaka (i.e. Satyaloka). These regions are attained by perfect sannyasis and brahmacaris in their next lives. Lower than Janaloka and Tapaloka is the Maharloaka, which is attained by vanaprasthas. So these places are distinguished from the svargaloka (the planets of the demigods headed by Indra), which is sought after by pious people who are interested in sexual pleasure far superior to that available on earth. The planets of Maharloaka and above are called the muniloka (the planets of the munis). Munis are not very inclined to sexual pleasure, but are very inclined to jnana or mental speculation. In other words, the svargaloka is heaven for the karmis, and the muniloka is heaven for the jnanis.

There are female personalities in the muniloka. Some of them are demigoddess who personify and award auspicious qualities desired by the sages, like jnana and vairagya. Brahma keeps female dancers who perform for his personal worshipable Deity, the Mahapurusa. These dancers are sages (brahmacarinis) who enchantingly sing the Vedic mantras with perfect intonation and expression. If the residents of the muniloka become interested in sexual enjoyment with one another, they have to leave that region and descend to lower levels. After finishing this business, they can return to the muniloka if they didn't get entangled down below. There are Puranic descriptions of some male and female residents of the muniloka getting cursed to take lower births because they became involved with each other even while they were living in the muniloka. So the situation there is something like that in an ISKCON temple, where brahmacaris and brahmacarinis are not supposed to have anything to do with each other. If they want to get married, they have to live outside of the temple building, at least when they wish to conceive a child. Sometimes they get involved with each other before marriage, and thus get into trouble.

The residents of Maharloaka and above are sons and daughters of Brahma, created asexually from his mind and bodily limbs. Earthly sages who become qualified by austerity and meditation may appear as sons or daughters of Brahma in the muniloka at the beginning of a new kalpa (day of Brahma). There they will live for at least 4,300,000,000 solar years, which is the life span on Maharloaka, the lowest muniloka.

MORE ON SATYALOKA

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 11, 1995

In her question, Mataji MMdd did not mention the region of Kailasa (Sivaloka within this universe), but we should understand that it is also counted as a department of Satyaloka. See SB 2.1.28, Purport: even Visnuloka (Svetadvipa, the planet of Ksirodakasayi Visnu) is classified as a Satyaloka.

The residents of Kailasa are called ganas. They are devotees of Siva. Some are great yogis (like Nandi, Lord Siva's bull), while many are from the category of ghosts and demons. But by the blessings of Siva, they all live in his region of Satyaloka where they can serve him for the entire duration of this universe. In Kailasa, there are both male and female ganas. Because Kailasa is still a place within the material world, the ganas are yet influenced by the mode of darkness, and thus they may become subject to sexual desire. As soon as that happens they

are banished from Kailasa by being placed within the wombs of women engaged in illicit sex.

After sending my last text, I considered that it is misleading to say that EVERY resident of Satyaloka is directly a son or daughter of Brahma. Siva is Brahma's son, but he in turn has his own famous sons, Ganapati (Ganesa, the pati or lord of the ganas) and Kartikkeya. Below them are the ganas, Siva's devotees.

For these ganas in Kailasa, as with the residents of the other regions of Satyaloka, the rule remains in force: "no sex life in Satyaloka." Of course, Siva himself is exempt from such a rule. His relationship with Goddess Parvati is incomparable to the insignificant lusty affairs of ordinary males and females.

I will amend the previous text by noting that among the most prominent residents of the muniloka are direct sons of Brahma. But not all the residents are.

Comment by Mundita Mastaka das

March 11, 1995

Dear Maharaja, does it mean that by calling me "mataji MMdd" you gave me a blessing to become a female on muniloka in my next life?

Anyway, thank you very much for your nice answer.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 12, 1995

I hope all our ISKCON devotees, male or female, will enter Krsnaloka after this life. And I hope that those whom I was able to help in some small way in this life will ask Krsna to please pardon me for all my offenses so that He may consider to alter my fate of repeated birth and death in the material planetary systems.

Actually, I just returned from India and have been sick and feverish. Somehow (probably due to double vision), I saw MMd as MMdd. Sorry about that.

UPASANA-KANDA

Question from Mundita Mastaka das

March 10, 1995

The Upasana- kanda section of the Vedas is defined in Srila Prabhupada's books in different ways:

SB 1.12.29: "The culmination of Upasana-kanda is the devotional service of the Lord Visnu."

SB 2.9.42: "...devotional service (Upasana-kanda)."

SB 4.20.30: "Upasana-kanda is the worship of different demigods for receiving material benefits."

CCML 9.263: "...and accept only Upasana-kanda or bhakti-kanda."

SB 1.1.2: "...in the Karma-kanda there is competition to reach heavenly planets for better sense gratification, and there is similar competition in the Jnana-kanda and the Upasana-kanda."

Can you please explain what is this process, who are upasana-kandis, what is their goal, their destination (in compare to karma-kandis), which path they

follow, which scriptures belong to this category and what competition is involved.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 11, 1995

Brahma-samhita 5.41 informs us that Vedic knowledge concerning the 3 modes of nature is a product of maya.

maya hi yasya jagad-anda-satani sute
traigunya-tad-visaya-veda-vitayamana

"[Govinda's] external potency embodies the threefold mundane qualities, viz., sattva, rajas and tamas and diffuses the Vedic knowledge regarding the mundane world."

From the purport by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura: "It is the deluding energy who has elaborated the regulative knowledge (Vedas) bearing on the threefold mundane quality."

The same thing is explained by Lord Krsna in the Bhagavad-gita 2.45.

traigunya-visaya veda
nistraigunyo bhavarjuna
nirdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho
niryoga-ksema atmavan

TRANSLATION

"The Vedas deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature. O Arjuna, become transcendental to these three modes. Be free from all dualities and from all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the self."

So, in considering the three Vedic kandas (paths), we must know how to separate transcendental injunctions given by Krsna Himself from mundane injunctions which are just products of the 3 modes of nature. That has already been done by Lord Krsna in the Bhagavad-gita.

Regarding the mundane forms of karma, jnana and upasana, Krsna states as follows.

Bg 3.27 (mundane karma):

"The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature."

Bg 7.24 (mundane jnana):

"Unintelligent me, who do not know Me perfectly, think that I, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, was impersonal before and have now assumed this personality. Due to their small knowledge, they do not know My higher nature, which is imperishable and supreme."

Bg 7.20 (mundane bhakti or upasana):

"Those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires surrender until demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures."

"According to their own natures" refers to the competitive attitude of conditioned souls under the modes of nature. Bg 14.10 says that the modes are

always in competition with each other. This gives rise to the spirit of sectareanism, which pervades mundane forms of karma, jnana and upasana.

Regarding the transcendental forms of karma, jnana and upasana, the Lord instructs as follows.

Bg 9.27

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform--do that, O son of Kunti, as an offering to Me."

Bg 7.19

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare."

Bg 12.2

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect."

LORD'S PASTIMES

Questions from Cit Sakti das

March 12, 1995

1)Recently I've heard in your two lectures about Lord Rakta - yuga incarnation and about Raktaja (Arjuna), who was born from Visnu. These names Rakta and Raktaja are similer, that I'd like to ask, if there is some conection?

2)Next question is from SB 1.9.39.where Srila Prabhupada is saying,that all Krishna's lilas are going on one after another in each and every universe.That means that these lilas we know from SB are going on one after another in each and every universe simultaniously or in one universe then another etc.?We also know from KB that Krishna lila in Vrindavana is going on constantly In this case we can consider that Krishna lila is gong on constantly in each universe after His depature from Earth?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 13, 1995

The only connection is as you've noted--the similarity of the names. Rakta in Sanskrit means "red" and also "blood." Lord Rakta of Treta-yuga is reddish in hue. Raktaja, who is Arjuna in another form, is born (ja) from blood (rakta) that Sri Visnu shed as a pastime.

Regarding how the Lord's lilas are displayed in other universes, the comparison is made to the sun passing through the points of arc in the sky. If the dome of the sky is divided into 720 sections to mark the minutes of 12 hours of daylight, the sun will be seen to gradually enter a new section as it passes out of a previous one. It is not that the sun is restricted to be in only one section at a time, and is forced to do a quantum leap from one to another like a jerky old movie. Nor are 720 suns displayed all across the sky for 12 hours straight.

VAIKUNTHA / AVATARAS

Question from bhakta Jan Mares

March 14, 1995

I would like to ask you following questions:

1. Who are predominating deities on unlimited Vaikunthalokas (when there are only 24 expansions usually mentioned)?

2. Are there any sastric information about avataras in another Dvapara- and Kali-yugas and their activities?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 15, 1995

1) Transcendental mathematics means $1+1=1$, $1-1=1$. Use these formulas to arrive at 24, and further the unlimited number of Vaikuntha-patis. Then you will understand everything yourself. As it is, your question is quite impossible to answer in full. 24 names of Visnu are not enough for you, you apparently want the names (because you ask for "who", which requires names for an answer) of the predominating deities of the unlimited Vaikuntha planets.

All right, Bhakta Jan. Here we go.

kamala natha
vasudeva
sanatana
vasudevatmaja punya
lilamanusa vighraha
srivatsa-kaustubha-dhara
hari
caturbhujatta-cakrasi-gada-sankha bujayudha
srisa
sac-cid-ananda-vighraha
anagha
sodasa-stri-sahasresa
suka-vag-amrtabdhindave
govindaya
yoginapata
ananta
yogine
koti-surya-sama-prabha
ilapata
parasmaijyotisa
pitavasa
parijatapaharaka
sarva-palaka
aja
niranjana
kamajanaka
kanjalocana
madhughna
mathura-natha
dvaraka-nayaka
balina
tulasi-dama-bhusana
nara-naraya natmaka
mayina
parama-purusa
samsara-vairina
murari
narakantaka
anadi-brahmacari
krsnavyasana-karsaka

Was that enough, Bhakta Jan? No? OK, here's more.

visvarupa-pradarsaka
satya-vaca
satya-sankalpa
jayina
subhadra-purvaja
visnava
jagad-guru
jagannatha
avyakta
gitamrta-mahodadhaya
sri-padambuja
damodara
yajna-bhokta
danavendra-vinasaka
narayana
para-brahmana
pannaga sana-vahana
punya-sloka
tirtha-kara
veda-vedya
daya-nidha
sarva-bhutatmaka
sarva-graharupa
parat-para
maha-bala
mahadeva

Bhakta Jan says the names are still not unlimited yet, so we must continue:

upendra
agnilocana
rudra
shaura
maha vira
suvikrama parakrama
hari kola hala
cakri
vijaya
jayaya
avyayaya
daityanthaka
parabrahmana
aghora
ghora vikrama
jvala mukha
jvala mauna
jvala
maha prabhava
nita lakshma
sahasthra
prathapana
chandikopi
surarighna
sadarighna
sada-shiva
guna-bhadra
maha-bhadra
bala-bhadra

subhadra
karala
nikarala
kathruka
bairava-dambara
diva
agamyā
sarva shatru
amogha
shastra-dhara
sarva-juta
sureshvara
sahasra-baha
vajranakha
sarva-siddha
janardana
bhagavata
sthula
agamyā
paravara
sarva mantraika rupa
sarva yantra vidarana
avyaya
paramananda
kalajita
khagovahana
bhaktathivatsa
suvyakta
sulabha
sugaya
lokaikanayaka
sarva
sharanagathavatsala
dhira
dhara
sarvagna
bhima
bhama
bhima para
krama
deva-priya
nutaya
pujyaya
bhavahuta
parameshvara
vasta vaksa
shrini vasa
vibhava
sankarshana
trivikrama
tri-lokatma
kala
sarva ishvareshvara
vishvambhara
sthirabhara
acyutaya
purusottma
adhoksja
akshaya
sevaya
vanamlina

prakampana
loka-guru
srasta
parasmai tyottistha
parayana
surava

A Com bug:GRP.dat deadlock

Fatal error: COM out of memory

System reset

login:
name:
password:

You have one partially unread text in (Have) Danda (Will Travel)

2) Yes, in Adi-lila of Caitanya-caritamrta. This question was answered in greater detail in the first days of the Danda conference. I am not going to repeat myself again.

Comment by Premarnava das

:)

Comment by Suhotra Swami

What was that again?

Comment by Premarnava das

That was a "smiley" Maharaja. You nodd you head towards the left shoulder and look at it.

: -)

Comment by Suhotra Swami

Oh, I see. Computer sign language.

The next time Bhakta Jan asks one of his "special" questions to this conference, I'll just answer with a smiley.

Comment by bhakta Jan Mares

March 17, 1995

Actually I made two mistakes: first I did not formulate the question properly. The point was what are the combinations of 4 attributes in Lord's hands if there can be only 24 combinations. Therefore what combinations have the other expansions? The second one was that this question asked me one devotee in Czechoslovakia and I was unable to answer it. Thank you for understanding.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 18, 1995

(-:

Comment by Premarnava das

You could also try this one, Maharaja.

:-)

Comment by Jahnu das

Or this one:

:-/

Or this: :-0

A QUESTION ABOUT LOGIC BASED ON SASTRAS

Question from (erased object 1833)

March 25, 1995, 13:45 SWT

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his beloved representatives.

A devotee gave me a copy of a book entitled "In Vaikuntha Not Even the Leaves Fall." I know that it was recently banned by the GBC. And I know that the question of where the jiva fell from is not really the essential topic in spiritual life. My question is not about that. My question concerns the subject of logic based upon sastra. This is taken up in the Second Wave, Chapter Two of this book. Now, in this chapter the authors deal with two excerpts from a letter you placed in Danda and in Philosophical Exchange, although they do not mention your name directly. They say about you, "it is clear that the author does not understand the meaning of tarko apratistha." I suppose that you have seen this book. I am very interested in knowing your reply to their remarks that pertain to your COM letter.

Thank you

Bh Hap Camper

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 25, 1995, 13:48 SWT

All right, to recapitulate, here's what they quoted from me, followed by my outline of their response to it.

"I'm not putting my hand on my heart for blind faith here. We all want to understand Srila Prabhupada's instructions on a deeper level, both for our individual spiritual progress and for progress in our preaching. But, tarko apratistha --logical argument is not the basis of that understanding. One must follow the mahajana Srila Prabhupada. Thus the truth hidden in his heart will become revealed to us by the grace of guru and Krsna. Yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deva Tatra gurau."

"I've failed to devise a logical framework into which every one of Srila Prabhupada's statements on the origin of the jiva fits, seamlessly resolving all apparent contradictions. I admire the devotees who continue to put forward some such frameworks. They seek the truth. But the logic of, "whenever Srila Prabhupada said the jiva originates in Vaikuntha, it was part of strategy to get Western people to have faith in his overall message," is flawed. This claim is tarka of the most insubstantial kind. Here's some reasons why."

That's they quoted from me.

In the chapter you refer to, the authors then said ---

1) that I contradict myself by using logic in the above statement because the logical consequence of that quote is that I should just give up logic altogether;

2) that while stating that I failed to logically devise a framework to resolve the jiva issue, I suggest that no one else has solved it and maybe no one else ever will;

3) I made a strawman out of the view that Srila Prabhupada's statements about fall from Vaikuntha were part of his preaching strategy, and then I proceed to shred that view;

4) after I decry the use of logic and denounce as insubstantial the logic that Srila Prabhupada could not make adjustments to the siddhanta for the sake of preaching, I then give four logical reasons why I believe this, though the authors do not deal with these 4 reasons because their argument is that I defeat myself anyway by my own use of logic.

It is true, as the title of this chapter of "In Vaikuntha etc." States that logic based on sastra is one of our pramanas. The word pramana in Sanskrit means "source of valid knowledge." There are three kinds of pramana that are accepted in the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya. These are sabda (spiritual sound), pratyaksa (direct perception) and anumana (logical argument). The root of pramana is prama (cognition); therefore pramana is that by which the truth is ascertained. But the acaryas of our sampradaya hold that of the three pramanas, sabda alone is the best evidence because it alone reveals the truth that lies beyond material perception. Direct perception (pratyaksa) and logic (anumana) help us only to understand the Vedic evidence in terms of our present condition. But they themselves are unable to reveal eternal truths. Then in what sense are perception and logic accepted as evidence? In the sense that with their help, Vedic knowledge can be demonstrated and confirmed. When employed skillfully, direct perception and logic reinforce faith in the sabda-pramana (evidence of spiritual sound).

What I presented in the first paragraph they quoted is not a denial of the usefulness of logic. I wrote "logical argument is not the basis of that understanding" of the truth of Srila Prabhupada's teachings about the jiva, a truth that lies beyond material perception. In other words, what I said was that of the three pramanas, anumana or logic is not the basis of the other two.

And I went on to show that their logic (that Srila Prabhupada's teachings on the jiva were compromised) is flawed. Why is it flawed? The first of the 4 reasons I gave (which they did not bother to quote) is that Srila Prabhupada himself never suggested that he used such a strategy. That means there is no sabda (evidence of spiritual sound) behind their logic. Hence their logic is insubstantial. The next reason was, we have no sastraic information of a Vaisnava acarya resorting to a compromise on the origin of the jiva in the past, although Vaisnavas preached to Muslims (who rediscovered Greek philosophy before the Europeans, and whose religious beliefs are very similar to those of the Europeans). Again, no sabda.

To back up the logic of my presentation, I gave extensive quotes of sabda-pramana from Srila Prabhupada himself, in the form of excerpts from Renunciation Through Wisdom. They did not mention this fact anywhere in their book. Instead, they accused me of using insubstantial (non-sastraic) logic. It does not appear that they accept Srila Prabhupada's own explanatory essays as being on the same level as Vedic sastra.

The defects of "In Vaikuntha etc." have arisen because, of the two authors, one takes lessons in Sanskrit and philosophy from a pandita who is not in the line of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and the other is too fond of argument.

I am presently reading a translation by a disciple of Srila Prabhupada of Jaiva Dharma by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. I've only gotten through the first seven chapters, but already I have found a number of explanations that corroborate what we know from Srila Prabhupada about the jiva's original status as an eternal servant of Krsna prior to his entering material existence. Bhaktivinoda confirms that the jiva fell because of deliberately rejecting Krsna's service. He does not confirm that the jiva was for all eternity within the material world and never had a relationship with Krsna at all. It is very clear to me from this that Srila Prabhupada exactly followed Srila Bhaktivinoda's footsteps in his presentation of the jiva-tattva. Jiva-tattva is what Jaiva Dharma is all about.

Another point that should be mentioned is the duty a scholarly disciple has to the founder-acarya. Srila Madhvacarya, who revived the Brahma Sampradaya in the Kali Yuga, is still today considered in Indian philosophical circles as very revolutionary in his explanations of the Vedic knowledge. For instance, to confound the Mayavadis, he refuted their favorite slogan, tattvamasi (I am the same), by arguing that Sankaracarya quoted Chandogya 6.8.7 incorrectly. The correct quote according to Madhva is atattvamasi (I am not the same). This and other explanations are so bold as to be unique in history. Therefore in books about Indian philosophy written by non-Vaisnavas one often finds Madhvacarya being accused of introducing non-traditional ideas into Vedic philosophical discourse. Now, in the pre-Gaudiya history of the Brahma-Madhva Sampradaya, there are two great scholar-devotees after Madhva. These are Jayatirtha and Vyasatirtha. Madhva is the 5th prominent acarya in our disciplic line, followed by Jayatirtha (the 10th) and Vyasatirtha (the 17th). They are referred to as the muni-traya (three great sages) of the sampradaya before Madhavendra Puri (the 19th), who is the first Gaudiya acarya of the line. Jayatirtha and Vyasatirtha employed their unlimited knowledge of the sastra and their Sanskrit expertise in soundly defeating all those who criticized the writings of Madhva, their founder-acarya. They did not try to deflect criticisms of Madhva's "radical" explanations by half-hearted appeals to some special preaching strategy of his.

In this light, then, "In Vaikuntha etc." proves to be an annoying disservice to the bold presentation of the Founder-acarya of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada.

I have a question for you. Does this name you use have anything to do with the American slang expression I've sometimes heard, "happy camper"?

Comment by (erased object 1833)

March 25, 1995, 13:50 SWT

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my most humble obeisances -- all glories to Srila Prabhupada and his beloved representatives.

Thank you for this explanation. I very much appreciate your analysis of the origin of the falldown of "In Vaikuntha Not Even the Leaves Fall" --- that the Sankritist learned his craft outside the sampradaya of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, and that the English expert is just too argumentative. This is very interesting.

