

DAADA 1997

Questions and Answers

with

His Holiness

Suhotra Swami

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

BILVAMANGALA THAKURA

Question from Vijnana das

December 31, 1996

We were discussing the story of Bilvamangala thakura and were at the part where he follows somebody else's wife. After arriving at the house of the woman her husband just gives her over to him as Prabhupada states in a lecture:

What do you want? Why you are following my wife?" He said, "Yes, I am following wife because I want to embrace her." "Oh, you want to embrace? Come on. Embrace. Come on. You are welcome. Come on." So the wife also... She (he) ordered, "Oh, here is a guest. He wants to embrace you and kiss you. So please decorate yourself nicely so that he may enjoy." So the wife also followed the instruction of the husband because wife's duty is to follow the instruction. And when Bilvamangala came inside before the woman, he said, "My dear mother, will you kindly give your hairpins?" "Yes. Why?" "I have got some business." Then he took the hairpin and at once pierced his eyes: "Oh, this eye is my enemy." [Lecture Madhya lila 20.142 NY Nov. 30, 1966]

The question was asked whether this was standard practice in Vedic culture that is a guest asks for such a thing then it is given. Or was it just a situation created for the pastimes and glorification of the pure devotee?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 31, 1996

To my understanding, Bilvamangala Thakura was at that time in the renounced order. He'd renounced, and accepted shelter at the lotus feet of Acarya Somagiri, after the famous rebuke he'd received from the prostitute Cintamani.

Somagiri told him:

"Use your legs then and go to Vrindaban where you can see the beautiful Deities of the Lord. But don't let your wicked eyes lead you astray. For even the wooden image of a woman can cause lusty desires. Nevermind about your past sinful activities, Bilvamangala, but do not sin again."

So ... obviously, it is not standard in Vedic culture for a man in the renounced order, who is under such a vow placed upon him by a bona fide spiritual master, to request a grhasta for permission to enjoy the company of that grhasta's wife alone.

That this particular grhasta agreed is another thing. We can take it as the arrangement of the Lord. But that notwithstanding, there is such a superstition in ordinary (not Vedic) human society that a woman becomes blessed by intimate contact with a saintly person. Prabhupada referred to this in his explanation of the sentence, "This world is a place of cheaters and cheated." He said lusty men would dress up as sadhus and sit next to the river where the housewives would come to wash clothes. Those among the housewives who were foolish or lusty would think they'll progress spiritually by seducing such "saintly persons." So in this way, one side cheats the other. As Srila Prabhupada would say in his inimitable style, "This is going on. This is nonsense." ALL GLORIES TO SRILA PRABHUPADA!

Comment by Suhotra Swami

January 1, 1997

And apart from the consideration that Bilvamangala was a renunciace under vow to a bona fide spiritual master, in any station of Vedic culture, this moral principle predominates:

matrvat para-daresu
para-dravyesu lostravat
atmavat sarva-bhutesu
yah pasyati sa panditah

One who considers another's wife as his mother, another's possessions as a lump of dirt and treats all other living beings as he would himself, is considered to be learned.

(Canakya-sloka 10)

Prabhupada said that this sloka constitutes the sum and substance of Vedic education. Anyone who comes as a guest to a house and asks to enjoy the private company of the wife in that house is, according to this sloka, completely ignorant, uncultured, abominable, etc.

Comment by Vijnana das

January 1, 1997

Thank you very much for your answers. There is one other point that arose. That is the position of the wife. Accepting that the renunciate asking such a thing is a rascal and the husband foolishly agrees then orders the wife, must she follow. As Srila Prabhupada says in the lecture:

"So the wife also followed the instruction of the husband because wife's duty is to follow the instruction."

What is her position? Should she follow or reject such a husband?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

January 1, 1997

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said that his daughter Sathi should reject her husband Amogha because he had become fallen for blaspheming Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He cited sastra in this connection. You can consult the relevant section of Cc.

ON GHOSTS

Question from Brahma Muhurta das

January 1, 1997

We are just now working on a multimedia project. A part of the project is dedicated to education about ghosts. It shall appear in a Q&A format. Here's a list of questions Govinda Madhava and I could come up with. Would be really great if you could give answers. The answers don't have to be extensive. It's all meant for fast reading on computer screen.