Regarding my name, I know what you mean. Recently I came across 2 examples of the phrase "happy camper." In an esoteric magazine, a man who was interviewed

to tell how he was abducted to another planet by a UFO said about the experience, "Believe me, I was not one happy camper!" In another magazine I saw an article about American prisoners of war that some people believe are still being held in captivity by the Vietnamese. The magazine printed a questionable photograph that these believers use as evidence. According to the US government, the 3 white men in the photo are not Americans, but Russians. A US government spokesman was quoted as saying, "All I see when I look at this picture are 3 fat, happy campers."

But actually in my case, Camper is an Anglicized version of Kaempfer. My father was a Prussian of that name from Danzig (now called Gdansk) who moved to Canada after the Second World War, where he changed his name to Camper. He didn't like the way people associated his name with "Mein Kampf". My first name is Hapgood, the name of a friend of my father in Halifax who helped him get established in "economic development" when he first arrived there. Shorten Hapgood to Hap, and you have Hap Camper, my material upadhi.

Your servant,

Bhakta Hap

PS: Anything to say about Aum Shinrikyu, the poison gas sect in Japan?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 25, 1995, 13:53 SWT

Who's heard of the Mad Gasser of Mattoon out there in Danda-land?

Comment by (erased object 1833)

March 25, 1995, 13:56 SWT

Oh, yes, Maharaja! The Mad Gasser of Mattoon is a VERY esoteric reference! I am impressed! He was something like a Midwestern USA Springheels Jack, only with poison gas that never left a trace.

This Aum Shinrikyu group seems to be in touch with similar inauspicious entities as were behind old Springheels and The Mad Gasser.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 25, 1995, 13:58 SWT

I think you are right about that. And of course there's Owl Man and The Jersey Devil ...

Comment by (erased object 1833)

March 25, 1995, 14:01 SWT

... what to speak of the Shaver Mystery.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 25, 1995, 14:04 SWT

Yes, the Shaver Mystery. What a study of borderline human psychosocial behavior that one is. One nut writes a strange letter to a science fiction magazine in the late forties, and suddenly there's a whole movement of people getting psychic messages from Deros, Teros and whatnot.

Comment by (erased object 1833)

March 25, 1995, 14:06 SWT

Richard Shaver was the visionary, and Ray Palmer was the promoter. Such people are certainly empowered by dark forces. So many, many weird happenings and weird movements out there in the world.

"World" comes from the Germanic roots "wer" (man) and "ald" (ancient). Such is the ancient and mysterious home of man. Language demonstrates that the root of human culture is inseparable from the root of the cosmos itself. The cosmos is indeed a geocentric chessboard, and mankind comprises the chessmen moved by powers of darkness and light that have guided our destiny since the beginning.

Ah! Xhoris, thou ancient pearl of the sea. Who dares to climb thy dusty pathways to don the armor of the dead? Who dares to enter thy labyrinth in search of ambrosia? And who dares to solve the riddle of the Antikythera Mechanism, and so reveal the destiny of men on earth that is inscribed in heaven and in hell?

Comment by Premarnava das

March 27, 1995

Hap, did you by chance take part in a confernce for the development of IT technology within the developing countries that took place September -94 in Copenhagen?

I remember one of the speakers that reminds me very much of you. Are you tall, thin, dark and have glasses?

TAROT CARDS

Question from (erased object 1833)

March 26, 1995, 12:34 SWT

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and his beloved representatives.

What about reading Tarot cards as a means of self-analysis, prophecy and spiritual development? Tarot is very respected in European and American esoteric circles. Often people with such interests are also attracted to Krsna consciousness, at least out of curiosity. Would it be adviseable to preach to them on the basis of Tarot, since Tarot is also derived from Vedic and Vaisnava culture? As evidence for this claim, I quote the following.

From the "Encyclopedia of Tarot" by S.R. Kaplan

[Page 18]

"Some writers believe the earliest cards are derived from images of the Indian deity Vishnu, the preserver of the world and one of the three great names for God, the other two names being Brahma, creator of the world, and Siva, its destroyer. Vishnu is depicted in Indian art with four hands holding four objects - a lotus, mace, conch and discus - that are sometimes associated with the four suits. Additionally, Vishnu has ten traditional avatars, nine past and one, Kalki, the White Horse, yet

to come, and these ten avatars correspond numerically to the ten sephiroth in the Tree of Life as well as to the ten pip cards in each suit. Early Indian playing cards contain either eight or ten suits to a set and each suit comprises twelve cards, consisting of numerals 1 to 10 plus two court cards. The suit signs of the ten-suited pack are similar to the ten incarnations or avatars of Vishnu.

"Michel Constant Leber, writing around 1842, believed that some of the Major Arcana cards were derived from early Eastern idols and symbols that subsequently changed under the influence of Christian dogma. Thus, Vishnu, the Indian deity, became Le Pape, the head of the Catholic Church; La Maison di Dieu replaced an oriental pagoda; and the cloaked L'ermite was derived from a Muslim dervish. One of the androgynous Hindu deities is known as Ardhanari; one-half of the god is Siva and the other half is his wife of many names. This composite god has four arms: Siva holds in his hands a cup or drum (damaru) and a wand or trident, while behind him sits a bull; his wife holds a sword and circular ring or shield, and crouched behind her is a tiger. Thus the four objects held by Ardhanari are similar to the four suits in playing cards. In Hindu mythology the wife or sakti of Siva was also known as Bhairavi, the redoubtable; Ambika, the progenitor; Sati, the perfect wife; Gauri, the brilliant; and Durga, the inaccessible who had ten arms."

Also on the same page the ancient Indian game of chess (chaturanga) is described and its symbolism explained in terms of Hindu philosophy. Samuel Weller Singer, writing in 1816, proposed to show that cards were invented by Hindustanis, probably as an extension or alteration of the game of chess.

If all this is true, wouldn't this mean that Tarot is a Vedic science that should be revived by ISKCON, in the sense that devotees can re-establish the true meaning and use of Tarot? Perhaps the BBT should print a deck of Tarot cards using the original forms of the Dasavatara. These could be copyrighted as True Tarot. And the BBT could provide a Krsna conscious manual for their use.

Thank you for considering this question.

Your servant,

Bh Hap Camper

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 26, 1995, 12:40 SWT

I don't doubt that Tarot's origins can be traced to India. Western astrology is a similar offshoot of Vedic science. The problem is that Vedic and Vaisnava sciences are meant to be used by brahmanas. Prabhupada said that his mission was to establish brahmanas in a headless society. The essential contribution of the brahmanas is to act as the head and mouth of the Lord by speaking spiritual knowledge, give direction to society how to fulfill the human mission, and also to accept charity on behalf of the Lord. These are paratattva (spiritual) duties of the brahmanas, and these actually establish the genuine brahmana

social class. "Brahma-jnanititi brahmana" -- a brahmana is one who has brahma-jnana, spiritual knowledge.

Astrology, tarot and so much other Vedic knowledge comprises aparatattva (material knowledge). These have their place, no doubt. There's a purport in the 3rd Canto chapter about Kardama Muni's renunciation in which Srila Prabhupada explains the importance of marriage arrangements between compatible partners, and how astrology was employed for that purpose. Yet these things are not essential. Just see: astrology and Tarot are still practiced in the West, but spiritual culture is lost.

Regarding preaching from Tarot cards, this sounds like a recipe for a good evening's entertainment. But I think the transmission of spiritual knowledge would be severely hampered in such a circumstance, unless the preacher was extraordinarily intelligent and convincing. Fortune tellers, therapists, astrologers and so on are just servants of people's karma. The demigods are likewise servants of our karma; people worship demigods not to get free of karma, but to speed up good reactions and slow down bad reactions. The same motive is there in those who visit fortune tellers and such.

You lived in North America for most of your life, so you may have heard of Paul Winchell and Jerry Mahoney. These were TV entertainers. Paul was a ventriloquist. Jerry was his dummy. Yet their exchange was so lifelike, you forgot that Jerry Mahoney was just a big wooden-headed doll sitting on Paul's lap. Tarot card readers and astrologers do not occupy a role conducive to preaching. Their role is more like that of Jerry Mahoney--they just reflect the karma of the ventriloquist.

Text by Premarnava das

March 28, 1995, 09:35 SWT

Subject: The Secret is out....

What's your comment on that one, Hap?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 28, 1995, 12:40 SWT

Subject: Enough is enough

This conference is slipping out of control. Some of the senior members have sent in private letters of complaint. So everybody calm down now. I want to get (Have) Danda (Will Travel) back to its original Krsna conscious mood. Which was not unfunny. But it can't be totally looney, either.

Bhakta Hap Camper has a private COM address. If anyone wants to debate him further, do it there.

Hap, you are forbidden to write any more off-the-wall texts into this conference. Your last one, with the quotes, was not too bad as a response to the utterly <<bananas>> texts that Premarnava Prabhu imported into Danda. But enough is enough.

MEMORY

Text by Suhotra Swami

March 28, 1995

A great memory does not make a mind, any more than a dictionary is a piece of literature. A dog is not considered a good dog because he is a good barker. A man is not considered a good man because he is a good talker. Culture is to

remember and speak the best that has been thought and said in the history of the world: katha eva kathasu saram, the essence of all topics, Krsna katha. Saram means essence. Even if one remembers only a drop of that essence, his memory is perfectly cultivated, because as it is said, "One drop of the ocean of divine nectar would drown the whole world." As the soil, however rich it may be, cannot be productive without cultivation, so the memory without culture can never produce good fruit.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

March 28, 1995

Subject: The recent madness has been consigned to the Oblivion conference ...

...by the vigilant sysop. Those texts are no longer accessible through the Danda conference.

RELATED COMMENT ON HUBBARD JUNK

Text by Suhotra Swami

March 29, 1995

Today I read that download of that internet bulletin on the "secret scripture" junk of L Ron Hubbard. It goes without saying that it is completely bonkers. But it is also interesting to note that Hubbard seems to have tapped into the same sort of astral "space-opera" as did one Richard Shaver. I'll try to avoid a too-detailed explanation, but the Shaver Mystery, as it is commonly called, predates Scientology by a good many years. It started in the late '40's when Ray Palmer, the editor of a US science fiction magazine, publicized the "racial memories" of Mr. Shaver which Palmer happened to find in a waste paper basket in his magazine's office. His assistant editor had thrown Shaver's letter in the trash, considering it lunacy. But Palmer was intrigued by Shaver's story (full of cryptic jargon not unlike Hubbard's) about the hidden history of Planet Earth involving Teros (deva-like spacemen) and Deros (demons who live below the earth, who operate magic-tech machinery to harrass humanity). Human beings were supposedly cultured millions of years ago by the Teros. Now, according to Shaver, the Teros are somewhere in space, and we are left at the mercy of the evil Deros and their underground mind-warping ray projectors. Palmer rewrote Shaver's letter as a 30 000 word article entitled "I Remember Lemuria!" that he published in the next issue of his 'zine. It sent shockwaves all across the United States, bringing in many thousands of letters of reader response. Typically, these people claimed to have similar insights, memories and even direct contact with the Deros and Teros. Thus the Shaver Mystery was born. It lasted well into the 50's, and then faded away. But by that time, Hubbard (who had been a science fiction hack) had started his Dianetics movement. There was also another early '50's science fiction writer named Philip K. Dick who tapped into a similar mystical/technical quasi religious state of mind. He didn't start a cult, but he wrote what are celebrated today as "cult" stories. One of his last books was called VALIS, which presented an autobiographical account of Dick's sci-fi religious hallucinations. Clearly, it could have become "scripture" like Hubbard's had Dick not been too psychologically broken to try seeking popularity as a cult leader. A very popular Hollywood film, Blade Runner, was based on a PK Dick story.

Anyway ... I just wanted to say that Hubbard's genre is not unique, and he is not the first in this line. It is just weirdness, of course, but it is powerful weirdness that seems to have burst out all at once in the late '40's -- from somewhere down below. Along with the flying saucer phenomena, it would appear.

Comment by Jahnu das

March 29, 1995

I just love your comments and clear insight, Maharaja.

HELL

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das

April 9, 1995

Is it possible that a fallen devotee goes to hell?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 10, 1995

Yes. Srila Prabhupada said that. There is also a prayer in Nectar of Devotion offered to the Lord by a devotee in hell. And there is the famous SB verse spoken by Lord Siva regarding Maharaja Citraketu, which states svarga pavarga narakesu, whether a devotee is in heaven, earth or hell, he sees them with the same vision. So that certainly confirms that a devotee may go to hell. Maharaja Citraketu's being cursed to be a demon was a hellish punishment. Maharaja Indradyumna's being cursed to be an elephant was another hellish punishment. Maharaja Yudisthira actually had to descend into hell, Prabhupada said because he hesitated to tell a lie for Krsna's sake. The point of the svarga pavarga narakesu verse is that even in hell, as in heaven or in earth, a real devotee does not forget Krsna. And so although by his offenses and misfortune he may end up in hell, such a devotee is actually transcendental to the hellish condition.

Comment by Mahanidhi das

April 10, 1995

I might have wrong conclusion, but to me it seems that the question has some conection with the text in the Q&A (Harikesa Swami) conference, posted just prior to that, and where the answer was "no".

Some who are members of both conferences might be a bit confused by appearent contraversy in answers.

Comment by Manidhara das

April 10, 1995

....sorry for getting involved, but this type of "controversial" questioning and connecting these two conferences in such an brainless way is a sign of very poor intelligence and bad vaisnava etikette. Lets hope that only Sriman Mahanidhi das gets confused and nobody else.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

April 10, 1995

Subject: Hell & fallen devotees

It is not constructive to frame questions in such a way as to elicit apparent contradictions.

Anyway, what is meant by a fallen devotee? And what is meant by hell? Certainly there is sastric evidence of devotees who received hellish punishment (Citraketu, Indradyumna, and even Maharaja Yudisthira). They are not "fallen"

devotees, but I gave them as examples to underscore what Srila Prabhupada said more than once, that such examples ought to be taken by us as lessons of the risks involved when one commits offenses. If exalted devotees such as these can get into trouble, how careful should we be?

Srila Prabhupada commented on a disciple's poem by saying that he should not have referred to himself as Krsna's devotee, because it is very a rare thing to be a devotee of Krsna. Rather he should have referred to himself as Krsna's servant, because every living entity can make that claim.

So again, what do you mean by fallen DEVOTEE? Perhaps you mean Ajamila.

Ajamila was saved from hell because he chanted "Narayana" as the Yamadutas approached him. Afterwards Yamaraja forbade his servants from touching DEVOTEES who "even if by mistake or because of bewilderment or illusion . . . sometimes commit sinful acts," because "they are protected from sinful reactions because they always chant the Hare Krsna mantra."

Yamaraja then told the Yamadutas:

"Paramahamsas are exalted persons who have no taste for material enjoyment and who drink the honey of the Lord's lotus feet. My dear servants, bring to me for punishment only persons who are averse to the taste of that honey, who do not associate with paramahamsas and who are attached to family life and worldly enjoyment, which form the path to hell.

"My dear servants, please bring to me only those sinful persons who do not use their tongues to chant the holy name and qualities of Krsna, whose hearts do not remember the lotus feet of Krsna even once, and whose heads do not bow down even once before Lord Krsna. Send me those who do not perform their duties toward Visnu, which are the only duties in human life. Please bring me all such fools and rascals."

Dare we assume that we are in the same category as Ajamila? Dare we presume that if we commit sinful acts that we may not fall into the category of persons fit to be snatched by the Yamadutas and taken off to hell?

One of Srila Prabhupada's first disciples, who became the first chief editor of BTG, left ISKCON in the late '60's and became immersed in sense gratification. In the '70's he wrote a letter to Srila Prabhupada offering to return to ISKCON and resume his editorial work on the condition that he would not be able to refrain from illicit sex. Prabhupada was in London when he received this letter, and after reading it he took massage. His Holiness Trivikrama Maharaja, who was massaging Prabhupada, innocently asked, "So, Srila Prabhupada, how is _____ [who wrote the letter] doing?" Prabhupada answered with great force, "He is going to hell!"

Another time, according to Giriraja Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada said inquiries into how a devotee may avoid hellish reactions for his offenses reveal an intent to commit offenses. So I would not advise the members of this conference to pursue this question. Rather, we should avoid carefully offenses and the risk of hellish punishment that one can suffer from them.

Comment by Mahanidhi das

April 10, 1995

please accept my humble obeisances

I wrote my previous text in a hurry (and foolishly), so it came out so clumsy and "square", but with no intention to agitate anybody in this conference, at least. But that has happened, and I am sorry for that.

I especially ought to be very careful, since I already have on my back a big pile of "reputation" over "contraversary confusions" and so on, it is simply adding up so smoothly.

Comment by Bhagavat Dharma das

April 10, 1995

Dear Guru Maharaja,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Sorry for creating so much trouble. It is so that I heard Your class from last year in Krakow. Then I read that text. I asked the question in order to complete my own understanding. I was not intending to confuse any one with my incomplete question. Thank You for the clear answer.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

April 10, 1995

No problem. But we should be careful, as you say.

I knew your intention was not to make trouble. My comments were general ones, for everybody.

IN VITRO

Question from Pracarananda das

April 10, 1995

I would like to ask you about the in vitro conception - bearing children in tubes. It is a hot issue now in Poland, and I was asked at a class about it.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 10, 1995

You should ask a more specific question about this. What should I say about it?

IN VITRO REVISITED

Question from Pracarananda das

April 14, 1995

The discussion that is going on in the Polish media is between the catholic pro-life activists and the majority of media who consider the in-vitro method of conception to be the only way to help families who cannot have children. The problem with this method, from the ethical view, is that they usually take a few ovums, concept all of them, but use only one, throwing all other away.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 14, 1995

They are less than sudras, trying to do things that only great brahmanas of the ancient past could do. Thus they commit so many sins. Throwing away fertilized ovums is just another type of abortion.

CAITANYA UPANISAD

Question from Mukhya dd
April 11, 1995

I have heard that this book was discovered by Bhaktivinoda Thakur. Could you tell something more about it? Does it belong to the 108 Upanisads? Does it describe exclusively Lord Caitanya? How was it discovered by Srila Bhaktivinoda?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 11, 1995

The Upanisads are philosophical explanations of the Vedas. Different upanisads are associated with each of the 4 Vedas; the Caitanyopanisad is associated with the Atharva Veda. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura had heard from Vaisnavas in Bengal about the Caitanyopanisad, but there were no copies of it available because it was so rare. He personally looked all over Bengal for an extant edition, to no avail. Finally the Thakura was given the Caitanyopanisad by a Vaisnava pandita named Madhusudana das Mahasaya, who lived in the town of Sambalapura. Madhusudana das translated the Sanskrit verses into Bengali, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura wrote a commentary to these verses called Sri-Caitanya-caranamrta. This edition of Caitanyopanisad was printed on the Thakura "Yantra" press in Calcutta, and was an immediate sellout.

Mataji Mukhya dd also asked if the Caitanyopanisad is exclusively about Lord Caitanya. The answer is yes.

Comment by Mukhya dd

April 12, 1995

Do the Gaura mantra that second initiated Gaudiya Vaisnava chant, originate from the Caitanyopanisad? I vaguely remember something to this effect, but I am not sure if it is true.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 12, 1995

I do not have the Caitanyaopanisad handy. A translation has been published, probably by Kusakratha das (Krsna Institute, Los Angeles). You'll have to check this out yourself.

THE TRUE INTELLECTUAL

Questions from Cit Sakti das
April 20, 1995

1) *In Czech lecture with Manidhara Prabhu arised question who is really an intelectual and how we can recognize him. Manidhara Prabhu recomended to ask you for complete answer.*

2) *In the Bg.2.47 in the puport SP is explaining that prescribed duties can be fitted into 3 subdivisions: routhine work, emergency work and desired activities. What means desired activities and whot to do with them in practical life in the Krsna counsciousness?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 21, 1995

The true intellectual is the devotee who engages his buddhi (intelligence) in Krsna's service. This is called buddhi-yoga. It is explained in such gita verses as 2.39, 2.41, 2.44, 2.49 2.51, 2.52, 2.53, and 18.57.

"Desired activities" may have a mundane or transcendental context. In the mundane context, if a husband and wife of the higher order desire a child, they will perform garbhadhana-samskara. In the transcendental context, a devotee may desire a particular perfection in devotional service. For instance, in NOD there is mention of a lady devotee who desired Krsna as her husband. To this end, she danced all night for the pleasure of the Lord.

EUTHANASIA

*Question from Kurma das
April 21, 1995*

*Dear Suhotra Swami,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.*

In the Australian media Euthanasia has become a hot topic.

Could you enlighten us with any information re the Vedic view of this subject?