- 1) *What is a ghost?*
- 2) *Are there different kinds of ghosts? Are there good ghosts or are they all bad?*
- 3) *Can humans see ghosts?*
- 4) *How do ghosts look like?*
- 5) *Do the Vedic literatures deal with this subject?*
- 6) *What do ghosts eat?*
- 7) *Can ghosts speak? How do they communicate amongst each other?*
- 8) *Do ghosts have names?*
- 9) *Can ghosts move or otherwise physically influence gross matter?*
- 10) *How does one become a ghost?*
- 11) *Can houses or places be haunted? Do ghosts prefer certain localities?*
- 12) *For how long do ghosts live?*
- 13) *What is a Poltergeist?*
- 14) *How does a human being know that he is haunted by a ghost?*
- 15) *Can ghosts see humans?*
- 16) *Do ghosts have families? Do they generate offspring?*
- 17) *Do ghosts have to die?*
- 18) *How can one be relieved from the influence of a ghost? Does "ghostbusting" and exorcisim work?*
- 19) *Are there more ghosts than human beings?*
- 20) *Where do ghosts live? Do they have their own planets?*
- 21) *Are ghosts organized? Do they have some kind of hierarchic order?*
- 22) *Are there male and female ghosts or are theu unisex?*
- 23) *Do ghosts sleep?*
- 24) *How do ghosts move?*
- 25) *What shall a human being do to avoid becoming a ghost?*

We have full understanding if the questions are just too many or too material. But we thought we shall give it a try anyway.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 1, 1997

Please, no ghost-katha in Danda. Ghosts are attracted whenever someone even thinks about them, what to speak of discusses them.

You should consider forming your own conference called Ghosts "R" Us. The members can write in about ghosts they have known.

For Vedic answers to your questions (but I don't think you'll get answers for all of these questions), consult the Preta-khanda of the Garuda Purana. GP is a sattvika Vaisnava purana, so we can have confidence in the information there, even though the subject of ghosts is full of ignorance.

Karmi reference:

Ghosts I Have Known by Hans Holzer.

The Encyclopedia of Ghosts and Spirits by Rosemary Ellen Guiley.

Handwerterbuch des deutschen Aberglauben.

Daimonic Reality: A Field Guide to the Otherworld by Patrick Harpur.

The Ghosthunters Almanac by Peter Underwood.

Ghosts, Hauntings and the Supernatural World by Roy Harley Lewis.

The Journal of a Ghosthunter by Simon Marsden.

Comment by Brahma Muhurta das

January 1, 1997

Thanks, Maharaja.

STOP TO ENJOY & FALL DOWN?

Question from Aprameya dd

January 1, 1997

SB 4.29.4p: "There is always someone who wants to go to a prostitute for illicit sex or to a hotel to eat meat and drink wine. There is always someone who wants to gamble at night clubs or enjoy so-called sports. All these propensities are already within the hearts of the living entities, but some living entities STOP TO ENJOY these abominable activities and consequently FALL DOWN to a degraded platform."

I can't understand what is the logic?

Dear Guru Maharaja, thank you very much for your perfect answers to my my so imperfect questions.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 1, 1997

Well, if there is no editing mistake involved, then I would say the logic is this. Previously in this same purport we find these two sentences:

Originally the living entity is a spiritual being, but when he actually desires to enjoy this material world, he comes down.

Although one may be born in a family of Aryans, where there are restrictions against meat-eating, intoxication, gambling and illicit sex, still one may want to enjoy these forbidden things.

So "stops to enjoy these abominable things", when referred back to these sentences, obviously cannot be understood as "he stops enjoying these abominable things" but rather as

he stops his original function (indicated in the first sentence);

and

he stops following the restrictions against meat-eating etc. (indicated in the second sentence);

to enjoy these abominable things.

WHY?

*Question from Vrajendra Kumara das
January 2, 1997*

Could you please explain how should we take such apparent contradictions in SB and BG as following statements: In BG Krsna states "..of the wielders of weapons I'm Rama" but in SB11.16.20 He says to Uddhava "..of the wielders of weapons I'm Lord Siva" In BG Krsna declares "Among sacrifices I'm japa" and in SB11.16.23 He says "Among sacrifices I'm study of the Veda".