Obviously Euthanasia in its grossest form is akin to homicide but what of a terminally ill devotee fasting until death or refusing medication? What about Srila Prabhupada's departure in relation to his non-consumption of food? Its a good time for the devotees here to come out and present a well rounded Krsna conscious viewpoint. Can you help?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
April 23, 1995

Here are three statements about euthenasia or mercy killing from Srila Prabhupada.

(1)

Srila Prabhupada: They say, "Oh, it is better to kill him than to give him so much pain." That theory is coming in communist countries. An old man--grandfather--is suffering, so better to kill him. And there--in Africa there is a class of men who make a festival by killing their great-grandfathers. Is it not? Yes.

Syamasundara: They eat them?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. [Syamasundara laughs.] Yes?

(2)

Himavati: But then if you think further, that is that if you are going to make a program to feed the animals in your house, then won't more and more animals come into your residence? Suppose I feed these rats and I go on feeding them. Won't more and more rats come?

Prabhupada: Well, the rats will be fed. Either you give or not, it will steal. So that is not the problem. But if you give them food, they will... Of course, that is Western philosophy, that because the animals are increasing, they should be killed. We Indians also, we have taken that view--because we cannot give protection to the cows, they must be sent to the slaughterhouse. That is the modern view. But that is not injunction of the Vedas. The Vedas says that everyone has right to live, every living entity. That is going on not only in consideration of the animals, even in human beings. Just like the Americans, they were all Europeans, and they entered this American land, killed so many red Indians. So these kind of things are going on, but that does not mean that is the law. You killed so many red Indians for your benefit, but you have to suffer

for that. So that... This is going on in the human society, but that does not mean it is dharma. No. Dharma means you have to abide by the regulation given by the Vedas. You have to adjust things. Sometimes in Africa the man-eaters, they kill their grandfather, make a feast. The Russians also, they maintain such theory, that old men, they should be neglected. I have heard. I do not know. They become burden. But that is not Vedic injunction.

Himavati: But isn't that natural, just like no one wants to keep an old bull in the barn?

Prabhupada: Yes. These things are man-manufactured. Dharman tu saksad bhagavat pranitam. Therefore we have to accept the words of Narayana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is dharma.

(3)

So they are very... Householder, this is meant for the householder especially. This is ideal householder, that guru, agni, atithi, vrddhanam. Old man also should be taken care of. Nowadays the philosophy is coming: "mercy-killing." "Old men should be killed to show him mercy." Because he is burden in the society, the communistic theory.... "Old man does not do anything and simply eats; therefore to show him mercy he should be killed." "Mercy-killing." Just see the philosophy, "Killing is mercy." But this is going on. "Mercy-killing." Is that? "Mercy-killing"? What is that? Huh?

Brahmananda: They kill someone for that person's benefit.

Prabhupada: Benefit. So the man killer, will he take that benefit? If somebody comes that "I shall kill you for your benefit," that he will be afraid of, but he is philosophising, "mercy-killing." This is going on. So one should be respectful also to the old men. According to Vedic knowledge, brahmana, old men, child, woman, and cow--they have no fault. They are free. They are not within this jurisdiction of law. So therefore cow-killing, brahmana-killing, woman-killing, and elderly-person-killing, they are accepted as the great sinful activities.

The above 3 references put euthanasia into the Vedic perspective. But it seems to me that your question is not really about euthenasia. If a devotee refuses medication or fasts until he leaves his body, (1) he is doing it to himself, not to another person, and (2) he is doing in preparation for going back home, Back to Godhead, not to get free of bodily distress. Such a devotee knows that it is time for him to leave this world. So why continue maintain the body? This is not the same as suicide. It is not done as a means of getting free of a painful condition of life. That is specifically defined by Lord Caitanya as "harrassment" of the Supreme Lord. There is a story illustrating this very point narrated by Locan das Thakura in his Caitanya Mangala, about a South Indian brahmana who vowed to commit suicide in the presence of Lord Jagannatha because he could not endure his extreme poverty any longer. Lord Caitanya became very unhappy with this person.

I don't know what cases are under discussion in Australia, but in the US there is a doctor named Kerkorian (or something like that) who has build a rolling suicide laboratory in the back of a van. People who are terminally ill and suffering greatly from the disease call him, and he puts them in his van, sticks a needle in their arm, and tells them to press a button that will inject a powerful drug into their bloodstream that brings on unconsciousness and death. These unfortunate people think that death is the end of all suffering, so if death is made as painless as possible, that's the best way to go. "The best death" for a karmi is to die in peaceful sleep (total ignorance, in other words). But there is a next life which is determined by the thoughts of our last moments in this life. It doesn't také much imagination to envision where an unconscious person will end up in his next birth.

You can't compare such an artificial contrivance as Dr. Kerkorian's suicide van, which is aimed at smothering pain with ignorance and which exemplifies the philosophy of souless atheism, with a devotee's preparing himself to go back

home, Back to Godhead by renouncing food and medication and simply absorbing himself in the hearing and chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord.

GURU-TATTVA

*Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
April 26, 1995*

I just finished reading the ISKCON Journal No.1 from 1990 dealing with ritvik issue. It is very instructive. There is the concept of guru-tattva mentioned several times with suggestion that GBC should publish a paper regarding this concept.

Is there any such resolution? If not, could you please present siddhanta of our sampradaya about it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
April 26, 1995

GBC Resolution 104 of 1990 was passed in direct connection with the edition of ISKCON Journal that you mention. But this resolution does not present a definition of guru-tattva. It is an invitation to three devotees who espoused the "rtvik" philosophy to associate with the North American GBC members, so that they might Berger understand guru-tattva according to the teachings of the sampradaya.

Guru-tattva (the philosophy of the spiritual master) is a vast subject. How can it not be, since the guru represents the teachings of Srila Vyasadeva in both principle and practice. The edition of ISKCON Journal you mention was focused particularly on the tattva of the diksa-guru, who links the disciple to the guru-parampara. The "rtvik" philosophers deny the need of a diksa guru. They say that someone can even now become a direct disciple of Srila Prabhupada by means of rtvik initiation. The so-called rtvik guru is not a diksa guru, because he does not take responsibility for the disciple. He performs a ceremony and gives a name, but the connection is to Srila Prabhupada, not to him. The disciple does not consider the rtvik initiator to be his spiritual master. When asked, "Who is your guru?", he answers, "Srila Prabhupada."

There is a Sripat (important Gaudiya Vaisnava temple established by a personified branch of the Caitanya tree) in Bengal where a decree made by Srila Virabhadra Sena is kept. Virabhadra Sena is the son of Lord Nityananda and the incarnation of Ksirodakasayi Visnu. The decree was written down by Srila Srinivasa Acarya. This decree excommunicates a brahmana disciple of a Gaudiya spiritual master. That spiritual master came from a simple background, and his brahmana disciple, being caste-conscious, would not acknowledge him as his spiritual master. Rather, that brahmana would claim to be the disciple of his spiritual master's spiritual master. Virabhadra Sena declared that the mercy comes to a disciple through his diksa spiritual master, and to jump over the initiator is a great offense. Thus this brahmana was banished from the sampradaya.

The "rtviks" of today use a very similar rationale as did that brahmana. Their view of guru-tattva is never approved by the bona fide Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Their view is approved only in apasampradayas. For instance, in Bengal today there is a movement founded by one Anukula Candra Thakura. Anukula Candra is dead, but he continues "to initiate" through so-called rtviks, exactly as the rtvik philosophers lately associated with ISKCON recommend. This Anukula Candra is by no means a bona fide Gaudia Vaisnava. He is a kind of Sahajiya who was supposedly an incarnation of God. His followers are fish eaters.

A footnote to the previous text:

It should be noted that Srila Prabhupada did appoint rtvik gurus to initiate on his behalf during his manifest pastimes on this planet. There were several senior sannyasis who chanted on the Brada and selected the names of Prabhupada's initiates as early as 1974. In 1977, Srila Prabhupada selected 11 rtviks to initiate devotees on his behalf; they were to become "regular gurus" after his departure, and thereafter the devotees they initiated would become their own disciples. These were Prabhupada's clear instructions.

The so-called rtvik philosophers have interpreted his instructions in another way. They argue--on no tangible evidence whatsoever--that Prabhupada meant the eleven to remain rtviks even after his departure. This conception has been termed "the philosophy of posthumous rtvik initiation." The first dictionary definition of the word "posthumous" is, "denoting a child born after the father's death." Thus the rtvik philosophers argue that Srila Prabhupada will continue to father spiritual children via rtvik initiation even after his departure. But this is their own concoction. Such an idea is not reflected in Srila Prabhupada's own instructions.

So the point of departure between Prabhupada's rtvik system and that proposed by the so-called rtvik philosophers is precisely the point of departure of Srila Prabhupada from this mortal world. After Prabhupada departed, the rtvik system of initiation that he established during his manifest pastimes came to an end--by his own order, in accordance with the system of guru-parampara.

LORD BRAHMA

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
May 1, 1995

I have some questions about Lord Brahma: Does Lord Brahma ever fight demons? Is he carrying any weapons? We see the account of demons or others like Daksa attack or offend Lord Siva. Is there also such accounts about Lord Brahma?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
May 2, 1995

According to Mahabharata Adi Parva 224.23, the Gandiva bow was formerly Lord Brahma's. He gave Lord Siva a sword (MB Santiparva 166.45). But because Lord Brahma is the original brahmana of this universe, he does not engage in combat with weapons like the ksatriyas. He blesses others with celestial weapons. As far as I know, he rarely fights with anyone.

There is a narration in the Padma Purana of a dispute between Lord Brahma and Lord Siva. In this controversy, Brahma created a powerful warrior named Svedaja to fight for him. Since he is the creator of all living entities, why should he have to fight himself?

EGOISTIC PRINCIPLE SAMBU

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
May 16, 1995

In Brahma-samhita 16, purport by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta is mentioned "egotistic principle Sambhu" with regard to soul coming to the material world. What does it mean?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 18, 1995

Sambhu is a form of Siva who expands from Lord Sankarsana as He glances at the Maya-sakti. Siva, the tamo-guna avatara, enshrines all the jivas who emanate from Lord Sankarsana in ahankara (false ego), which is produced of ignorance. Verses 8-10 of the Br.S. describe the "shrine" that bears the jivas on their way to Maya as *linga*. *Linga* means "divine halo," "masculine symbol" or "male generating organ." This is the Sivalinga, so widely worshiped in India. This *linga* unites with the *yoni* (female generating organ) of Prakrti to impregnate the jiva-souls into the material energy. Due to being enshrined in egoism, these jivas think themselves the lords of the material world.

DHRUVALOKA

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das

June 1, 1995

In the CC Adi. 5.22 purport 25th paragraph it is mentioned: "A purified materialist who has performed many sacrifices, undergone severe penances etc. can reach such planets as Druvaloka, and if he becomes still more qualified there, he can penetrate still higher orbits and pass through the navel of the universe to reach Maharloka..." Isn't it that Dhruvaloka is a spiritual planet, and Maharloka a material one? How can an advanced materialist go to a spiritual planet? Can you please elaborate on this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 6, 1995

In contrast to the information about the position of Dhruvaloka that is given in the purport you have cited, we find the following statement in the purport of SB 2.2.22.

>>The topmost planetary systems consist of planets like Brahmaloaka and Dhruvaloka (the polestar), and all of them are situated betone Maharloka.<<

Regarding who is eligible to enter Dhruvaloka, in the purport to Bg. 18.71 Srila Prabhupada writes as follows.

>>Those who are righteous in performing devotional service but who are not pure can attain the planetary system of the polestar, or Dhruvaloka, where Dhruva Maharaja is presiding. He is a great devotee of the Lord, and he has a special planet, which is called the polestar.<<

But in SB 4.9.29, we find the following.

>>Dhruva Maharaja was offered Dhruvaloka, a planet that was never resided upon by any conditioned soul. Even Brahma, although the topmost living creature within this universe, was not allowed to enter the Dhruvaloka.<<

And in SB 4.12.27, we find this sentence.

>>Sisumara or Dhruvaloka can never be reached by anyone but the Vaisnavas, as will be described by the following slokas.<<

All I can say is that Dhruvaloka is a very special place. It seems that only specially selected Vaisnavas may enter there; but it also seems that these select devotees need not be completely pure (even though Dhruvaloka is said in the purport of SB 4.9.20-21 to be an eternal place in the Kingdom of God like Svetadvipa, Mathura and Dvaraka). The purport to SB 4.12.39 states that all

other planets encircle the polestar, or Dhruvaloka. The sastric references outsider of Srila Prabhupada's books that are available to me confirm this. I don't see any point to speculate further on this topic.

NARADHAMAS

Question from Ramapriya das

June 2, 1995

In Bhagavad-gita 7.15, purport, Srila Prabhupada explains how 99,9 Prozent of population are naradhamas. When the whole population becomes naradhamas naturally all there so-called education (in german BG Fortschritt) is made null and void by the all powerful energy of physical nature. Does that mean that all there so-called education and advancement is based on the activities of the 0,1 prozent which are not naradhamas or devotees? In other words can they only progress cause there are devotees on the planet? Is this translation education into Fortschritt mistranslated?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 6, 1995

The way in which the *naradhamas* are considered advanced is explained a little earlier in the same purport you have cited from.

>>Out of the 8,400,000 different species of living beings, there are 400,000 human species. Out of these there are numerous lower forms of human life that are mostly uncivilized. The civilized human beings are those who have regulative principles of social, political and religious life. Those who are socially and politically developed but who have no religious principles must be considered naradhamas. Nor is religion without God religion, because the purpose of following religious principles is to know the Supreme Truth and man's relation with Him. In the Gita the Personality of Godhead clearly states that there is no authority above Him and that He is the Supreme Truth. The civilized form of human life is meant for man's reviving the lost consciousness of his eternal relation with the Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead Sri Krsna, who is all-powerful. Whoever loses this chance is classified as a naradhama.<<

So a naradhama is one who is socially and politically advanced but who does not choose to take up Krsna consciousness. I don't really see the point of your question as to whether the naradhamas are advanced because of the presence of devotees on the planet. Lord Caitanya explained to Rupa Gosvami about how the living entities make progress.

All the stages up to the point of taking up Krsna consciousness are a natural progression, or evolution, of the soul in material consciousness. Finally, at a certain stage of development, the Libiny entity gets the opportunity to *choose* to take up Krsna consciousness. Before that point of choosing Krsna or maya, whatever progress he makes is only material progress, which is the arrangement of karma.

AHAM BRAHMASMI

Question from Ramapriya das

June 2, 1995

Could you please explain the different steps how the living entity as a devotee realizes that it is brahman or spirit soul. And could you please explain the difference between the brahman realization in a personal and an impersonal understanding.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 6, 1995

I covered these areas quite extensively in an earlier exchange with Gopinatha das. To answer your question, I would just end up citing the same quotations again. So please just look into the log of Danda texts for Gopinatha's question about "real" Brahman realization, and my answers.

DEPARTED SOULS

Questions from Rohita das

June 4, 1995

1. In SB 3.20 there is a description of Brahma's creating various forms of life. Whenever Brahma created some form of life, he gave up his body afterwards. Srila Prabhupada then writes that it was the mentality in which he had been acting what he gave up. Whenever he did like that, the body he had left took on some form, as for instance that of the evening twilight. Does it mean that when one is in a certain mental condition and then he gives it up, that thought is there in space in some subtle form and later on brings some reactions? Could you kindly tell me something about that?

2. It's also unclear to me what is the difference between Pitas, Sadhyas and ghosts. In SB 3.20.42 it is stated that Pitas and Sadhyas are invisible forms of departed souls, which are ghosts as well?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 6, 1995

1. I don't feel like getting too deeply into this mental stuff. My answer is very simple. We do not have a body or a mind like Brahma. And Prabhupada said there are no reactions for thoughts in the Kali Yuga.

2. The Sadhyas and Pitas are not ghosts. They are souls departed from human life who live in the celestial regions. The Pitas are known as the "forefathers." The Sadhyas are a kind of demigods.

GANDHARVAS

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

June 9, 1995

When editing SB 5.16.15 I learned that Gandharvas are busy with chanting glories of the demigods. Therefore I don't know why was Narada Muni in one of his past lives cursed because of doing so - SB 7.15.72. Is there any special reason for it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 9, 1995

It is explained in the purport of 7.15.72. Narada committed 2 offenses. These are the special reasons. There must be a special reason why you did not read the purport, or did not notice the mention of these 2 offenses.

TIME PERCEPTION

Questions from Rohita dasa

June 14, 1995

1) Please explain to me what does it mean that the soul absorbs himself in Brahman - this state is said to appear when one is grossly covered by the mode of ignorance, at which time the soul in the body is practically "inactive;" for instance in deep sleep or other unconscious states.

2) Further I'd like to ask you how is the state of consciousness related with time. I mean that sometimes one feels a long time having passed away as a moment, or else he considers a short time as an eternity.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 14, 1995

1) You are indicating a specific sort of Brahman absorption. Now, it could be said that one who is always remembering Krsna is absorbed in Brahman, because Krsna is the supreme Brahman. But you are concerned with the soul's entering the state of *susupti* (deep sleep). As is stated in gita, the material energy is also known as maha-brahman. This maha-brahman is the acit-sakti (energy of unconsciousness) of Lord Visnu, who resides in the heart as Paramatma. When one passes into dreamless sleep (total unconsciousness), that means the soul in the heart is merged into the the acit-sakti or maha-brahman of Paramatma.

2) Time in the material world is relative.

What follows is the accepted scientific explanation of the word "relativity:" in this material universe, nothing is at absolute rest, everything is in motion; so therefore when we wish to describe the relationships between things in this world, we must take into account that all things are in motion.

That taking into account of the motion of all material things is called relativity. For instance, according to relativity it is just as correct to say "the train is moving away from the station platform" as it is to say "the station platform is moving away from the train." This is so because it cannot be proven that the station platform is at absolute rest. Both train and platform are in constant motion, even when "at rest." So relativity describes such relationships mathematically; mathematics is actually defined at "the science of relationships." As we find in the SB 3rd Canto chapter about the calculation of time from the atom, "time" is marked according to relative motion. Every movement of one thing relative to another takes time. That gives even a neophyte a fix on Einstein's concept of "space-time." Time is motion through space. And this motion is relative. So one sense of relative is as I have explained, that you can say the train is moving away from the station, or you can say the station is moving from the train. So you can say "this period of pain seemed to last a long time" when according to your watch it was only 3 minutes; and you can say "this blissful visit to Vrndavana dhama seemed to be over in a few moments" when according to your watch it was 3 weeks. Your watch is not absolute. Whether 3 minutes is "short" or "long" or 3 weeks is "short" or "long" is a matter of point of view. The timespan of your whole life in that body is from one point of view just an instant. From another point of view it lasts for aeons.

PANCOPASANA

*Question from Bhaktin Lea
June 19, 1995*

In the purport of 2.3.24 it is said:

The system of panca-upasana, recommending five mental attitudes for the common man, is also enacted for this purpose, namely gradual development, worship of the superior that may be in the form of fire, electricity, the sun, the mass of living beings, Lord Siva and, at last, the impersonal Supersoul, the partial representation of Lord Visnu.

Why is the Supersoul impersonal?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 21, 1995

The pancopasana method of worship was prescribed by Sankaracarya to the smarta brahmanas. It is a puja program that conforms with Mayavadi philosophy. That is why Supersoul is impersonal.

PITRLOKA

*Question from Dharmasetu das
June 27, 1995*

Dear Suhotra Swami I want to ask you about the Pitriloka. Actually how to understand that our forefathers has their own planet, Pitriloka, since their souls are after death embodied in some other bodys (in one of the 8 400 000 species) and live accordingly? What is actually their destinations? And how they can become elevated on some higher planets if their descendents offer them pindas? For example, if the soul of my forefather is now in the body of a dog, how this person can get higher destinations if I offer him a Pinkas corectly throughout my lifetime? Please if you can clarify all this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 27, 1995

The offerings to forefathers are a regular part of the karma-kanda process within varnasrama-dharma. If a family follows varnasrama-dharma properly, generation after generation, there is no question of anyone becoming a dog. But if a mleccha family that follows no principles tries to offer pinda to a departed relative, it will have no effect, because they are too sinful. So you have to understand the cultural context.

Comment by Dharmasetu das

June 27, 1995

*Dear Suhotra Swami,
Please if you can answer if it is that all our forefathers automaticaly goes to the Pitriloka after leaving the body or they take birth according to their karma in the next life and in that way they don't go neccesarily to the Pitriloka since that is not their karma? I am confused if they take birth again (for example as animal, or insect) how can we still call them a forefathers since we can't offer them a pinda?*

Please if you can clarify this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 27, 1995

Your question is unclear to me. I thought I answered it before. But you've asked the same question again in a different way. I am going to drop this discussion.

CHRISTIANS

Question from Dharmasetu das

July 1, 1995

I have one question. Where are going the real christians after leaving the bodies. Is it Brahmaloaka since, s I've heard, they worship Lord Brahma, or it is something else?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 1, 1995

Real Christians go to Christ. And it seems, from what Srila Prabhupada indicated, that he descended from Brahmaloaka. But who those real Christians are, I don't know.

WORSHIP OF BRAHMA

Question from Rohita das

July 1, 1995

It is known that in India is worshiped Lord Visnu as well as many demigods but I have never heard about worship of Brahma. Could you please tell me anything about it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 1, 1995

No. With the loss of the Vedic culture, Brahma is not worshiped in Kali Yuga. Of course, our sampradaya worships him, but as acarya, not as demigod.

DEGRADATION AMONGST ANIMALS

Question from Mundita Mastaka das

July 8, 1995

It's stated in SB 1.13.50 purp: "...and the Lord either descends personally from His abode or deposes some of His devotees to remove the fallen condition of human society, or even animal society. Such disruptions take place not only in human society but also among animals, birds or other living beings, including the demigods in the higher planets."

Can you please elaborate on this. What does "disruptions among animals" mean? I heard that the animals don't violate the laws of nature.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 9, 1995

But if you think a little bit about the Lord's different incarnations, it is very clear. Lord Buddha came to save the innocent animals that were being

slaughtered by sinful brahmanas. Lord Ramacandra solved the disorder that Vali caused for the monkey-king Sugriva when Vali took away his wife and kingdom.

And so on. Especially in Rama-lila there are so many examples.

Ho-hum. Sure would be nice to get some real philosophical questions again. (Yawn.)

SUN-GOD

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
July 10, 1995

Could you please elaborate on this text from the SB 12.11.28: "In the course of the sun's orbit there are twelve months and in each of the 12 months a different sun-God and a different set of his six associates preside." Does this mean that there are many sun-Gods in charge even in one year? Or this is not meant with the earthly years?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 11, 1995

There are twelve Adityas (sons of Aditi) who serve in the post of Surya throughout the period of one year. This fact is indicated in the purport to 1.12.21, where Srila Prabhupada mentions the "Adityas from the sun globe."

Each Aditya is accompanied in his chariot by an apsara, a rsi, a celestial serpent, a yaksa, an asura, and a gandharva, and these also change every month. The rsi chants Vedic hymns, the gandharva sings, the apsara dances, the Yaksa holds the bridle, the asura acts as the guard and the serpent tends the horses and the chariot. The actual power that transforms an Aditya into Suryadeva is the power of Lord Visnu, which is His parasakti in the form of the three Vedas. Visnu Purana Amsa 2 Chapter 11 says that the power of Visnu is located in the solar chariot, and when the seven officers of the chariot (i.e. the Aditya, rsi, apsara etc.) enter it to begin their monthly duty, the Lord's power pervades them.

JIVAS DURING BRAHMA'S NIGHT

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
July 11, 1995

Could you please tell where are the jivas situated during Lord Brahma's night? I have found different infos about it: Bg.8.19 - "merged in the body of Visnu"; SB 2.6.11p. - "merged in the belly of virat-rupa or (later in purp.) Lord"; Beyond Birth and Death, Ch.4 and Isopanisad 14 - "merged in water (waters of devastation, respectively).

SB 2.5.10p. says "Our Brahma is younger than Brahmas in other universes." Does it mean that also our whole universe is younger than others? Are there any concerning references in sastra?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 12, 1995

From SB 3.8.14 and Br Samhita 5.22, we learn that the living entities are merged into the stem of the lotus that sprouts from the navel of Lord Visnu. The lotus grows from the Lord's navel-lake, so the stem is under that water. The stem is

connected to the Lord's body. And Br Sam. 5.22 says the lotus is non-different from the living entities which Brahma regards as his own body. So it is simultaneously correct to say that during the period of devastation the jivas are merged into Visnu, the lotus, under water, and within Brahma.

HIRANYAKASIPU

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
July 20, 1995

In the SB 8.19.12 it is mentioned that, since Hiranyakasipu was not able to find Visnu, he became convinced that Visnu is dead. In SB 7.2.38-40, when Hiranyakasipu was narrating the story of King Sujajna, he mentions often about the protective potency of the SPG (Isa). Are we to understand that at this point Hiranyakasipu was not an atheist?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 20, 1995

He thought that Visnu is a post held by a jiva, like any other demigod post. Therefore he thought himself so powerful that he could kill Visnu. His philosophy was exactly like that of the Mayavadis who follow Sankaracarya. When Brahman is covered by Maya, first Isa or Isvara appears from theaterial mode of goodness. Then other living entities appear. But all are conditioned by Maya, and all are subject to annihilation.

Comment by Labangalatika dd
July 21, 1995

What does "theaterial mode of goodness" mean?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 21, 1995

That was supposed to read "the material mode of goodness." But I was typing online, and something happened to the space and the m.

MAHISASURA

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
July 25, 1995

In SB 6.7.39p. is stated: "...and Mahisasura was a devotee of Goddess Durga."

According one story I remember Mahisasura fought with Durgadevi as his ultimate rival on his way to become the most powerful being in the universe. Srila Prabhupada mentions briefly this incident in following quotations:

Prabhupada's Lectures

Srimad-Bhagavatam 1976

760228SB.MAY

Maya is very strong. You have seen the picture of Maya, Durgadevi, and the Mahisasura is fighting, very strong, just like Hiranyakasipu. There are many asuras. So Mahisa... Sometimes Krsna Himself comes to kill the asura, or sometimes His agent, Maya, Durgadevi, kills.

Evening Darshan

Mayapur, February 24, 1977

770224ED.MAY

Mahisasura he's struggling with the weapons of Maya, Durga. He'll be failure, but still--ahankara-vimudhatma kartaham--by false egotism he's thinking, "I shall conquer over the material..."

Could you please explain this seeming contradiction?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 25, 1995

Mahisasura was a devotee of goddess Kali in the sense that he first of all became lusty to enjoy her and therefore approached her to take her as his wife. Just like lusty men today are attracted by young women who dress in short black witch-clothes and paint their faces with blood-red lips and vampire eye shadow, so he, being a fool, was attracted by the form of Kali. She refused his overture. Then he tried to take her by force. That is how the fight started, in which Kali Miller Mahisasura.

BRANCH OF GADADHAR PANDIT

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das

July 25, 1995

In CC A 12.88 purport it is mentioned that, Sri Vallaba batta (Pusti Marg) is a branch of Gadadhar pandit. Does this mean that devotees in pusti Marg are considered to be connected to the Caitanya tree? What does it exactly mean : Branch of Gadadhar pandit? Does it mean that the devotees in this branch were cultivated and preached to by Gadadhar Pandit?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 25, 1995

The relationship between Vallabhacarya and Sri Gadadhara Pandita is described in Antya-lila of the Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, chapter seven.

The Pusti-margis are connected through the link of Vallabha to Sri Gadadhara Pandita, but due to offenses certain Pusti-margis made against Gaudiya Vaisnava pujaris who were engaged in the worship of Madhavendra Puri's Gopal Deity at Govardhana, the link is not strong now. These offenses took place after the disappearance of Vallabhacarya. The Pusti-margis later removed the Gopal Deity to Nathadvara, where He is now worshiped as Sri Nath, the principle Deity of their sampradaya. (See C-c. Madhya 4.1, purport).

CONDITIONED AND LIBERATED SOULS

Question from bhn. Svetlana

July 25, 1995

These questions were asked by bhn Svetlana (the architect) and I tried to write them down in a proper way:

- It is said there are eternally liberated and eternally conditioned souls. Does it mean that the liberated and conditioned always stays like liberated and conditioned or there are different categories of living entities which always exist?

- Why we desired to enjoy separately from Krsna?

- How the living entities become demons? Do the demons always sink down into hell or there is any chance for them to be saved? Does the division of demoniac and godly existed since the beginning of creation?

- How to understand there was no creation in the spiritual world?
- It is said the soul has nothing to do with the material activities. How the material activities make the soul conditioned?
- Is it that one should be egocentricly disposed so that he starts to think of his self-realisation? Ys

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 14, 1995

These questions are not expressed very clearly in English. But I shall try to answer them anyway.

Regarding the liberated and conditioned souls, Lord Krsna says to Uddhava:

"My dear Uddhava, due to the influence of the material modes of nature, which are under My control, the living entity is sometimes designated as conditioned and sometimes as liberated. In fact, however, the soul is never really bound up or liberated, and since I am the supreme Lord of maya, which is the cause of the modes of nature, I also am never to be considered liberated or in bondage." (SB 11.11.1)

The propensity to enjoy is intrinsic to the soul. In his introduction to the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Srila Prabhupada writes, "We are all hankering after pleasure. Ananda-mayo 'bhyasat (Vedanta-sutra 1.1.12). The living entities, like the Lord, are full of consciousness, and they are after happiness. The Lord is perpetually happy, and if the living entities associate with the Lord, cooperate with Him and take part in His association, then they also become happy." The living entity who comes under the influence of ignorance imagines himself to be an independent enjoyer from Krsna. That is the beginning of his material bondage. The essential answer to the question, "Why we desired to enjoy independently from Krsna?", is: because of ignorance.

Living entities become demons due to cultivating the modes of passion and ignorance in their search for happiness apart from Krsna. Demons do certainly sink into hell. But they can also be saved even from hell by the mercy of the Lord and His pure devotees. The division of the divine and demoniac living entities has existed since the beginning of creation, as confirmed by Bg 16.6.

There is no creation in the spiritual world because there is no matter there. Matter is essentially spiritual energy of the nature of nirvisesa (without quality). While the substance of matter is eternal, the forms that matter displays are temporary, being created in time and destroyed in time. The spiritual world is comprised of spiritual energy that is full of transcendental qualities (visesa). Hence the names, forms, qualities and activities displayed in the spiritual world are timeless.

The soul is conditioned by material activities through the medium of the subtle body consisting of mind, intelligence and false ego. Just as the soul has nothing to do with gross physical activities, it has nothing to do with dream activities either. Yet while dreaming, we believe our experiences to be real, and we react to them in happiness, sadness or fear. This is all due to the subtle body.

There is a false ego and a real ego. Self-realization is real egoism. But this is only the beginning of spiritual life. Krsna is the Superself, and Krsna consciousness means to surrender the real self to the direction of the Superself. Otherwise, trying to realize the real self apart from Krsna leads to Mayavadi philosophy.

MODE OF GOODNESS

*Question from Nanda Kumar das
August 3, 1995*

Some devotees here read Kundali Prabhus book and are gradually becoming convinced that without coming to the mode of goodness one cannot perform devotional service properly. What is your opinion about this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 4, 1995

I have only briefly examined his book, **The Nectar of Discrimination**. It would not be proper for me to directly criticize it, since I am not familiar enough with the text to make an in-depth analysis. I do know that there are several GBC men who have read it much more carefully than I. Their comments reflect a concern about the author's intentions. But I do not wish to enter into a discussion about these comments either.

What I can say is based upon my own experience as GBC. In my zone, I had to deal with a few cases of devotees who, after reading this book or hearing his lectures on the subject of the three modes, became 1) rather mental about their own devotional service, and 2) became critical of other devotees, including their temple president, because according to their new-found discrimination they could see that other devotees are under the influence of the modes of nature. They concluded that **N.O. Discrimination** gave them the right to reject the leadership of such devotees. There was one bhakta who, stubbornly defending his critical attitude by citing **N.O. Discrimination**, soon left devotional service altogether.

This small experience of mine leads me to conclude that the assumptions these devotees formed after reading **N.O. Discrimination** have more to do with jnana-yoga than bhakti-yoga. The jnanis believe that by discrimination they can attain the conception of aham brahmasmi, seeing themselves as Brahman, and seeing how all other living entities are in Maya. To cultivate such a conception within the ISKCON association is without a doubt a dangerous enterprise. It can easily lead to Vaisnava aparadha.

As I said to a temple president who raised this question with me before, to read such a book as this without forming wrong assumptions seems to require a level of discrimination that we do not normally find in bhaktas/bhaktins and younger initiated devotees. It is therefore more adviseable that the devotees simply learn about the three modes from Srila Prabhupada's books under the guidance of their spiritual masters.

KARMA

*Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
August 13, 1995*

Trying to find out who is directly in charge of karma I have found two different information (quoted below). Could you please clarify this apparent contradiction?

SB 1.13.46 p., 1st par.: The highest perfectional project of philanthropic activities is to engage everyone in the act of preaching bhakti-yoga all over the world because that alone can save the people from the control of maya, or the material nature represented by kala, karma and guna, as described above.

SB 6.14.55 p., 1st par.: The subtle laws of karma, which are controlled by the Supreme, cannot be understood by ordinary conditioned souls.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 13, 1995

I don't follow the contradiction that you say you have found in these two quotes. Ultimately everything is under the control of the /l□b(Supreme. The material energy is the power of the Supreme. So what is the contradiction?

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

August 13, 1995

I wanted to know if karma is controlled directly by Krsna or through Dueta as medium (I don't doubt Krsna's supremacy).

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 14, 1995

If there is no doubt about Krsna's supremacy, then there is no question of contradiction. This is a simple philosophical point of the Lord as the powerful and His material energy as the power.

VASTU PURUSA

Question from Bhn Lisa

September 2, 1995

Can you please explain what is 'vastu' & who/what is the Vastu Prusa who controls it & his origin? What is his particular function & importance of it?

Whilst in Mayapura this year, I noticed to one corner of the area where the yajna was being performed for the new temple, a raised area with 64 (I'm uncertain) coloured squares. I think I remember that this had something to do with Vastu Purusa- is this correct & if so, what is the connection?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 2, 1995

Vastu means "substance." Questions about vastu and yajna should be addressed to Bhakti Vidya Purna Maharaja via the COM account of Govinda Das (SMP).

ARE PAINKILLERS DEMONIC?

Question from Kamalavati dd

September 2, 1995

Somebody recently told me that to take painkillers is demonic since it shows our tendency to control and avoid the pain we deserve. Moreover the same devotee told me that it's useless since we will have to suffer the pain we are avoiding with the painkiller anyway. But I always thought that those who are trying to be devotees should simply strive to surrender to Krsna and He'll take care of their karma - and it's much easier to perform activities in KC if we properly take care of our headaches and other aches. Can you please comment on this - thank you.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 2, 1995

Srila Prabhupada used to tolerate pains like tooth-aches. But his own father used painkillers in his old age. Some of the most senior devotees in ISKCON who are troubled with migraine headaches use pain relieving medicines, otherwise their service would be impeded. That painkillers are demoniac is, I would say, a very opinionated stance. Let that person prove it by citing sastra.

CHECKING THE MEDICINES

Question from Mahendra das

September 3, 1995

Should we check for animal ingredients in the medicines which are prescribed by a karmi doctor?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 3, 1995

If you think that there may be such ingredients within, yes.

CHRISTIANS

Question from Punya Palaka das

September 6, 1995

I was asking you about the monasteries in the morning because I got a letter from my wife - she heard from Vrndavani m., wife of Jayagurudeva prabhu, about one monastery they recently visited in Switzerland; there were young ladies there, waking up at 1 a.m., for hours chanting prayers, offering dandavats, living rigid life (?) as "real yoginis"... So she asked me, "Does it mean that love for Jesus can also be real? And that it helps them to endure tapasya and find some pleasure in living with him? Otherwise how could they live like this?" How would you answer that? You already explained that waking early is natural, living in the monastery is a kind of occupation in the West, and that the monks and nuns don't follow the four principles. So is it just another kind of sense gratification and nothing else?

And it's a fact that I had many friends in the Czech Republic who were converting to Christianity at the communist times, at the risk of persecution, looking for some higher goals of life, discovering the forgotten tradition... Some of them have become preachers. But their ideal is "Love thy neighbour", with praying to God for others' welfare, thanking Him, and helping each other - in more or less sinful activities (without serving Krishna; although they say they serve God in this way). I have no doubts they cultivate bodily conception, lacking the spiritual philosophy. Does this mean they are actually demons, if they hesitate to take to Krsna consciousness "having once surrendered (mentally) to Jesus"? Because they don't adhere to any authority?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 2, 1995

The fact that someone rises early and performs austerities is not necessarily a symptom of even the slightest spirituality. During the Vietnam war, the Viet Cong (Communist guerrillas) underwent horrendous austerities for many years. If they were lucky, they could eat one bowl of rice per day ... but often they

could not even get that. And they lived in the jungle, in caves or in underground tunnels. And of course they were very conscious of death being very near. Don't forget, this was all due to a strong belief ... in completely mundane ideals. They were atheists.

Buddhists are also atheists. Yet in Buddhist monasteries, monks and nuns perform very similar rigid austerities as do these Christians you mention.

Of course, we accept (as Prabhupada taught) that Jesus Christ is a saktyavesa avatar of Krsna, as is Lord Buddha. So there is certainly much more benefit in practicing austerities in the name of Jesus or Buddha than in the name of Ho Chi Minh or some similar materialistic socio-political leader. But as Srila Prabhupada explained to Yogi Amrit Desai, if bhakti-yoga is not performed properly (i.e. under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master), then all one gets for one's hard work is simply the result of the work, in other words, karma. It can be very good karma that results in a birth in heaven. But if real spiritual standing is not awakened (realization of the self as distinct from the body, and the function of the eternal self as servant of the Supreme Person), then the benefit from such practices **must** be material. Srila Prabhupada even said that sentimental appreciation of his own books and teachings by a person in the sudra category, who does not follow the four regulative principles, will not bring that person to Krsna consciousness. "It is not possible," he said. "We require first-class men to understand this philosophy." In other words, brahmanas who strictly adhere to the sadacara and who cultivate transcendental knowledge by the authorized process handed down by the acaryas.

Comment by Mukhya dd

September 6, 1995

I would like to ask a question in connection with the statement by Srila Prabhupada that only first-class men can understand Krsna conscious philosophy.

Sometimes sankirtan devotees say that they meet in the street persons who read carefully Srila Prabhupada's books and some of those persons know and appreciate the books much more than the regular devotees in the temple. Is it possible that such persons who obviously do not follow the regulative principles and above all, who have not surrendered unto a spiritual master, are able to understand the philosophy better than the devotee who is trying to live the philosophy by executing devotional service?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 6, 1995

Perhaps they understand it better as theory, or jnana. But if they do not follow the regulative principles, then they have no vijñana (realization). And that means they have no solid spiritual standing.

HONESTY

Question from Kamalavati dd

September 12, 1995

Sometimes my service is to be in the Boutique in RD and it happens that people are quite space out and give more laxmi than needed without being aware. I usually give them back what is more than necessary and they are very appreciative since it was their own fault to give so much and think that it's ok. So I was wondering if they'll become more purified if I simply take the laxmi and use it in Krsna's service or if I give them back the money (which

otherwise they'll not notice anyway that they gave) and make them in this way a little more appreciative of the devotees? I am sorry to bother you with such insignificant questions but otherwise there are various opinions.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 12, 1995

It is not quite clear what you mean by "I usually give them back what is more than necessary." (It is spelled necessary, by the way). I suppose that you mean that your returning the correct change is not necessary because they do not know the correct price. But that phrase could also mean that you are charging them less than the sales price, giving back more change than is necessary.

Anyway, Srila Prabhupada said, "our men should be loved for their honesty." And Abraham Lincoln said "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." So getting into the habit of practicing small dishonesties will very likely backfire over the long run.

LORD AS TRI-YUGA

Question from Aprameya dd

September 17, 1995

I'm perplexed why in SB 3.24.26 Lord Visnu is called Tri-yuga which means as Srila Prabhupada explains that He descends in the three yugas, since I know there are 4 yuga avatars. Is it so that the regular Kali yuga-avatar (which is different from Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu) also appears as a devotee?

What is the position of Lord Kalki-avatara - is He yuga or lila avatara? Is He appearing in each Kali yuga?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 17, 1995

Tri-yuga means that the Lord comes in three ages to establish the Yuga Dharma. In the fourth age, He comes in a hidden (channa) form, not as the Lord, but as the Lord's devotee.

Kalki-avatara appears at the close of the Kali Yuga. He does not come to teach dharma, only to kill. So he is not classed as Yuga Avatara. Yes, He is a lila-avatara.

LIFE FROM MATTER

Question from Mahendra das

September 17, 1995

I couldn't understand some parts of the purport of this text. Would you explain it? "...In other words, matter also has the potency to manifest living entities in the form of vegetables. In this sense, life comes from matter, but matter also comes from life..."

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 17, 1995

In the same purport, Srila Prabhupada writes as follows.