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 2, 1997

No, the real contradiction is that there is a Vrajendra Kumara das in Germany who is a disciple of Bhakti Bhusana Maharaja. Why? Why does there have to be more than one?

Comment by Adipurusa das
January 4, 1997

It was excellent, thank you very much, Maharaj!

Comment by Vrajendra Kumara das
January 5, 1997

Thank you for your brilliant answer exposing my blindness and foolishness but still I want to clarify one point re the same question (Among the sacrifices I'm japa in one case and "Study of the Veda" in another). It still seems to me that speaking about how He is represented among different things Krsna choses the most potent representatives (e.g. Among fishes I'm shark) . Before I used to think that japa was the most powerful sacrifice because it represents Krsna among sacrifices according to BG. If this is not so then next time He can say that He is something else among sacrifices. When I chant japa remembering that it represents Krsna among sacrifices it gives me faith that I'm doing the most important thing. Then I read that 'Study of the Veda' is Krsna among the sacrifice and japa doesn't seem to me as important as Veda. What I'm trying to say is that the words of Krsna should have Absolute meaning because He is Absolute. But if in one case He says "Among sacrifices I'm japa" but in another case he says something different referring to the same category (sacrifice) it seems that His words become relative. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

By the way, thank you for your wonderful book SAS, I just started to read it.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 5, 1997

Absolute means from Krsna's point of view, not your point of view. Our point of view is always relative. What does absolute mean, actually? Absolute means *all-inclusive.* For Krsna, there is no difference between japa and the study of the Vedas, because these are both included within him. Just as for Lord Caitanya there is no difference between chanting the names of the gopis and chanting the names of Lord Krsna. For ordinary people, there is a difference. But the mistake of ordinary people, like Lord Caitanya's students, is to ask "Why is Lord Caitanya chanting the names of the gopis when the sastra says chanting the holy name of the Lord is the yuga-dharma? There is a contradiction here! How can we accept Him as our authority, when He does not correspond to our 'absolute' mental conceptions?" But human mental conceptions are not absolute. Of course we accept that chanting of the holy name as the foremost religious principle, which comes to us from the absolute platform. But that instruction is the best *for us.* Not for the Lord. He Himself is already the best. He chants His own names, or the gopis' names, or says of sacrifices I am 1) japa, or 2) the study of the Vedas, or 3) sex life. That is something you missed. When Krsna says I am sex that is not contrary to the religious principles, He is talking about a sacrifice, the garbhodhana samskara. So in other words, He is saying of sacrifices I am sex life. Why? WHY? W H Y ? Because He is absolute. All inclusive.

Just like at home the wife relates with her husband in one way, and at the office a business partner relates with him another way. Both wife and partner think their own relationship with that man is "absolute." But the wife and the partner are personally quite distant from one another. So how can either of their relationships be absolute, since it does not include the other? Only *that man's* relationship with *them* is absolute, because only he includes the two of them. Their relationship is nondifferent from the point of view of his own interests. He finds both their association invaluable (though maybe the wife complains that he spends too much time with his partner, or the partner complains he spends too much time with his wife). So what is the wrong if he on one occasion says, "Of all the people in my life, my wife is most important," and on another occasion he says, "Of all the people in my life, my partner is the most important"?

And besides all this, Jiva Gosvami writes that the potency of the Vedic mantras comes from the holy names that are included within the mantras. There is therefore

no difference between the holy name and the Vedas. Both are Krsna! But again, that does not mean you can stop chanting in favor of just studying. Your own particular relationship with Krsna through this sampradaya does not allow that. Just like the wife cannot assume the relationship of the business partner, nor vice-versa.

Your position is not to be absolute. Your position is to be a servant.

BRAHMA'S MEDITATION

*Question from Narakara das
December 25, 1996*

There is a verse in the 3rd Canto that puzzles me somewhat. It is 3.8.22:

"AT THE END OF BRAHMA'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS, when his meditation was complete, he developed the required knowledge, and as a result he could see in his heart the Supreme within himself, whom he could not see before with the greatest endeavor."

How long were actually 100 years, mentioned in this verse? If Brahma meditated for his entire life span, how could he have created the universe afterwards? Or does this verse refer maybe to some other Brahma or some other creation?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 2, 1997

I thought I answered this text last week. But upon reviewing the recent texts in Danda, I see my answer went missing somehow. Here it is again:

See SB 7.9.34, specifically the word for word: abda-satam--for a hundred years according to the demigods.