"Krsna is the supreme living being. Although it may be said that in the material world a living force is generated from matter, it must be admitted that originally matter is generated from the supreme Libiny being. Nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam. The conclusion is that everything, both material and spiritual, is generated from the Supreme Being. From the evolutionary point of view, perfection is reached when the living entity attains the platform of a brahmana."

Matter and spirit both emanate from the Supreme Spirit. Krsna glancem over matter, impregnating her with undeveloped spirit souls. She develops their consciousness by birthing them through higher and higher species. Finally, when they come to brahminical status, they are liberated, and their pure spiritual nature is revealed. Thus, as Srila Prabhupada states, "In this sense, life comes out of matter, but matter also comes out of life."

THE HEART

*Question from Aprameya dd
September 19, 1995*

I'd like to ask you is there any connection between the heart and the mind or the intelligence. What is actually the heart?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
September 20, 1995

The heart is the seat of the soul. The soul is the source of consciousness. The mind and intelligence are coverings, or conditionings, of intelligence. Hence, there is a connection between the heart and the mind, and intelligence. The heart is therefore said to be the seat of the mind and the intelligence.

KRSNA IN THE CATUR-VYUHA

*Question from Subala das
September 2, 1995*

There is no any contradiction with that statment. First goes Krishna - Balarama - Maha Sankarsana - 1st Caturvyuha - 2nd - Maha Visnu - etc...

There is nothing wrong to call Balarama - Sankarsan. Actually He was named Sankarsan (Garga Muni called him like that) because He was transfered from womb of Devaki to womb of Rohini.

And Vaasudeva Krishna - because He was a son of Vasudeva and also because Krishna in Dvaraka called Vaasudeva Krishna - being a Vaibahava Prakasa of Lord Krsna and playing role as Ksatriya (in ksatriya vesa).

(if I'm wrong please correct me)

Comment by Vraja Kishor das
September 24, 1995

*Dear Vaishnavas,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.*

Recently someone asked me: "since the chatur vyuha expands from Balarma, why is sankarsana known as balarama and vasudeva as Krishna?"

I have no idea. I think I heard that vasudeva actually expands from Krsna - but I am not confident about it. Please help.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 24, 1995

The point to understand is not that Balarama is the original source of the catur-vyuha, but that Balarama is the power by which the vyuha expands. Balarama is Lord Krsna's own power, appearing as His brother. Balarama's service to Krsna is to make all arrangements for the expansion of His pastimes. Krsna is always the original source.

RIGHT OR LEFT EAR?

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

September 20, 1995

SB 4.25.50-51p. states that right ear (Pitrhu) is 'meant' for fruitive activities and left ear (Devahu) for spiritual activities like initiation by Gayatri mantra. On the other hand, Srila Prabhupada many times says that Gayatri mantra should be uttered into the right ear of the disciple.

Could you please clarify this subject?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 21, 1995

When the guru and disciple are both facing East, then the mantra is given in the left ear. When they are both facing each other then the guru gives the mantra in the right ear. Some Paddhatis (rule books) say the guru and disciple should face East, some say face each other.

PRETAS

Question from Vrajendra Kumara das

September 25, 1995

Your Holiness, can you please explain why in S.B.2.6.43-45 dead bodies (pretas) are listed amongst living beings possessed of power, opulence etc. What does it mean? Are they some kind of zombies or what?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 25, 1995

Preta means a departed ancestor who did not become a pitri (forefather on the Pitriloka). He became a ghost instead. Sometimes pretas move about in dead bodies. There's an interesting story about that in Sanskrit literature. Anyway, preta-dosa (the state of being haunted by a preta) proves the power of ghosts. They are mysterious entities, and men not only fear their power but even worship them. That power that is feared and worshiped also represents Lord Krsna's opulence.

Comment by Dadhibhaksa das

September 26, 1995

Where we can find this interesting story about pretas in sastras?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 26, 1995

It is not in sastra. It is an old Sanskrit story. It was translated by an Englishman named F.W. Bain and published as part of an anthology in 1901.

ALTHOUGH

Question from Janaka Gauranga das

September 25, 1995

While translating SB, we came across a following sentence, which is marked.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 6: Chapter Nine, Text 34 TRANSLATION

(the demigods said:) "O Lord, You need no support, and ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE NO MATERIAL BODY, YOU DO NOT NEED COOPERATION FROM US. Since You are the cause of the cosmic manifestation and You supply its material ingredients without being transformed, You create, maintain and annihilate this osmic manifestation by Yourself..."

In the PURP it is said:

"The demigods are understood to be various limbs of the Supreme Lord's body, although the Supreme Lord has no material body and does not need anyone's help."

Does it mean that demigods are rejecting the idea that "if the Lord has to maintain this material cosmic manifestation, He must have a material body, and if He has not such a material body, He needs a help from demigods" ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 25, 1995

Yes, I would agree with your analysis.

TATTVAVADIS

Question from Adhira das

September 27, 1995

Harikesa Maharaja direted me to You with this technical question:

In CC Madhya-lila Chapter 9, text 11 Purport, Srila Prabhupada comments that: "Actually the disciplic succession of Madhvacarya is known as the Brahma-Vaisnava sect; that is the sect coming down from Lord Brahma. Consequently the Tattvavadis or the followers of Madhvacarya do not akcept the incident of Lord Brahma's illusion...Srila Madhvacarya has purposefully avoided commenting on that portion of S.B. in which brahma-mohana ,the illusion of Lord Brahma is mentioned."

Why didn't they accept this incident? Our sampradaya is also dominy down from Lord Brahma through Madhvacarya then why do our acaryas comment on that event?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 28, 1995

I don't have an in-depth answer I can give you on this, because though I've read several books by the top Tattvavadi scholar of the modern time, and though I've even met that scholar personally and discussed philosophy with him, I did not go

into this particular question, nor have I seen anything written about it from the Tattvavadi side. But my understanding is that in respecting Brahma as the first acarya of the sampradaya, the Tattvavadis cannot accommodate his being in any kind of illusion. Apparently, for them, to admit he was in illusion would call into question his capacity to be acarya. But Srila Prabhupada answered this point as follows --

Aksayananda: So there's no doubt that Lord Brahma is a pure devotee?

Prabhupada: Whatever he may be, he is acarya.

(From a morning walk of 10 December 1975)

TEN OFFENSES

Question from Vijnana das

October 7, 1995

I remember hearing a tape of yours once with an explanation of how the ten offenses are made by persons as they come closer to Krishna. I don't remember much though due to my Kali Yuga memory. Could you explain it to me.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 7, 1995

I can't remember saying what you've described. But it reminds of an example about approaching a bright light out of the darkness. As one gets closer to the light, one's shadow gets bigger and bigger. So Maya is compared to darkness and shadow. In that sense, then, as one comes closer to the light of Krsna consciousness, Maya's influence seems to get stronger and stronger. Of course, if one keeps his attention on the light and doesn't look back, then one will not notice the lengthening shadows. This is the real point. It is not simply, as you've worded it, "the ten offenses are made by persons as they come closer to Krishna." It is not that it **must** happen. Maya is always one step behind us, of course, but we don't have to give her attention and thus fall under her spell. We should just keep our attention firmly fixed on the Holy Name. Thus we shall avoid offenses and approach Krsna without difficulty.

Comment from Vijnana das

October 11, 1995

Please excuse me if I cannot remember very clearly the analysis you gave. I will try to give a better idea.

*It was something like the ten offenses happening in a sequential order as one comes to The Krishna consciousness movement. Not that they **must** happen as you pointed out, but that they may happen.*

Like when one first sees the devotees he may blaspheme them, or joke about them thus committing the first offense. Then when hearing about Krishna he commits the second offense by thinking he is equal to other gods. Then after hearing and taking initiation he may disobey the orders of his spiritual master. Up to the point where after being a devotee for so long still he maintains material attachments even after understanding so many instructions on this matter.

Please forgive me if I am unclear. I only heard the class once when I was with Gaura Bhagavan on Sankirtan. It just seemed like such a wonderful analysis and I have such a bad memory I forgot it. Anyway if I am too unclear then I will not disturb you any more about it.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 11, 1995

Yes, it was something like that. Not that it has to happen that way, but there is a sense in the progression by which one offense can lead to all ten.

CREATION IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Question from Bhagadatta das

October 18, 1995

In the end of the first paragraph from the purport to text 16 from the 15-th chapter of BG there is one line I can't understand: "Of course, in the spiritual world there is no such thing as creation, but since the SPG, as stated in the Vedanta-sutra, is the source of all emanations, that conception is explained." Could you clarify this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 18, 1995

Nothing in the spiritual world is created in time, as things are created here at a certain point. Everything in Vaikuntha is eternal. But even in eternality, Krsna is the source. That is the meaning of *nityo nitananam cetanas cetananam*: "Among eternally conscious beings, there is one supreme eternally conscious being." A helpful example is the sun and the sunlight. As the sun exists so also the sunlight exists. They are inseparable. There is no way to know the sun if there would be no sunlight. Yet still the sun is the source of the sunlight.

MAYAVADIS

Question from Diviratha das

October 25, 1995

A German scholar is about to write an article for an important book about Srila Prabhupadas methods of dealings with mayavadis and their philosophy. I try to help her to get the right understanding. In this connection I need the following information:

1) Are the Gita-mahatmya verses, quoted by Srila Prabhupada in his BG intro, composed by Sankaracarya? If so, in which book did he write them and when? Where information about that could be found?

2) in the Prabhupada nectar books is a story how Srila Prabhupada allowed to put the Sariraka bhasya in a library of an ISKCON temple. How to understand this? Did he allow all (mature) devotees to study Sankaracaryas commentary or is it only for specific devotees?

3) What is the difference between the philosophy of Ramanujacarya and that of Lord Caitanya? (Especially in regard to mayavadi philosophy, but in general too.)

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 25, 1995

1) The Gita-mahatmya is composed by Sankaracarya. For further information, you will have to do your own research. I suggest you contact Dr. Tilak Raj Chopra, Haselweg 15, 5309 Meckenheim-Merl, GERMANY, tel. 02225-3142 [I do not know if this address and telephone number are still current, however]. He is an

Indologist and Sanskritist at the Uni Bonn who is fully trained up in Mayavadi philosophy, and yet (up to a few years ago, anyway) is friendly to devotees.

2) Keeping a book in a library is one thing; allowing devotees to study it is another. Lord Caitanya said *mayavadi bhasya sunile haya sarva nash*, "hearing the Mayavadi bhasya of Sankara brings spiritual destruction."

3) This is a big question. As an answer, I'll put here a text I wrote for the ISKCON Homepage on the internet World Wide Web. It briefly compares the Vedanta doctrines of the 4 Vaisnava sampradayas with Lord Caitanya's sampradaya.

Personal vs. Impersonal Vedanta, and the Four Vaisnava Sampradayas

What is Vedanta?

The highest degree of Vedic education, traditionally reserved for the sannyasis (renunciates), is mastery of the texts known as the Upanisads. The Upanisads teach the philosophy of the Absolute Truth (Brahman) to those seeking liberation from birth and death. Study of the Upanisads is known as Vedanta, 'the conclusion of the Veda.' The word *upanisad* means 'that which is learned by sitting close to the teacher.' The texts of the Upanisads are extremely difficult to fathom; they are to be understood only under the close guidance of a spiritual master (guru). Because the Upanisads contain many apparently contradictory statements, the great sage Vyasadeva (also known as Vedavyasa, Badarayana and Dvaipayana) systematized the Upanisadic teachings in the Vedanta-sutra or Brahma-sutra. Vyasa's sutras are very terse. Without a fuller explanation, their meaning is difficult to grasp. In India there are five main schools of Vedanta, each established by an acarya (founder) who explained the sutras in a bhasya (commentary).

Of the five schools, one, namely Adi Sankara's, is impersonalist. Sankara taught that Brahman has no name, form nor personal characteristics. His school is opposed by the four Vaisnava sampradayas founded by Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka and Visnusvami. Unlike the impersonalist school, Vaisnava Vedanta admits the validity of Vedic statements that establish difference (bheda) within Brahman, as well those that establish nondifference (abheda). Taking the bheda and abheda statements together, the Vaisnava Vedantists distinguish between three features of the one Vastu Brahman (Divine Substance): 1) Visnu as the Supreme Soul (Para Brahman), 2) the individual self as the subordinate soul (Jiva Brahman), and 3) matter as creative nature (Mahad Brahman). The philosophies of the four Vaisnava sampradayas dispel the sense of mundane limitation ordinarily associated with the word 'person.' Visnu is accepted by all schools of Vaisnava Vedanta as the transcendental, unlimited Purusottama (Supreme Person), while the individual souls and matter are His conscious and unconscious energies (cidacid-sakti).

What is Siddhanta?

Each of the Vedantist schools is known for its siddhanta or 'essential conclusion' about the relationships between God and the soul, the soul and matter, matter and matter, matter and God, and the soul and souls. Sankara's siddhanta is Advaita, 'nondifference' (i.e. everything is one, therefore these five relationships are unreal). All the other siddhantas support the reality of these relationships from various points of view. Ramanuja's siddhanta is Visistadvaita, 'qualified nondifference.' Madhva's siddhanta is Dvaita, 'difference.' Visnusvami's siddhanta is Suddhadvaita, 'purified nondifference.' And Nimbarka's siddhanta is Dvaita-advaita, 'difference-and-identity.'

The Bengali branch of Madhva's sampradaya is known as the Brahma- Madhva-Gaudiya Sampradaya, or the Caitanya Sampradaya. In the 1700's this school presented Indian philosophers with a commentary on Vedanta-sutra written by Baladeva

Vidyabhusana that argued yet another siddhanta. It is called Acintya-bhedabheda-tattva, which means 'simultaneous inconceivable oneness and difference.' In recent years this siddhanta has become known to people from all over the world due to the popularity of the books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Acintya-bhedabheda philosophy maintains the same standpoint of 'difference' as Madhva's siddhanta on the five-fold relationship of God to soul, soul to matter, matter to matter, matter to God and soul to soul. But Acintya-bhedabheda-tattva further teaches the doctrine of Saktiparinamavada (the transformation of the Lord's sakti), in which the origin of this five-fold differentiation is traced to the Lord's play with His sakti or energy. Because the souls and matter emanate from the Lord, they are one in Him as His energy yet simultaneously distinct from Him and one another. The oneness and difference of this five-fold relationship is termed acintya or inconceivable because, as Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport to Bhagavad-gita 18.78, 'Nothing is different from the Supreme, but the Supreme is always different from everything.' As the transcendental origin and coordinator of His energies, God is ever the inconceivable factor.

Differences among the four Vaisnava Sampradayas

The four Vaisnava sampradayas all agree that Visnu is the cause. However, they explain His relationship with His creation differently. In Visistadvaita, the material world is said to be the body of Visnu, the Supreme Soul. But the Dvaita school does not agree that matter is connected to Visnu as body is to soul, because Visnu, God, is transcendental to matter. The world of matter is full of misery, but since Vedanta-sutra 1.1.12 defines God as anandamaya (abundantly blissful), how can nonblissful matter be His body? The truth according to the Dvaita school is that matter is ever separate from Visnu but yet is eternally dependent upon Visnu; by God's will, says the Dvaita school, matter becomes the ingredient cause of the world. The Suddhadvaita school cannot agree with the Dvaita school that matter is the ingredient cause because matter has no independent origin apart from God. Matter is actually not different from God in the same way an effect is not different from its cause, although there is an appearance of difference. The example of the ocean and its waves is given by Suddhadvaita philosophers to illustrate their argument that the cause (the ocean) is the same as the effect (the waves). The Dvaitadvaita school agrees that God is both the cause and effect, but is dissatisfied with the Suddhadvaita school's standpoint that there is really no difference between God and the world. The Dvaitadvaita school says that God is neither one with nor different from the world--He is both. A snake, the Dvaitadvaita school argues, can neither be said to have a coiled form or a straight form. It has both forms. Similarly, God's 'coiled form' is His transcendental non-material aspect, and His 'straight form' is His mundane aspect. But this explanation is not without its problems. If God's personal nature is eternity, knowledge and bliss, how can the material world, which is temporary, full of ignorance and miserable, be said to be just another form of God?

Reconciliation of the four Vaisnava viewpoints

The Caitanya school reconciles these seemingly disparate views of God's relationship to the world by arguing that the Vedic scriptures testify to God's acintya-sakti, 'inconceivable powers.' God is simultaneously the cause of the world in every sense and yet distinct from and transcendental to the world. The example given is of a spider and its web. The web emanates from the spider's body, so the spider may be taken as the ingredient cause of the web. But that does not make the spider and the web one and the same. The spider is always a separate and distinct entity from its web. Yet again, while the spider never 'is' the web, the existence of the web cannot be separated from the spider. There is a further lesson to be learned from this example: while the spider is clearly different from its web-creation, it nonetheless is acutely conscious of every corner of it. In philosophical terms, we could say the spider is

transcendental to the web by its identity, yet simultaneously *immanent* throughout the web by its knowledge. This is a simple yet powerful demonstration of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva. Lord Krsna, in *Bhagavad-gita* 9.4 and 5, says He pervades the whole universe by His complete awareness of the spiritual and material energies that make up the creation. Yet at the same time, in His identity as the source of everything, He stands apart from the cosmic manifestation.

The web is compared to God's Maya-sakti (power of illusion), which emanates from the Real but is not real itself. `Not real' means that the features of maya (the tri-guna, or three modes of material nature: goodness, passion and ignorance) are temporary. `Not real' does not mean the material world does not exist. The essential ingredient (vastu) of the world is real, because it is the energy of God. But the form this energy takes at the time of cosmic creation is temporary. Therefore the Maya-sakti is said to be unreal. Reality is that which is eternal: God and God's Svarupa-sakti (spiritual energy). The temporal features of the material world are manifestations of the Maya-sakti, not of God Himself. These features of Maya bewilder the souls of this world just as flies are caught in the spider's web. But they cannot bewilder God. God appears within this material world as the supreme individual person, yet He is not bound by this world, exactly as a spider is able to move anywhere in its web-creation without being bound by it.

Sankara and Buddhism

Sometimes Sankara's Advaita Vedanta commentary is presented in books about Hinduism as if it is the original and only Vedanta philosophy. But in fact Sankara's philosophy is more akin to Buddhism than Vedanta. Buddhism is, of course, a nastika or non-Vedic religion. Before 600 AD, the time of Sankara's appearance, most Vedantist scholars did not endorse a doctrine of impersonalism. Evidence gathered from the writings of pre-Sankara Buddhist scholars shows that their Vedantist contemporaries were Purusa-vadins (purusa = `person', vadin = `philosopher'). Purusavadins taught that the goal of Vedanta philosophy is the Mahapurusa (Greatest Person). Bhavya, an Indian Buddhist author who lived centuries before Sankara, wrote in the Madhyamika-hrdaya-karika that the Vedantists of his time were adherents of the doctrine of bhedabheda (difference and nondifference). That Sankara borrowed Buddhist ideas was noted by the Buddhists themselves. A Buddhist writer named Bhartrhari, who lived at the same time as Sankara, expressed some surprise that although Sankara was a brahmana scholar of the Vedas, his impersonal teachings resembled Buddhism. This is admitted by the followers of Sankara themselves. Pandit Dr. Rajmani Tigunait of the Himalayan Institute of Yoga is a present-day exponent of Advaita Vedanta; in his book, *Seven Systems of Indian Philosophy*, he writes that the ideas of the Buddhist Sunyavada (voidist) philosophers are `very close' to Sankara's. Sankara inserted into Vedantic discourse the Buddhist concept of ultimate emptiness, substituting the Upanisadic word Brahman (the Absolute) for Sunya (the void). Because Sankara argued that all names, forms, qualities, activities and relationships are creations of Maya (illusion), even divine names and forms, his philosophy is called Mayavada (the doctrine of illusion).

However, to compare Brahman with the void is philosophically untenable. The Vedanta-sutra defines Brahman, not Maya, as the cause of everything (janmadyasya-yatah, V-s. 1.1.2). How can that which lacks name, form, quality and activity be the cause of that which possesses these features? *Nil posse creari de nilo*: nothing can be created out of nothing. Mayavadi Vedanta avoids the issue of causation by arguing that the world, though empirically real, is ultimately a dream. But dreams also have elaborate causes.

SELF-ENVY

Questions from Vrajendra Kumara das
October 26, 1995

Can you please explain what self-envy is? In S.B.6.16.42 it is stated: "...By causing pain to one's own self due to self-envy and by causing pain to others, one arouses Your anger and practices irreligion". Someone told me that in English envious also means enimical but I couldn't find that meaning in the dictionary. Moreover if it means "enimical" in this case why the other word is chosen? I don't know how it sounds in English but in my language (Russian) "self-envy" doesn't make any sense. Sanskrit equivalent for this word is "sva-drohat".

The second question is from B.G.18.26: "One who performs his duty without association with the modes of material nature, without false ego, with great determination and enthusiasm, and without wavering in success or failure is said to be a worker in the mode of goodness". Why first it is stated that one works without association with modes (literally mukta-sanga - "liberated from all material association) and then the statement goes ..."this worker is in the mode of goodness"? And in the purport Srila Prabhupada is speaking about activities in Krishna consciousness. So it seems that he equates the activity in the mode of goodness and in pure Krsna Consciousness. Could you please clarify this apparent contradiction.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
October 26, 1995

"A demonic person, being always against God's supremacy, does not like to believe in the scriptures. He is envious of both the scriptures and the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is caused by his so-called prestige and his accumulation of wealth and strength. He does not know that the present life is a preparation for the next life. Not knowing this, he is actually envious of his own self, as well as of others. He commits violence on other bodies and on his own. He does not care for the supreme control of the Personality of Godhead, because he has no knowledge. Being envious of the scriptures and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he puts forward false arguments against the existence of God and denies the scriptural authority." (From Bg 16.18p)

"But unfortunately, especially in this age, na te viduh svartha-gatim hi visnum: people do not know that the highest goal of human life is to please Lord Visnu. On the contrary, like demons, they simply plan to kill Visnu and be happy by sense gratification." (From SB 7.2.14p)

Svartha-gati (quoted above, which comes from SB 7.5.31) Prabhupada often translated as "self-interest." Thus, by envying Visnu and planning to kill Him, materialists kill their own self-interest. In this way they are envious of their own self.

Your second question is answered in the purport to SB 8.5.29.

"Sattvam visuddham vasudeva-sabdhitam (SB. 4.3.23). In this material world, the three modes of material nature--goodness, passion and ignorance--prevail. Among these three, goodness is the platform of knowledge, and passion brings about a mixture of knowledge and ignorance, but the mode of ignorance is full of darkness. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead is beyond darkness and passion. He is on the platform where goodness or knowledge is not disturbed by passion and ignorance. This is called the vasudeva platform. It is on this platform of vasudeva that Vasudeva, or Krsna, can appear. Thus Krsna appeared on this planet as the son of Vasudeva. Because the Lord is situated beyond the

three modes of material nature, He is unseen by those who are dominated by these three modes. One must therefore be *dhira*, or undisturbed by the modes of material nature. The process of yoga may be practiced by one who is free from the agitation of these modes. Therefore yoga is defined in this way: *yoga indriya-samyamah*. As previously explained, we are disturbed by the *indriyas*, or senses. Moreover, we are agitated by the three modes of material nature, which are imposed upon us by the external energy. In conditional life, the living entity moves turbulently in the whirlpool of birth and death, but when one is situated on the transcendental platform of *visuddha-sattva*, pure goodness, he can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who sits on the back of Garuda. Lord Brahma offers his respectful obeisances unto that Supreme Lord."

The essence is that material goodness is still influenced by passion and ignorance. In material goodness, the senses still disturb. Thus the Lord remains unseen. In transcendental goodness (*vasudeva-sattva*), the senses are directly engaged in yoga (connection to Krsna). Thus the devotee sees Krsna directly. There is no sensual agitation, or in other words disturbance of passion and ignorance, on this platform.

Question from Bhakta Maxim

December 22, 1995

If you do not mind I'd like to comment on the question raised by Vrajendre Kumar Prabhu regarding self-envy (sorry to bring it up again as the topic is so far behind.) If I am not mistaken - please correct me if I am wrong -- the word "envy" has two different meanings in English: 1) jealous attitude to other's happiness or success (the usual meaning) and 2) animosity (that is more rare, and is more understandable in terms of self-envy, i.e. causing harm to oneself by being inimical to Krsna).

In Russian the two meanings merge together as the Russian word for "jealous attitude" does not have the second meaning whatsoever, only a tinge of. Maybe this is the cause of the confusion.

Please forgive me for rushing in where angels fear to tread.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 22, 1995

According to my big etymological dictionary, **envy** is traced to Latin **vide**, "to see." **Vide** in turn is related to **Veda** ("I know," originally "I see"). The word **inuidere**, to see intensely, based on **vide**, branches out from Latin into English as **envy**. **Induidere** actually has two forms that have given two words to the English language. From **inuidia** (noun) transformed to Vulgate **inveia** done through Old French **envie** the English **envy**. From the adjective **inuidiosus** comes the English **invidious**. Anyway, the ultimate root is the Sanskrit **vid** (Veda is formed from this verbal root), from which we get so many Indo-European words, like **wisdom** in English, **wissen** in German, **veda** in Czech, the Greek **idein** which comes into many languages as **idea**, and so on. The essential semantic indication is the intense, antagonistic looking at some object. We know that original envy is of the living entity for Krsna. Krsna is the Self of our self. So the "original" original meaning of envy is to look antagonistically upon one's own Self, Krsna.

TREE WASN'T THERE BECAUSE NOBODY SAW IT

Question from Vijnana das

October 7, 1995

I was studying the second canto chapter 10 regarding how the virat purusa had the desire to speak then speech was manifest etc. I remember a class you gave in Amsterdam a long time ago where you were speaking on this subject and mentioned a tree in Oxford that had an inscription on to the effect that when no one is there to see it then the tree doesn't exist but that someone else put there that God is seeing it. Could you explain this philosophy that nothing exists if there is no one to see it and how to defeat it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 31, 1995

Yes, there's a story that on one day a long time ago (this may have even been back in the days of Bishop Berkeley) that someone pinned a note to a big tree in the center of the Quad (a square surrounded by university buildings) at Oxford. The note said something like,

"God must consider it exceeding odd,
If when there is nobody about in the Quad,
that this tree
continues to be."

The next day another note was pinned on the tree, that stated

"Your statement is odd
For even when nobody in in the Quad
The tree continues to be
As seen by Me
Yours truly, God."

The problem dealt with in the two letters is a problem of ontology, which deals with what is "out there" that we can know. The first letter Argus that there is nothing "out there," what we know is just our perceptions. And our perceptions are manufactured in our consciousness. More or less this is the doctrine of solipsism, that "I am the only reality." The second letter argues that there is a reality "out there" that exists whether we perceive it or not. That reality exists within the perception of God.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

October 31, 1995

I looked at your question again and noticed you asked how to defeat solipsism. Here are two powerful arguments.

1. "My dear solipsist, you say my view of the world is wrong. But if your view is that you are the only conscious being, then my opposing view is also your view, because according to you I don't exist, only your own thoughts exist, like your thoughts of me and my arguments. So, why do you argue with yourself? If you do not agree with me on this point and continue to argue, then you contradict your claim that everything is just your own idea."

(If you are trying to sell a solipsist a book, you can follow the above argument to this conclusion: "Here, it's your idea to buy this book and take it home and read it from cover to cover very carefully.")

2. "My dear solipsist, thought on its own has no practical value in helping you put any order to the experiences that make up what you suppose is your own private world. You have to take help from the theories and beliefs of science and common sense, which tell you that the world is not your own private idea, that it existed before your birth and will continue after your death. In coping with your experiences, you have to rely upon definitions and directions that

entail the falsity of solipsism. Of course, you can reinterpret all this in terms of solipsism. But the fact remains that the knowledge you require to live in this world and deal with it does not come to you from solipsism (i.e. from persons, books, institutions, traditions, etc. that confirm that 'all your perceptions and this information how to understand and deal with your perceptions are just your own idea'). Therefore your viewpoint is like a philosophical parasite whose life fully depends upon the life of another philosophy. How, then, can your philosophy be the real one?"

THE POEM ABOUT THE TREE IN THE QUAD

Comment by Suhotra Swami
November 10, 1995

Vijnana das, in his most recent question, mentioned a philosophical poem about a tree in the Oxford Quad. In my answer I cobbled an approximation of the poem together, but (ta-ra!) here is the real thing, written by Robert Knox, as related in a book called **Learning to Philosophize** by E.R. Emmet.

The first part of the poem, representing solipsism, is:

There was a young man who said, "God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no one about in the Quad."

The second part, representing a refutation of solipsism based upon the philosophy of Bishop George Berkeley which Srila Prabhupada also agrees with (see **Dialectical Spiritualism** pages 215-216):

Dear Sir,
Your astonishment's odd:
I am always about in the Quad.
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be,
Since observed by
Yours faithfully,
God.

WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS INTERESTED IN VEDIC PHILOSOPHY

Question from Gopinatha das
November 11, 1995

I am now working on a french publication and we would like to find more information about western philosophers interested in vedic philosophy.

We have information about Thoreau, Emerson, Hegel. Amongst french writers there was Malraux, Romain Rolland and Lamartine who showed interest.

Can you please tell us about any other western personalities who showed an interest to the vedas ??

I have heard that Einstein had an interest, but I do not have any exact quote from him.

Schopenhauer was interested in budhism, did he showed any interest in the vedic tradition also ??

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 11, 1995

About Einstein, if he had an interest in the Vedas, there is not much evidence of it, not as much as Oppenheimer, who knew Sanskrit and quoted the Gita when the first A-bomb was tested. I believe Heisenberg read the Upanisads. But none of these guys are considered to be philosophers, Einstein included. They are physicists, mathematicians and scientists.

Schopenhauer mentioned the Vedas in his writings. It appears he was more interested in Buddhism, as you have noted. About other recent-era Western philosophers, I don't know. There are some, like Berkeley and Heidegger for instance, who speculated in ways that resemble specific Vedic teachings about consciousness and the nature of being. But I am not aware of their directly giving credit to the Vedic scriptures for inspiring their speculations. Since I am currently preparing a book on Vedic answers to philosophical problems of knowledge, I've been reading texts on Western philosophy lately. One is a book called **The Existence of the World** by Reinhardt Grossmann. In a passage from this book, it becomes clear that Western philosophers have their own system of **neti-neti** speculation.

"Existence, according to our view, is not a category: it is not an individual thing, nor is it a property, nor is it a relation, etc. But this means that it does not have a categorial property. Nor does it form a category of its own. The entity **entity** is not green, it has no shape, it is not higher in pitch than anything, nor is it larger (in number) than something else, etc. etc. In short, the entity **entity** has no properties and stands in no relations to other things, or, as Hegel would say, it has no determinations. But this implies, according to Hegel's line of reasoning, that pure being is absolute negation, since it is **not** this, that or the other." (pages 123-124)

Neti-neti means, of course, "not this, not this." The idea of pure being expressed here is an idea similar to impersonal Brahman. Perhaps Hegel borrowed this line of negative speculation from the jnana Upanisads, and thus by his writings imported it into European thought. In any case, negative impersonal speculation is now well-established in Western philosophy. Such a passage as that quoted above does not need to mean that Mr. Grossmann personally has been reading the Upanisads.

In contrast to this, there is a trend of recent-era Western philosophy called Personalism. The term was first used in the USA by Bronson Alcott in 1863 and in France by Charles Renouvier in 1901. The main features of Personalism are 1) the individual living entity is the primary reality, and 2) Theism, which as opposed to Deism, says that God is both the transcendental cause of the world **as well as** beany the immanent divine presence throughout the world. According to Personalists, the main social task is not to change the world but to change the individual, to promote his personal self-perfection.

But I don't find evidence of a direct connection between the European and American Personalists and Vedic personalism, although the philosophical principles are very similar. If you want to find out more about these Personalists, then investigate a journal called **Espirit**, founded in 1932, which propagated their message to the philosophical circles of France. I do not know if it is still in publication.

There is a definite relationship between ancient Greek philosophy and the Vedas. The oldest evidence of that relationship is traced in a book called **Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient** by M.L. West, published by the Clarendon Press at Oxford in 1971. Herein you will find details of how Vedic philosophy was utilized by Pherecydes, Anaxmander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Hesiod, Homer, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and Empedocles. This book is **very** interesting and

practically unknown to ISKCON devotees, from what I have seen. And this is not a "New Age" book of pop-mysticism, but a serious scholarly book.

Plotinus (205-270 AD), who is the founder of neo-Platonic philosophy (which comes much later in history than the doctrines of the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers mentioned above, therefore Plotinus is not covered in West's book), was also directly influenced by the Vedic knowledge. Plotinus' guru was Ammonius Saccas, who is thought by some to have come from India. In fact Plotinus himself tried to go to India to study under great sages there. Neoplatonism greatly influenced Christian thought throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

By the way, in my last text to Danda I wrote: "The second part, representing a refutation of solipsism based upon the philosophy of Bishop George Berkeley which Srila Prabhupada also agrees with (see *Dialectical Spiritualism* pages 215-216)". I should clarify that I did not mean to say that Srila Prabhupada agrees *in toto* with Berkeley's philosophy. He agrees with the portion of it that is dealt with in D.S. on pages 215-216 and expressed in the second part of the poem.

Comment by Akincana Krsna das

November 12, 1995

Dear Suhotra Maharaja,
let me add few words. In the Western philosophical tradition there is a term "panentheism" (don't confuse with 'pantheism'). It comes from Greek language: pan= everything + en= in + theos= God. The term was popularize by K.Ch.F. Krauze in the 19th century as a result of study on Indian thought. It brings ideas similiar to ours. The panentheists think God is the only substance that exists, and although God includes the universe He doesn't loose his personal separateness. The creation exist entirely in God, but He transcends the creation. The panentheism has different versions and some of it's proponents are or were: Plotinus, F.E.D. Schleiermacher, A.N. Whitehead, Ch. Hartshorne, Bierdiajev. Interestingly, some Indologists use the very same term (panentheism) to describe the concept of 'isvara' in Vaisnava vedanta.

SIVA ETC.

Questions from Bhakta Jan Mares

November 11, 1995

Please let me ask you few questions:

1. *What is the difference among Rudra, Siva and Sadasiva in relation to bodily color? Siva is usually described and pictured as blue-red, or reddish (SB 3.14.25), but sometimes as white or golden (SB 5, cover; SB 4.24.24-25).*

2. *In SB there are two seemingly contradictory verses regarding the attitude of demigods towards devotees and their sp. advancement: positive (SB 1.19.18) and negative (SB 11.4.10). Could you please reconcilliate them?*

3. *Srila Prabhupada says that the change of body at the time of death is immediate (740407MW.BOM). What does this "immediate" mean?*

4. *What is the exact scriptural reference to our four reg. principles? In Folio they are described as "vidhi" or "yama," but I haven't found any quotation. Are these principles the same in all sampradayas?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 11, 1995

1) The form of Siva who appeared from Brahma's forehead is named Rudra. He is described as nila-lohitah, a mixture of blue and red (*Bhag* 3.12.7). More or less the same account appears in other scriptures like the Visnu Purana and other puranas, but in some of these accounts Rudra is described as having a bluish-white body. A way to reconcile this is to remember that these acts of Brahma's creation take place at the beginning of each of his days; so with every new day, Rudra reappears, and not exactly in the same way and exactly in the same form as in other days. For instance, Mahabharata Vana Parva chapter 12 describes Rudra appearing from the forehead of Visnu when the Lord became angry with Madhu and Kaitabha's harrassments of Brahma. Siva assumes different forms for different purposes; his pure white form indicates his function as the judge of all living entities at the time of cosmic devastation. In Santi Parva chapter 166, Lord Brahma says Siva changes his color from blue to red to white. Brahma-samhita 5.8 states, tal-lingam bhagavan sambhur jyoti-rupah sanatanah, "This halo [emanating from the plenary portion of Maha-Sankarsana] is divine Sambhu, the masculine symbol or manifested emblem of the Supreme Lord. This halo is the dim twilight reflection of the supreme eternal effulgence." This "dim twilight reflection" is a golden color. This is the color of Sadasiva, or Sambhu.

2) Maya also means illusion and mercy. She tests the determination of the aspiring devotee as illusion, and she protects the devotees who have passed her test as mercy (daivi-prakrti). The demigods, who are the administrators of the material nature, have the same two-fold function in relationship with devotees.

3) Immediate means as soon as one departs from the gross body he is in another body, at least in the sense of being in the subtle body. To become a ghost after death means to not get another gross body right away, but still it means being in another body, the subtle body.

4) suta uvaca
abhyarthitas tada tasmai
sthanani kalaye dadau
dyutam panam striyah suna
yatradharmas catur-vidhah

TRANSLATION

Suta Gosvami said: Maharaja Pariksit, thus being petitioned by the personality of Kali, gave him permission to reside in places where gambling, drinking, prostitution and animal slaughter were performed.(Bhag. 1.17.38)

Dyutam means gambling, panam means drinking, striya means association with women and suna means animal slaughter. Where these four activities are performed, Kali resides, thus they are most sinful and are to be shunned by all devotees in all bona fide sampradayas.

"The four things are Kali's disciple, friends. We have already discussed this. So one friend is this meat-eating problem, the butchers, Kali's friends. And the liquor distiller. He's also Kali's friend. And the gamblers or the gambling house maintainer. And prostitute house maintainer. These are friends of Kali. Now you will find all over the world these things are very prominent. Clubs and butcherhouse and liquor house and gambling house. Therefore the whole atmosphere is Kali." (SP SB lecture 1974)

Prabhupada: Bhaktivinoda Thakura has sung one... Ei ota kalir chela: "Here is another disciple of Kali." Nake tilaka galai mala. "He has got tilaka on the

nose and mala, kanthi, also." Sahaja bhajana kache mamu sange lana pare bhalo: "And he's, he has become a Vaisnava by illicit sex." This is stated by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. "Here is a Kali's chela. He has dressed like a Vaisnava, but he is doing his bhajan with illicit sex." Sahaje bhajana kache mamu sange lana pare bhalo. You know? There is a class of sahajiyas?

Bali Mardana: Yes.

Prabhupada: Yes. Vaisnavas. Just like, dress like Rupa Gosvami, loincloth, and, but three dozen women behind him.

Bali Mardana: Yes, gopis.

Prabhupada: So Bhaktivinoda Thakura: "Here is a disciple of Kali. He has tilaka and he has kunti and he's doing this nonsense." Eita kalir chela. (SP morning walk July 13, 1974)

Comment by Narakara das

November 12, 1995

Well, on reading bhakta Jan's question regarding "scriptural reference to our four regulative principles," I immediately recalled one verse in connection:

loke vyavayamisa-madya-seva
nitya hi jantor na hi tatra codana
vyavasthitis tesu vivaha-yajna-
sura-grahair asu nivrttir ista

TRANSLATION: In this material world the conditioned soul is always inclined to sex, meat-eating and intoxication. Therefore religious scriptures never actually encourage such activities. Although the scriptural injunctions provide for sex through sacred marriage, for meat-eating through sacrificial offerings and for intoxication through the acceptance of ritual cups of wine, such ceremonies are meant for the ultimate purpose of renunciation. (SB 11.5.11)

Srila Prabhupada in one lecture comments:

In the sastra it is said, loke vyavayamisa-madya-seva nityas-tu jantor na hi tatra cadana. In the sastras, there is recommendation that "You can eat meat under certain certain condition. You can drink under certain conditions. You can marry, sex life, under certain conditions." Loke vyavaya amisa madya-seva. Vyavaya means sex; and amisa means meat eating; and madya-seva, drinking, intoxication. So sastra says that "Everyone, every living entity, has got a general tendency for these things: sex life, meat-eating and drinking." Then where is the need of sastric injunction? That sastric injunction is there not to encourage them, but to restrict them. In the human life, pravrttir esam bhutanam nrvttes tu maha-phalam.

You have got a tendency for sex life. Take for example. This is your tendency. But if you can check it, that is your success. Not that because you have got tendency, you have to increase it. That is not human civilization. Human civilization means we have got so many snimal propensities, and if we can control them, that is advancement of human civilization. Just try to understand. Not that "Because I have got this tendency, let me increase it without any restriction." That is not human civilization. (SB Lectures, 1.16.21, Hawaii, January 17, 1974)

Comment by Suhotra Swami

November 12, 1995

Yes, that is a useful quote also, which I too sometimes use in class, except that as an answer to this particular question, gambling is not mentioned. SB 1.17.38 mentions all four (un)regulative principles.

ATHEISM

Question from Jahnu das
November 12, 1995

I'm preaching to some atheists, and some of them have this idea, that any concept or idea which is not testable and falsifiable are to be rejected. They say that it is unreasonable to believe in God since the idea cannot be falsified.

Is there any sense in this? Isn't it like saying that ignorance is superior to knowledge?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
November 12, 1995

I'd start by asking them whether their idea that every idea must be falsified in order to be accepted is itself falsifiable. You will find out quickly that this is an axiom, an absolute principle--in other words, it is their own unquestionable holy atheistic Truth that lies beyond all reason.