This span of time is precisely explained by Srila Prabhupada thusly, in connection with Hiranyakasipu:

"Hiranyakasipu performed a severe type of tapasya, austerity, for many long years. Indeed, it is said that he performed the tapasya for one hundred heavenly years. Since one day of the demigods equals six of our months, certainly this was a very long time." (SB 7.3.15-16p)

So even Hiranyakasipu performed austerity for as long as Brahma did.

Further confirmation is in SB 3.10.4: divya varsa-satam, "one hundred celestial years."

ONE FOURTH?

*Question from Adipurusa das
January 4, 1997*

Since long I have been confused as to how is it that this material world consists of one quarter of the Lord's energy. According to my mundane understanding one fourth is a very big chunk! And in a room conversation Srila Prabhupada said:

<<...Majority, 90%, they are always good. They never fall down.

Dr. John Mize: So we're among the 10%.

Prabhupada: Yes. Or less than that. In the material, whole material world all the living entities they are... Just like in the prison house, there are some population, but they are not majority.>>

So it's not jivas. But is it that a mere prison takes 25% of all the governments energy? Even if it takes 1/4 of the Lord's CREATIVE energy only, still, why so much is needed for a lowly little place like this? Or it is some rather insignificant energy?

Can you kindly clarify this for my laic understanding?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 5, 1997

The quantification, whether 25 or 10 percent, is just to give an idea that most of the Lord's energy is displayed in the Vaikuntha realm. What is 25 or 10 percent of infinity? Infinity. So then what can the human mind *really* grasp about division? Not much.

KICKING OUT KAITAVA DHARMA

Question from Vrajendra Kumara das

January 15, 1997

Dear Maharaj, in the beginning of SB there is a statement that kicks out all mundane religion and establishes Bhagavata Purana as the highest religious scripture that gives the fruit of love of God but in the very end of SB (12.12.65) it says: "A brahmana who studies SB achieves firm intelligence in devotional service, a king who studies it gains sovereignty over the earth, a vaisya acquires great treasure and a sudra is freed from sinful reactions". So the first statement creates an impression that SB is meant only for paramahamsas who are after love of God but the final statement explains that everybody gets something from reading SB according to one's desire and level of development. And such things as great treasure (for vaisya) or reign over the earth are definately the results of some material desires and motives. So how should we properly understand these two statements?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 15, 1997

It is cheating to promote a medicine (karma-kanda/jnana-kanda) as curing a disease when it only temporarily gives relief from a few of the symptoms of the disease.

If a medicine (bhagavat-dharma) actually does cure a disease at the root, it is not cheating to advertise the relief it gives from certain symptoms, so as to attract materialistic people to accepting this factual cure.

EMBODIED VISNU-TATTVA

Question from Bhagadatta das

January 16, 1997

I found it a little confusing to read in the SB.5.18.15 p. that visnu-tattva also sometimes appears in this world in a material body. As Srila Prabhupada explains in his purport that actually there is no difference for Visnu, whether He appears in material or spiritual body, for He always acts spiritually. Then the question arises, "For what reason had Lord Visnu appeared as an embodied entity, Lord Kamadeva?"

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 16, 1997

Yes, it is bewildering even to the great sages. But for the 100th time, I have to say there is no difference for the Lord between matter and spirit.

SANKHYA AND SCIENTISTS

Question from Aprameya dd

January 19, 1997

In your second lecture from the seminar "SB- the natural commentary of Vedanta sutra"/21 March 94, Mayapur/ you are explaining the similarity between the atheistic sankhya philosophers and the modern scientists:

"When the soul comes in contact with matter then matter transforms. Now, in the modern world atheistic material scientists, specifically the scientists known as the quantum physicists, they have very similar understanding of the relationship between the consciousness and matter."

But I was wondering how they are similar if the scientists don't akcept the existence of the soul, which is one of the two main tattvas in sankhya philosophy. Even when they speak about 'consciousness', as much as I know, they mean nothing more than mere function of the matter or "/the mind is/ just an epiphenomenon of neurochemistry"/SAS p.58/.