This is the philosophical principle known as reflexivity. In mundane discourse, any "absolute" refutation of another position bounces ("reflexes") back upon the refutor to refute his own position. Reflexivity is an invariable defect in all material ideologies.

Rascals.

DISCIPLES GOING TO HEAVENLY PLANETS

Question from Vijnana das
November 14, 1995

In this mornings SB class the point arose about devotees aspiring to go to the heavenly planets. One devotee said that he had heard that Srila Prabhupada said that Most of his disciples would go to the heavenly planets. I have also heard that. But cannot remember where or from who. I remember hearing it a lot of times though. Do you know if Srila Prabhupada actually said that and where?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
November 15, 1995

I am not aware of that statement. You have Folio, so you can search for different combinations of words (disciple, heaven, ISKCON, heavenly, etc.) and see what you get. Even if you find something, there are other quotes which indicate otherwise. Finally, I can't conceive why this statement, which even if true is obscure, is being given so much attention. Prabhupada once said that just as airplanes float in the sky because of the petrol in their tanks, so the earth also floats, and if all the petroleum is extracted from the earth it will fall, just as an airplane falls when it runs out of petrol. But shall we make this quote into a major issue that we present in public lectures? "Petrol gives floatation power, that is why airplanes fly and the earth is suspended in space." Is this such a tattvic principle that we must make sure that all devotees and guests understand it? Bhagavad-gita says that devotees who do not perfect themselves will go to heaven, and then resume bhakti-yoga upon taking birth on earth again. That applies to certain cases; it is not a general principle that is to be preached in a way that will lead everyone to think, "Anyway, no matter how hard I try to become Krsna conscious, the chances are that I will go to the heavenly planets. So, why Brother being so strict?" Just

like in a certain case, Srila Prabhupada used the petrol flotation analogy. It is not a general principle to be applied everywhere.

THE CALENDAR

Comment by Suhotra Swami on Atmarama dasa's question
November 15, 1995

I am sorry, but I can't help you. If you wish more information about the Vaisnava method of calendar calculation, contact Markandeya Rsi das on COM. He is a member of this conference and will see your letter here. About the Adventist Church and why it is 1995, I am very happy to admit that I don't know anything about this. If you find out more about it from somewhere else, please don't put the info into this conference. If Markandeya Prabhu or anybody else in Danda is able to help Atmarama Prabhu, kindly send him a personal letter.

Comment by Prithu das Adhikari
November 18, 1995

Dear Atmarama Prabhu
You say:

<< I've been invited by the Adventistic Church for a public discussion about the Calendar, as to why now it is 1995 AD, etc... I'm supposed to present the Vaisnava concept, but I must admit that I don't know much. Could you perhaps explain a little about it? >>

Well I may be able to fill you in with some news - hope nobody is on my case to mess up the conference with such a huge file:

The Calendar is based on the date of birth of Jesus. You should know that there are huge Problems with that. The fact is that the calculation of the Christian Era is not at all accurate and was not fixed until the sixth century. It is based on the rather unsound mathematical calculation of a certain monk Dionysus Exiguus in 533 A.D. The specific day he set aside was the day the Roman God Mithra who was worshiped as the saviour of Mankind. This day was also termed as 'Dies Natalis Invict', the day of the Unconquerable. Besides that it was the day when acc. to Roman calculation the sun was born. This is in the middle of winter; surely not the season when 'shepherds abide in the fields and watch over their flock at night.' Rather during December Palestine is in the grip of frost. (Flocks are put to grass between the months of March and November.) Besides, Matthew as much as Luke date the birth of Jesus as during the Regim of Herod which lasted from between 39-4 B.C. That means Jesus must have been born at least FOUR YEARS BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA to be in the lifetime of Herod the Great in the reign of Augustus.

On the other hand we know from the Gospels as much as from the Roman Historian Tacitus that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate who governed Judea from 26-36 AD. ("Christus, from whom the name (of the Christians) had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate..." (Tacitus, Annals XV.44.3-8) Hippolytus (200 A.D.) states that Jesus suffered crucifixion in his thirty third year. He sets the date of Crucifixion as Friday, the 14th of Nisan (A.D.29) 1

If we try to harmonise this information with the reported events in Matthew (2:1-23) the birth of Jesus, the arrival of the Magi and the flight to Egypt all would have to have taken place in the last year of Herod's life, 4 B.C.

This is not the only problem:
Matthew reports:

"...when Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were

two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi." (Matthew 2:16).

This last sentence then rather seem to indicate that Jesus must have been born at least within the last two years of Herod's reign which would place his birth at 5 or even 6 BC. Consequently he either died in 28 or 27 BC with 33 years of age according to Hippolytos' estimate of Jesus' age at crucifixion or with 35 years if we are to maintain with Hippolytos the date of Crucifixion as Friday, the 14th of Nisan (A.D.29). Whichever way we are to decide, in any case the present choice of the date of birth of Jesus as the beginning of the Christian era is by all accounts out of question and totally arbitrary.

2. The Census of Quirinius

If you try to determine the date of Jesus on the basis of the famous statement in Luke, namely that Joseph, Mary and Jesus went to Bethlehem to attend the Census of Quirinius, you open yet another Pandora's box: "... In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. (Luke 2:1-5)

The fact is that Quirinius was not the Governor of Syria at that time (he went as a Legate to Syria only as late as 6 A.D. The Governor was Varus.

3. The Star

If you try to do the same by using the star of Bethlehem, more trouble is ahead. Whatever may be the case, the first part of Matthew, the report on the Magi from the East, following a star in the sky, has attracted the attention of astrologers of all times.

The German Astrologer Johannes Keppler observed on December 17th in 1603 a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces. He recorded the same event in 6 B.C. and calculated that a similar constallation must have occured at 7 BC. Keppler found support for his theory in a jewish rabbinical reference to the Messiah appearing when Saturn and Jupiter were in conjunction in the constallation of Pisces. Churchfather Origen was of the opinion, that the star of Bethlehem was actually a comet. Origen writes:

..."The star that was seen in the east we consider to have been a new star, unlike any of the other well-known planetary bodies, either those in the firmament above or those among the lower orbs, but partaking of I the the nature of those celestial bodies which appear at times, such as comets, or those meteors, which resemble beams of wood, or beards or wine jars or any of those names by which the Greeks are accustomed to describe their varying appearanccs. And we establish our position in the following manner.

..... but we have read in the Treatise on Comets by Cheaeremon, the Stoic that on some occasions also, when good was to happen, comets made their appearances; and he gives an account of such instances...."

"Now I would say that with respects to comets there is no prophecy in circulation to the effect that such and such a comet was to arise in connection with a particular kingdom or a particular time; but with respect to the appearance of a star at the birth of Jesus there is a prophecy of Balaam recorded by Moses to this effect " There shall arise a star out of Jacob, and a man shall rise up out of Israel."And now, if it shall be deemed necessary to examine the narrative about the Magi, and the appearance of the star at the birth of Jesus, the following is what we have to say, partly in answer - to the Greeks, and partly to the Jews..." (Origin, Contra Celsum I, Ch 58-60, from Ante Nicene Father Vol II, p.422/43)

This statement compares well with the conclusion of the German Scholar Schnabel who, according to the positions of planets in the constellation of pisces fixed the year of 7 B.C. According to him in that year the well known Halley's comet which reappears at an interval of 76 years was visible in the sky. According to

that the appearance of a star guiding the magies seem to settle the year of birth for the year 7 B.C.

Edmund Halley discovered 79 years later the comet of the same name. It was calculated that one of its periodic fly-pasts would have occurred in 12 BC. There is an interesting statement in the Protoevangelium of James , 21 "...And he (Herod) examined the Magi, saying to them:" What sign have you seen in reference to the king the has been born?" And the Magi said: "We have seen a star of great size shining among these stars and obscuring their light, so that the stars did not appear. And we thus knew that a king has been born to Israel and we have come to worship him. Protoevangelium of James , 21 ante nic Vol VIII, page 366 This statement could well support the opinion of David Clark of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, John Parkinson of Dorkin's Mullard Space Science Laboratory and Richard Stephenson of Newcastle University who have offered an interesting theory: That the star of Bethlehem was actually a Nova, visible to the Chinese Astronomers of the Han dynasty for more than seventy days in 5 BC. The acceptance of these accounts would all place the birth of Jesus between 7 and 5 BC, that means 5 - 7 years off target of the present calculation!!!

That the Gospels in no way are historically reliable can be shown easily as follows:

Take for example the events preceding the birth of Jesus: The only evidence we derive is based on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke in accounts, which are impossible to reconcile and in fact mutually excluding each other. In Matthew Joseph is visited by an angel and NOT Mary while in Luke Mary is visited and NOT Joseph. In Luke the divinity of Jesus is announced to shepherds by angels while in Matthew a star appears in the sky, an event which is entirely omitted by all other Gospels. In Luke the shepherds of the fields of Bethlehem appear to adore the new-born child while in Matthew the Magi appear to worship Jesus. According to Matthew it appears that Joseph's home is to be Bethlehem. From there he and his family flee to Egypt, based on a warning in a dream to Joseph while Herod, the Great, based on the evidence of the Magi is engaging himself in an extraordinary massacre of children, an atrocity which would not possibly have evaded the attention of the famous Historian Josephus, who reported on events of much lesser importance in Israel and of the ongoings at the court of Herod. We do know however from Josephus that Herod was cruel (Antiquities XIV:11-16) and that killing of innocent children to destroy a possible pretender to the throne could not be considered out of character.

From Egypt then, a voyage according to Matthew predicted in the Old Testament (2:15), "Out of Egypt I called my son." (Hosea 11:1), Joseph and his family, being "afraid to return" again due to another warning in a dream (2:22) "withrew to Nazareth" in fulfillment of the prophecy that "he would be called a Nazarene" (2:23), a prophecy impossible to substantiate from the Old Testament. Opposite to the tremendous disturbances accompanying the birth of Jesus in Matthew, in Luke the home of the holy family is Nazareth. From here Mary and Joseph set out to Bethlehem, to abide to a census of Augustus which is not mentioned in any of the other Gospels nor possible to corroborate by contemporary sources (see p....).

They continue to journey to Jerusalem which would be according to the description in Matthew would have meant to enter the lions (Herod's) den, presented there the child in the temple and returned to Nazareth (2:39) where they lived in peace. Hence scholars in general and since long have suggested that the events described above might not be taken to be actually historical but rather to serve as embellishments or as constructions to fulfil predictions from the Old Testament and to substantiate the Messianic claims of Christianity in particular.

Further indications of contradictions:

The Genealogy accounts of Jesus' descent: If Jesus was to be the Messiah he would appear in Bethlehem. He needed to be a descendent of the house of David. In

that sense one would think the extensive efforts to establish the genealogy of Jesus in both Luke and Matthew are to be understood, which are again not recorded in Mark and John. Not are both genealogies proposed by Luke and Matthew not in agreement with each other. Even if they were, the problem is that the whole genealogical section of the two gospels which aims to present the pedigree descent of Jesus from the house of David David fails to do so being at variance with the virgin birth accounts. It traces the ancestry of Joseph, while the whole point of the Virgin Birth report of Jesus is that not Joseph but the Holy Spirit is the father of Jesus. This as far as the Gospel research as far as the birth of Jesus is concerned. If you study the empty grave reports, again: you will find four Gospels reporting four stories not just contradicting but completely excluding each other.

Conclusion:

Take it from me who is working since years on a (forthcoming) book concerning these matters: If you want to be frustrated, try to establish the historical Jesus. Based on the Christian scripture it is simply impossible. The Gospel accounts are reliable neither historically nor sound theologically. (see Srila Prabhupada 's purport to Mahaprabhu's discussion with the Kazi)

All Glories to Srila Prabhupada!!!
He saved us from being Christians.
Gracious God would we be in trouble.
your servant
Prithu das Adhikary
PS

Kindly do NOT to use the above rough excerpts of my forthcoming publication for publishing purposes. I be willing though to enter into further discussions on the subject.

1 Encyclopedia Brittanica 11Ed. Vol.II,p.891

Comment by Suhotra Swami
November 18, 1995

Before I did say that this question should not be answered here, but Prthu Prabhu's answer is so full of interesting details that who could complain. Rather than complain, all the Danda-ites are shouting for more!

Comment by Atmarama das
November 19, 1995

Dear Prithu Prabhu, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.
Thank you for the information. I will certainly use them. But I also need to know the Vaisnava calculation. I remember reading in CC that now we are in the Sakabda era, and also Srila Prabhupada mentions some Bengal year. What is the principle of those calculations? I know that for us the Gaurabda is accurate. What about the four yugas? I remember reading in Vedic Cosmography... that there are some calculations that Kali-yuga started 3102 BC, so is there some connection?

Comment by Prithu das Adhikari
November 23, 1995

<< Before I did say that this question should not be answered here, but Prthu Prabhu's answer is so full of interesting details that who could complain. Rather than complain, all the Danda-ites are shouting for more! >>

All right, I am enthused and sufficiently tempted to let more of the cat out of my bag:

Here we go:

It is very clear acc to scholarship that CHRISTIANITY IS THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS ACCORDING TO PAUL.

Paul actually re-defined Christianity, to be precise.

While it is fair to say that Paul deserves praise for saving the teachings of Jesus to end in the bhauma ijya-dhah provincialism of James, Peter and the rest of the original disciples in Jerusalem (who were not able to see Christianity go beyond a reformed Judaism) Paul unfortunately did not stop there but incorporated various definitely non-sanatan-dharma elements into his preaching for which there is no authority acc. to standard spiritual knowledge, Torah or Veda. Foremost: the whole Soteriology of Christianity - The Salvation through the cross concept (A concept which of course Srila Prabhupada totally rejected.)

Bombay April 2, 1977:

Tamala Krishna: He says, "What is the actual meaning of the sacrifice of the cross, Jesus dying on the cross?"

Prabhupada: IT HAS NO MEANING. The people were so rascal that they attempted to kill him. Because he was speaking of God. So we can understand the pollution of the then society, how intelligent they were. He had to deal with such rascals that he was speaking about God and the result is that they wanted to kill him first. He preached, "Thou shalt not kill," and they killed him first. This is their intelligence. Now people are advanced. THOSE DOCTRINES, THEY ARE NOT... (indistinct). THAT'S ALL.

(just see how precisely Srila Prabhupada captured the point/ pda)

Tamala Krishna: He says, "Did Jesus die on the cross to redeem all the sins of the world?"

Prabhupada: This is another sinful thought Jesus has taken contract for ridding your sinful activities.(!!!) That's a plea, what is called plea for the sinners, that they will continue acting sinfully, and Christ will take contract to counteract. This is most sinful conviction. Instead of stopping sinful activities, we have given contract to Jesus Christ to counteract it.

Tamala Krishna: So these people are not actually getting free of their sins unless they stop sinning.

Prabhupada: Then what is the use of his preaching? They will continue sinful activities, and Jesus Christ will take contract for saving them. How nonsense idea this is! Bhavananda, do you think it is good idea?

Bhavananda: Not a good idea, Srila Prabhupada .

Prabhupada: Nonsense rascals. These people should be immediately hanged. "Our religion is very good." What is that? "We cannot stop acting sinfully, and Christ has taken contract. He will save us." How rascaldom it is! Namno balad papa-buddhi. Nama-aparadha. "I am chanting Hare Krishna, so no sinful action will be." It is like that. That means "I will continue my sinful activities and become a Christian, become a Vaishnava, become a chanter."

Tamala Krishna: Nama-aparadha.

And as this were not enough, later Srila Prabhupada puts all this in writing in a letter to Francois Pierre:

"The answers to your questions are as follows:

1) Yes, the message of Jesus is universally applicable. Why not? Jesus says, 'Thou shalt not kill.' This is applicable to all. But all Christians are violating this law. So where is a Christian? In my opinion there is not a single Christian.(!!!!) Do they follow all ten commandments?

2) We accept Jesus Christ as shakti avesa avatar, an empowered incarnation of God.

3) The Bible should be accepted literally and not symbolically. There is no symbolical meaning of the sacrifice on the cross. (!!!!) The people were so rascal. They attempted to kill him because he was speaking of God. We can understand the position of that society. He had to deal with such rascals. He preached 'Thou shalt not kill,' and they killed him. The argument that Jesus died to redeem us of sins is simply another sinful argument. (!!!!) That Jesus has taken contract to redeem your sins is simply a plea of the sinners. They continue sinning and expect Christ to take the contract to freedom. It is most sinful. Instead of actually stopping sins, they contract with Jesus Christ. These people should be immediately hanged.

4) Regarding Christ coming again, for the time being, you follow his instructions. Then if he comes it will be all right. Regarding the position of our movement if Christ were to come again, that we shall see when he comes. 'The end of the world' means that the world will be devastated. Just like you have a body and it will be finished, similarly the whole world body will be devastated. Creation, maintenance and annihilation. Nasha in Sanskrit means devastated.

Last:

5) "There is no difference between a pure Christian and a sincere devotee of Krishna....."

In the same vain the Last Supper is actually described in its EARLIEST ACCOUNTS in Paul's letter to the Corinthians only. It is therefore ante-dating the Gospel narrations by four decades and due to the development of a Christianity acc to Paul it found it's way into the Gospel accounts by the pious scribes.

In that sense it is noteworthy that this last Supper described in the Gospels was NOT celebrated in the original Church of Jerusalem or anywhere else in the Ur-kirche. Here is the original paulinic account, note specifically the first sentence:

"... For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: (So here where it comes from / Prithu) The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."
(1 COR 11:23-25)

Historically then there are three stages in the development of Christianity which will, when clearly understood, will give us the basic understanding of the Christian phenomena:

The first stage is being Jesus and the twelve, the whole itinerant traveling and preaching phase with "look at the birds in the sky, they do not sow and do not reap etc., the Sermon of the Mount etc., thou shalt love thy Lord etc. And become as perfect as your father is perfect. Change of heart is at the basis of these teachings, leave the world behind, let the dead bury the dead... It is the "Wander Radicalismus" of the Unmarried, roaming the country and preaching to repent and to love God with all thy soul. Predictably this lead to considerable tensions with the Sekten Experten of the Jewish Orthodoxy and ultimately paved the way to cross. Those were the early days...

The next phase is the after Easter phase: The Jerusalem Church around James and Peter, now often married and settled, who tried to come to terms with the Jesus

experience and his unexpected crucifixion acc. to their capacity and who acc. to my understanding quite didn't get it. Vaishnavera kriya mudra. The difference to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is that he had highly elevated and learned men around him to preserve his teachings. Here we have fishers, simple men.

However, these men, while not perceiving the teachings of Jesus BEYOND the Torah were serious devotees, adhering to ascetic practices and Vegetarianism (inconceivable that they would not have been taught this by Jesus himself - "no servant is greater than his master") These were the puritans, later condemned as fanatics and finally declared heretical in their succeeding movements as Ebionites and Nazarites (all Vegetarian).

It is most significant that they described Paul as the first Christian Apostate (that means who fell from the faith) They were for at least twenty years heavily embroiled in fighting with Paul and followers and ultimately lost the battle. Due to their Jewish-ness they would acc to scholars have participated in the Rise of all of Israel in rise against the Romans. Consequently they would have not survived the ensuing massacre of the entitè city of Jerusalem in 70 AD. There are description of a flight to Transjordan, pella though. But these people were scattered, all information about them are distorted and possibly destroyed by later Christian fanatics.

Only AFTER all that all 4 Gospels were compiled...

Paul and his followers make up the next phase of Christian development. Different from the original disciples of Jesus Paul was an intellectual, the first Theologian, well trained, according to him trained at the feet of the famous Pharisaic teacher and scribe Gamaliel (Acts 22:3, this report is by the way is doubted by scholars). Naturally in comparison to him the Jerusalem community was no match.

He had no proper concepts of the teachings of Jesus either (having never met Jesus except as described by Paul himself in his encounter on the Road to Damascus (which is impossible to verify and I cannot help to have some doubts about) And even if he met Jesus, the instructions from him are very different from what he must told the other apostles. Hence the controversy.

Like everyone else he is similarly on the bodily platform by all accounts, and being trapped in the thought patterns of his Pharisaic upbringing (who were by the way the only Jewish sect which believed in the RESURRECTION of the dead , - hence hardly any traces are left in the later Gospels of reincarnational concepts and the resurrection of the flesh is prominently featured) Let us not forget that the Pharisees Sect were not exactly the target of Jesus' adoration.

Paul would define now Christianity according to his realization. It is indicative that he does not at all dwell in all of his writings on the historical Jesus or his sayings like one would expect from him (like we say Srila Prabhupada said this and Srila Prabhupada said that). Indeed there are hardly a handful of references to the historical person. Rather he goes to work with expounding his own philosophy which acc to his own writings are unacceptable by the direct followers of Jesus.

At the heart of it all is the idea of the Salvation coming from the cross. It is the cross which becomes the climax event from now on, providing the Salvation of men. Acc to the Torah crucifixion of a person actually points to the divine damnation of the victim. "... If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, 23 you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse."

(Deuteronomy 21:22-23)

Paul rationalized that Jesus surviving crucifixion shows that he actually dislodged the Torah and its teaching. By the death of Jesus and his Resurrection the Torah had become irrelevant and the end the old covenant of Moses had come: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." (Roman 3:23-25)

" For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. (Roman 3:28)

This of course is a whole step further from the teachings of Jesus who, see above declared the Torah not irrelevant (for the general public) but rather pointed towards the fulfillment of the Torah in pure Bhakti:

"...'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS HANG ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS. (!!!)" (Matthew 22:37-40)

Jesus thus spoke the truth when he said that in Bhakti the Torah was fulfilled: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17)

Praise the Lord.

But for Paul the teachings of Jesus, the Jesus of History was practically irrelevant. Rather the cross, that very thing which brought about in the past condemnation now provided Salvation of mankind and inaugurated a new age. Not deeds were yielding salvation (Like in the old Jewish religion), (and true: sanatana dharma is not the ascending path) but only faith in Jesus crucified, dying for our sins and resurrected on the third day.

Christianity was invented and is based on this crucial error.

As Paul was preaching in the Greco-Roman world (where Savior Gods were en vogue, dying on behalf of their followers) this concept fell on most Vergile grounds. Indeed as I have pointed out in Text 242539 of this conference, the specific day set aside as Christmas is actually the birth day of the Roman God Mitra who was worshipped as the savior of Mankind. This day was also termed as 'Dies Natalis Invict', the day of the Unconquerable.

So my understanding now of all this is:

Paul and James/Peter's party had poor understanding of the transcendental message of Jesus - both being on the bodily platform. The Jerusalem Church deviated, regressing to a certain degree into Judaism after the demise of the master. Paul who, differently from them, understood the message of Jesus to be universal speculated wildly. He threw out the Torah, lock stock and barrel, and concocted various elements (also deification of Jesus) which are based on authority neither of the Torah nor Veda. (After all why should God be on the mental platform, that here somebody had to die on the cross for our sins while 5000 years before Krishna clearly declared aham tvam sarva papebhyoh mohshayishyami etc. Even Vasudeva datta was not allowed to take the sins of the universe..

Because the second phase of Christianity presents James and Peter clearly as Vegetarian (I will show that in my publication in the later writings of the fathers of the Church). They had no faith in the concept of salvation coming from the cross (see Letter of James, possibly not by James himself but breathing his spirit), they knew Jesus better than that. And it's absolutely amazing that Paul actually tells it himself: "...One man's faith allows him to eat

everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables..." (Roman 14:2)

The smoking gun is right there: Paul's concept of faith in the salvific nature of the cross, declaring the Torah obsolete and viewing the Vegetarianism of the apostles possibly as dietetic Fanaticism of nazarene jewish origin culture justifies the eating of flesh. First at least in the back room: "...It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. (Roman 14:21) which later is reflected in Timothy:

"... They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving..." (1 Timothy 4:3-4)

Consequently the teachings of the Apostles in Jerusalem (James, Peter which Paul sarcastically describes as "those Superapostles", "those reputed to be the Pillars" etc., (there is a whole barrage on my file of abuse as far as the original disciples is concerned) are not what Paul is overly concerned with. And so he tells his followers: "... For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. (2 Cor 11:4)

Conclusion:

All three movements, the original Jesus movement, James and Peter and the rest in Jerusalem (who regressed partially into Judaism exactly like sentimental Hare Krishna devotees who can't quite get over their Christian background and finally Paul have left their definite imprint on the Gospels. And so you have actually three strata of teachings.

This of course is the reason for all the confusion that brakes out if you seriously start comparing the Gospel accounts, and therefore, the Gospels acc to Christian teachings being divinely inspired, the holy spirit manages at times to speak out of 4 sides of his mouth simultaneously, leaving the befuddled reader with 4 totally different and often mutually excluding each other reports.

Jerusalem fell in 70 AD and with it perished the Jerusalem church (whose survivors fled acc to Epiphanius to Pella and up to the forth century were Vegetarians, with their own Vegetarian Gospel, declaring the animal sacrifices of the temple being terminated by Jesus' teachings and ... condemning Paul as the first Christian Apostate. They remained small and insignificant, a small group of puritans, crying in the desert.

Paul's party, being a success in the Greco-Roman world with its pagan element of a savior God became the successor of the teachings of Jesus by default.

Heresy became orthodoxy - Orthodoxy became Heresy.

"...Two thousand years passed, but you could not accept the instruction of Lord Jesus Christ. And you are all claiming that you are Christian. When did you accept Christianity? That is my question. Because you have disobeyed the order of Christ. So when did you accept? Two thousand years passed. Hmm? Who will answer this question?..." (Srila Prabhupada / May 9/75 Perth)

All Glories to His Divine Grace, who by his transcendental realization was able to reach through 2000 years of history to see pebbles of gold in the sand of that religion.

ys pda

PS

The publication I am working on in this regard is conceived as a preaching tool towards the outside world. It's also intended to help to devotees all over the world to get rid of their mental hung ups about Christianity. It will establish the Vaishnava teachings as Supreme and will establish Jesus as a vaishnava preacher.

I am not so concerned with the Jesus went to India lore as this will just take the focus away from the thrust of the book as shown above.

However I do have still some cards up my sleeve in this regard and promise some surprise when all goes well with the return of a certain Tibetan Lama to India from Tibet/now China when all goes well this summer. The world may be in for a surprise, and sorry, no, I can't let anybody in on this right now.

The Bhavishya Purana accounts I am not so sure about. We need a Bhavishya Purana ante-dating the arrival of the British to counter the insertion claims of Western scholars.

But there IS one intriguing thing I have not seen in any of the "Jesus went to India" literature and which I came across only accidentally while studying the accounts of the Churchfather Irenaeus in the Harvard University library:

It says there, hold your breath:

"Despite the heresy of it, the early church father, Irenaeus, testified to reports coming from those he trusted in Asia that Jesus had reached old age while still being a teacher."

What a stunt of this servant of yours!

PS

I appreciate any input by all of you as already begun by Bhakta Jan Mares.

<< I also need to know the Vaisnava calculation. I remember reading in CC that now we are in the Sakabda era, and also Srila Prabhupada mentions some Bengal year. What is the principle of those calculations? I know that for us the Gaurabda ic accuret.>>

I have no idea.

<<What about the four yugas? I remember reading in Vedic Cosmography... that there are some calculations that Kali-yuga started 3102 BC>>

That's what the karmis may say. I have seen that too in writing.

We don't accept that.

ys pda

ST. ODRAN'S REPORT FROM BEYOND

Text by Suhotra Swami

November 15, 1995

There is a most interesting account of early Christian history involving two saints, Odran and Columba. In AD 536, St Columba established a church at Iona. Desiring that the church be protected, Columba came up with the idea to perform a human sacrifice (!). His associate St Odran volunteered to be the victim. He was buried alive by Columba's men. Later Columba had the grave opened, and Odran was found to be alive. He reported that he'd had a look into the afterlife, and saw "The saved are not forever happy, the damned are not forever lost." St Columba, fearing that Odran was speaking heresy, ordered his men to bury him again.

This is no joke, it is traditional Church history. And it show that in the early days of the Church there was an understanding that both heaven and hell are not eternal situations for the spirit soul. But this understanding was covered up by the official party line that sinners go to hell forever and the pious enjoy in heaven forever.

Very interesting.

Comment by BMD

November 17, 1995

Where is Iona?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

November 17, 1995

From the context of the article I found this story in, it seemed that Iona is an island. Might be a Greek island. But the article did not give a geographic reference.

Perhaps somebody can look it up in an encyclopedia or something like that and let you know, by private letter that is. I'd do it but my encyclopedia set is all packed away in boxes.

Comment by Prithu das Adhikari

November 18, 1995

Good to have Microsoft Bookshelf / CD.

It says: "IONA island, 3.5 mi (5.6 km) long and 1.5 mi (2.4 km) wide, NW Scotland, one of the Inner HEBRIDES. Tourism is the main industry. The island is famous as the early center of Celtic Christianity. In 563 St. COLUMBA founded a monastery there and spread Christianity to Scotland."

ys Pda

PS This place is NOT to be mistaken by the Ionian Islands, which ARE near Greece as Suhotra M. proposed: "Ionian Islands, A chain of islands of western Greece in the Ionian Sea. Colonized by the ancient Greeks, the islands subsequently came under the rule of Rome, Byzantium, Venice, France, Russia, and Great Britain before beány ceded to Greece in 1864." Bookshelf is a must.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

November 18, 1995

Thank you very much!

MANU SAMHITA

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

November 17, 1995

1. Which Manu/s is/are the author/s of Manu-samhita?

SB 7.8.48p.: "The Manus compiled the Manu-samhita." Later in the same purp.: "Manu gave the law known as Manu-samhita(...)."

- From the first quote it seems that there are more Manus involved.

- From the context of the second quote it appears that the author is Vaivasvata Manu, which is also confirmed in 740218BG.BOM.

- According to SB 8.1.16 and 710406LE.BOM itself the author is Svayambhuva Manu.

2. To which extent are we supposed to follow it?

In the first quoted purport SP says, "The conclusion is that if we want real peace and order in the human society, we must follow the principles laid down by the Manu-samhita and confirmed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

On the other hand I heard that SP said to his grhastha disciples in Italy (who wanted to live according to M-s) that they will not be able to follow it because they are low-born. He also supposedly said that if we touch M-s we'll fall lower than mlecchas.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 17, 1995

This is a hobby-question, isn't it? It doesn't make any difference to anyone's Krsna consciousness, nor to the ISKCON mission, which Manu is the author of the Manu-samhita.

Svayambhuva Manu (who is also known as Manavacarya) is traditionally credited with authorship of Manusmṛti. But since Manu is a post, not a specific person, and since the post is that of the "law-giver of mankind," it is not an unusual state of affairs for the law be re-given or appended by a Manu after Svayambhuva Manu. Just like, though the Constitution of the US was written in 1789 by the so-called Founding Fathers like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, it was amended by lawgivers of later generations. The amendment passed after the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1945 limiting the president to twoterm in office was certainly not written by the Founding Fathers. But it is still part of the US Constitution.

With a little bit practical knowledge, and applicative intelligence, these hobby-questions answer themselves.

Regarding your second question, Manusmṛti is the dharma-sastra for Varnasrama society. Nectar of Devotion is the dharma-sastra for ISKCON society. Nana-sastra-vicaranaika-nipunau sad-dharma-samsthapakau lokanam hita-karinau tri-bhuvane manyau saranyakarau. These lines from Srisadgosvamyastakam answer your question in full, but the short answer is that the Manusmṛti principles are contained in the NOD principles. Just like the principles of the Codes of Hammurabi are contained in modern European-American legal codes. Not in detail, but in spirit. To say in 1995 that "I don't care for modern codes of law, I will follow the ancient Codes of Hammurabi" is the program of the knucklehead.

PRAPATTI

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

December 8, 1995

In the course about 4 sampradayas I've found following description:

Prapatti:

Visistadvaita philosophy discusses besides Bhakti `prapatti' or absolute self surrender to God as an alternative means to `moksa'. Bhakti is a rigorous discipline, and for those, who are incapable of undertaking it, `prapatti' is advocated as an alternative easy path to `moksa.' This doctrine is adopted on the strength of the teachings contained in the Vedas as well as the Itihasas, Puranas, and Pancaratra literature.

Could you please elaborate on this subject? Is it anything similar to what some Christians advocate ("only faith")?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 9, 1995

From what I know about Sri Ramanujacarya's life and teachings--and I don't claim to be an authority--the concept of prapatti refers to the surrender of a person of a low background (non-brahmana) to the Lord and His pure devotee. The practice of bhakti-yoga referred to is that which is done by brahmanas as they serve the Deities in the temple. Famous instances of prapatti are seen in the lives of the Alvars, the 12 transcendentalists whose teachings form the foundation of the Sri Sampradaya doctrine. About whether this has anything to do with the Christian "only faith" idea, well, that's a dogma. Prapatti is not a dogma opposed to other dogmas. Prapatti is a way for persons who are unqualified to do Deity worship to take complete shelter of the Lord.

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

Question from Radha Vinoda das

December 8, 1995

As you know my wife is corresponding with some people here. Here is an interesting question, which appears in a letter: "But now I would like to ask some quest. but because they are many and long I'll ask one quest. in every one my letter." So, I hope it might become an interesting for you diskussion. Further:"...I would like to have an EXAKT and argumeted answer.So, here is my quest: In "Krisna book" it is said that king Ugrasena had 10 quadrillion soldiers as personal guards. Isn't it an fantasmagory meant for simple people, because we can see how the things realy are: the number 10 quadrilion, according to USA and ex-USSR standards is

15

10×10^8 . So we can see the area needed for such a number people.

2

2

If we accept that on $1m$. we can have 5 persons, than on $1km$. we can have 5 000 000 people.Thus we can calculate that the area needed for

8×10^8

1 quadrilion people is 20×10^8 km . We can easely calulate

2

2

the area of the planet. it is $S=4 \times 3.14 \times R^2$, so it is $4 \times 3.14 \times 6371^2 =$

8×10^8

5×10^8 km . Above we calculated that for 1 quadrilion soldiers is needed

8×10^8

8

8

20×10^8 km . From this two numbers: 5×10^8 and 20×10^8 we see that only for 1 quadrilion people we need 4 times the area of the earth. WHAT

15

ABOUT 10 QUADRILION ? And WHAT IF WE ACCEPT AS A QUADRILION NOT 10

24

but 10^8 because this is the real mathematical meening of this number.

It shows me that if there is one fantasmagory then everything else is fantasmagory (I will show in my further letters that it is not only one)...

But I don't want some abstract answer. Example: When Jean Klod Karier - french writer - asked Sankaracarya why Krisna is disturbed on the battlefiel d Kuruksetra, He didn't know what's happening - Why, He is a God? The answer was: "It Is a human's weakness to think in this way" This kind answering doesn't answer the question..... Yours sencerely: Eni" (male)

Dear Maharaja, I see that it is a quite technical question, but the questioner wants the technical answer. Please answer if you find it interesting. I'll send the following questions, if there are some.

Comment by Jahnu das

December 8, 1995

Sorry to bud in. Sada Puta das suggests the following:

I paraphrase: This planet doesn't even have space enough to hold all soldiers of King Ugrasena's life guard if we they are given a space of two square meters each but since they live in Dvaraka which is Krishna's transcendental dimension, which is unlimited, there is no problem of missing space. The problem is resolved when we accept that the ordinary three dimensional model is put out of function when it comes to Krishna's transcendental pastimes which don't necessarily take place in mere three dimensions.

SOUL AND THE SUBTLE BODY

Questions from Kamalavati dd

December 8, 1995

Kadamba Kanana pr was describing in his morning class the different tortures the yamadutas afflict upon the sinful jivas. It was said that although thier intestines are taken apart & similar other things happen to them they don't die because they are in thier subtle bodies. As far as I know the subtle body consistes of mind, intelligence and false ego so I couldn't quite understand where are these intestines to be found? Is the subtle body exactly like the grosse material body the only difference beány that it is subtle? I find all this rather bewildering - Guru Maharaja, can you please kindly explain it?

The question was also raised : "What is the form of the soul?" It is said that the form of the soul is cad-cid-ananda-vigraha or eternal. Why is it said then that in the prossess of devotional service we develop our spiritual bodies? What does the soul look like in the material body? What I understood from the class is that the ordinary conditioned soul in the material world is in a kind of a seed form. If it is like this does it mean that its eternal form is temporarily covered?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 9, 1995

Yes, the subtle body is make of mind, intelligence and false ego, and what is false ego? It is the identification with the gross body. So the subtle body fits the gross body like a hand fits the glove. In India, mystic yogis in places like Rishikesh can roll their intestinem around in their bellies by their mental control over their physical bodies. So how could they do that if the subtle body was not connected also to the intestines? Again, another example. Why are we shocked and disgusted by the sight of the insides coming out of a gross body? Because of a conception programmed into the mind that this is horrible. The mind *identifies* with the internal organs, in the rasas of shock and horror. Therefore intestines are "in the mind," and the Yamadutas are so expert they can pull them out of the mind.

The soul looks like a spark, 1/10 000 the size of the tip of a hair. The form of a tree lies in potential within the seed, similarly the spiritual form of living entity lies in potential within the spirit spark.

GOING BTG WITHOUT CHANGING BODY

Question from Kamalavati dd
December 16, 1995

I was very surprised to read in SB 1.15.47-48 that "the Pandavas, beány completely washed of all material contamination, attained that abode in their very same bodies". In the purp SP writes "According to Srila Jiva Gosvami, a person freed from the three modes of material qualities,..., and situated in transcendence can reach the highest perfection of life without change of body." I was so surprised to read this because we hear so many times a day that we are not the body. Moroever so many pure devotees in our parampara for exemple were defenitly free from "the three modes of materiál qualities" but still we know that they have their eternal form in the spiritual world. Guru Maharaja, can you please kindly explain this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 8, 1995

First thing is, you have to be prepared for events in the lila of the Lord and His devotees that are completely outside of your power of understanding. Then, one conclusion we are obliged to draw here is that the "bodies" of the Pandavas are actually their own transcendental siddha-deha forms. Just as Krsna appears and disappears in His own form, coming to the material world and leaving it without changing His body, so also do His eternal associates like the Pandavas. That it indicates they became free of the modes of nature is a lesson for us, just like Arjuna's "falling into Maya" on the battlefield of Kuruksetra is a lesson for us. But all this is happening under the direction and protection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

JAYA & VIJAYA

Question from Bhakta Maxim
December 22, 1995

While reading Srimad Bhagavatam I came across one interesting statement in 8.21.16-17. This is a description of a fight between Lord Vamanadeva's associates and Bali Maharaja's demoniac soldiers. But among other associates of the Lord, Jaya and Vijaya are listed that is quite surprising, since they were supposed to be somewhere in material world by that time, having already taken birth once as Hiranyaksa and Hiranyakasipu. The later was the great-grandfather of Bali Maharaja. And they the two still had two more births in the material world ahead to go through. How was it possible for them to act in the meanwhile as the Lord's associates? Were they some other Jaya and Vijaya (may be there are many on Vaikuntha)?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 22, 1995

One thing we should learn as devotees. As soon as our minds start to think, "How is this possible" in connection with the lila of the Lord and His devotees, we should become very conscious of our insignificance. But still, we should try to understand and not be blind followers, so the question is good. Among the associates mentioned are Nanda and Sunanda. But they are not the Nanda (Maharaja) and Sunanda Gopa of Goloka Vrndavana. They are another Nanda and Sunanda from Vaikuntha. There are other examples of residents of different regions in the spiritual sky sharing the same names. There is a cowherd body named Arjuna, different from the Arjuna of the Bhagavad-gita, for instance. There are countless Vaikuntha planets with countless doorkeepers, servants,

associates, etc. Lord Vamana has His own planet. It is not indicated anywhere that the 4 Kumaras visited Vamana-loka. So . . . I believe the answer is quite clear by now.

Comment by Bhakta Maxim

December 23, 1995

Thank you very much for the explicit answer.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

December 30, 1995

Is your answer pertaining also to the Rahu's presence in the battle (SB 8.10.30-31, 8.21.19) ? (Some demon Rahu was already killed: SB 8.9.25).

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 30, 1995

I don't see your logic. The question and answer concerned the Lord's associates in Vaikuntha. You are bringing in a demon, and asking if my answer pertains to him also. Demons are not generally described as beány residents of Vaikuntha.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

December 30, 1995

I'm really sorry for not being clear, Maharaja. By no means I wanted to compare the Lord's associates with a demon. Rather I tried to find out the identity of a demon named Rahu participating in the battle between the demigods and the demons, because the one generálky known was killed by Mohini-murti before the battle started. Therefore it's difficult to imagine how he could take part in that battle. You indicated that there are persons with the same names and I drew conclusion from it that this could be also possible in this case of Rahu(s). Am I wrong?

Thank you for your patience with me.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 31, 1995

Well, if it can be true of the devotees, why not the demons? It is certainly true of the karmis. Many people have the same name.