Even, I hope I remember this correctly, there was such opinion amongst the scientists that the word 'consciousness' should not be used in the scientific literature because it's outside of the scope of experimental science.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 19, 1997

An apple for your thoughts.

If you look in the glossary of SAS under Mind/Body problem, you shall find different Western theories about the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body.

Among these, the ones prominent in science are dualism, functionalism and materialism.

Dualism is proposed by a few famous modern scientists like Karl Popper and John Eccles, who together wrote a book called *The Self and Its Brain.* The findings of Dr. Michael Sabom and other near-death experience researchers support dualism too.

Functionalism is favored by many scientists. An example is Dr. Paul Davies, whom I quoted in several places in SAS.

Materialism is loudly argued today by a scientist named Daniel Dennet. He has written many books about his belief in the material basis of consciousness. A well-known one is *Consciousness Explained.*

And many scientists say they just don't know.

Scientists used to be more intelligent before, like Sir Isaac Newton. He was sitting under a tree one day and an apple fell from a branch onto his head. This made him think about how the laws of God are made manifest within the laws of physics. We hope that more apples will hit scientists in the head and cause them to think this way.

CHANTING DEMIGODS' NAMES TO KRISHNA

*Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
January 23, 1997*

Could you please explain the verse below - why by chanting the names of demigods one can attain the Supreme Lord?

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 2: Chapter Six, Text 27

:TEXT

TEXT 27

*gatayo matayas caiva
prayascittam samarpanam
purusavayavair ete
sambharah sambhrta maya*

gatayah--progress to the ultimate goal (Visnu); matayah--worshiping the demigods; ca--as also; eva--certainly; prayascittam--compensation; samarpanam--ultimate offering; purusa--the Personality of Godhead; avayavaih--from the parts of the body of the Personality of Godhead; ete--these; sambharah--the ingredients; sambhrtah--were arranged; maya--by me.

TRANSLATION

Thus I had to arrange all these necessary ingredients and paraphernalia of sacrifice from the personal bodily parts of the Personality of Godhead. By invocation of the demigods' names, the ultimate goal, Visnu, was gradually attained, and thus compensation and ultimate offering were complete.

PURPORT

In this verse, special stress is given to the person of the Supreme Lord, and not to His impersonal brahmajyoti, as being the source of all supplies. Narayana, the Supreme Lord, is the goal of sacrificial results, and therefore the Vedic hymns are ultimately meant for attaining this goal. Human life is thus made successful by pleasing Narayana and getting entrance into the direkt association of Narayana in the spiritual kingdom of Vaikuntha.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 23, 1997

I stand in front of a group of NE BBT devotees. I hold up a photo and ask "What's that?"

"It's somebody's eye," comes the reply. Sure enough, it is a closeup of a human eye.

I do the same with a photo of a nose, then an ear, then a smoking mouth. Each time the group chants, "Nose! Ear! Mouth!" until they finally figure out who these different photos represent. Then they chant, "It's Bhakta Jan Mures!"

Comment by Jahnu das

January 24, 1997

:) You are so funny Maharaja.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

January 24, 1997

That was a good one, Maharaja!

But being less intelligent, something between mudha nad mayayapahrta-jnana, I needed a purport of our local pandit, Jahnu P.

An idea: He, Dikpala P. and my insignificant self thought it would be a good to have two "Dandas": Danda-philos and Danda-jokes. What do you think about it?

Comment by Kasya das

January 24, 1997

Dear Jan,

you have got from His Divine Grace very nice philosophical explanation in joking mood.

Srila Sukadeva Goswami while explaining Srimad Bhagavatam also uses a special humor for our understanding.. But we can not see that Maharaja Pariksit ever dared to advise Srila Sukadeva Goswami anything, even in joking words, hence by this attitude the transmission of sabda is not active. Please look Bg.4.34.

FALLING FIRST AS LORD BRAHMA

Question from Vijnana das

January 23, 1997

In this mornings class the topic of the living entity falling from the spritual world came up. The question was whether all the living entities first take the position of Lord Brahma when they fall. I seem to remember hearing a class of yours where you had said that, giving the reason that it would not be possible for us to accept the body of a worm in stool directly from the spiritual world but instead we become Lord Brahma and then gradually fall.

What is the actual case, does the living entity become first Brahma or not?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 23, 1997

I'm tired of talking about the falldown of the jiva.

Besides, the answer to your question is in Srimad Bhagavatam 9th Canto. And add to that Prabhupada's comments in a morning walk conversation in Vrndavana in (I think) 1976.

Anybody can look these references up.

QUESTION ABOUT TESLA

Question from Bhakta Darko

January 23, 1997

TRANSLATION

The activities and characteristics of the ethereal element can be observed as accommodation for the room for the external and internal existences of all living entities, namely the field of activities of the vital air, the senses and the mind.

PURPORT

The mind, the senses and the vital force, or living entity, have forms, although they are not visible to the naked eye. Form rests in subtle existence in the sky, and internally it is perceived as the veins within the body and the circulation of the vital air. Externally there are invisible forms of sense objects. The production of the invisible sense objects is the external activity of the ethereal element, and the circulation of vital air and blood is its internal activity. That subtle forms exist in the ether has been proven by modern science by transmission of television, by which forms or photographs of one place are transmitted to another place by the action of the ethereal element. That is very nicely explained here. This verse is the potential basis of great scientific research work, for it explains how subtle forms are generated from the ethereal element, what their characteristics and actions are, and how the tangible elements, namely air, fire, water and earth, are manifested from the subtle form. Mental activities, or psychological actions of thinking, feeling and willing, are also activities on the platform of ethereal existence. The statement in Bhagavad-gita that the mental situation at the time of death is the basis of the next birth is also corroborated in this verse. Mental existence transforms into tangible form as soon as there is an opportunity due to contamination or development of the gross elements from subtle form.

There is unchecked information that great inventor Nikola Tesla was know about Krsna. At the time when Vivekananda visitwd America he also visitek Tesla at his laboratory. They were talking together and Vivekananda was asked Tesla to meditate and practice yoga. Tesla was asking: "Why that?" Vivekananda: "To see a Krsna." Tesla: "I already saw Krsna and I can manifest Him." After that Vivekananda said Tesla was manifested few figures and one of them was small figure of Krsna. This

was written in some newspaper as interview with Vivekananda who also said that, according to his impression, Tesla was reached samadhi.

This segment is actually from one TV presentation made by karmis.

There is some questions:

1. Did Srila Prabhupada ever mentioned Tesla?
2. Did Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura went to America, were some of his articles or some material ever sent to America and what is the name of material?
3. Is there any written material from Bhaktivinoda Thakura that has been sent to America and what is that material?
4. There is speculation (probably) that Tesla was secret member of Gaudia Sampradaya. How much we can believe this since it was rumors between some Rosencroitzers (Christian sect) that have no interest to say something like that?

It was known that Tesla was practicing some yoga and followed some regulations regarding sex life and vegetarianism.

The following is Tesla's writing that was not published but it was saved by Leland Anderson (May 13th, 1907.):

"Nikola Tesla used ancient Sanskrit terminology in his descriptions of natural phenomena. As early as 1891 Tesla described the universe as a kinetic system filled with energy which could be harnessed at any location. His concepts during the following years were greatly influenced by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda was the first of a succession of eastern yogi's who brought Vedic philosophy and religion to the west. After meeting the Swami and after continued study of the Eastern view of the mechanisms driving the material world, Tesla began using the Sanskrit words Akasha, Prana, and the concept of a luminiferous ether to describe the source, existence and construction of matter. . . .

"There manifests itself in the fully developed being, Man, a desire mysterious, inscrutable and irresistible: to imitate nature, to create, to work himself the wonders he perceives.... Long ago he recognized that all perceptible matter comes from a primary substance, or tenuity betone conception, filling all space, the Akasha or luminiferous ether, which is acted upon by the life giving Prana or creative force, calling into existence, in never ending cycles all things and phenomena. The primary substance, thrown into infinitesimal whirls of prodigious velocity, becomes gross matter; the force subsiding, the motion ceases and matter disappears, reverting to the primary substance."

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 24, 1997

No doubt in my mind whatsoever. As Salvadore Dali said, "The only difference between Dali and a crazy man is that Dali is not crazy at all."

KRSNA'S SOURCE

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

January 23, 1997

In the Cc Adi 4.71 purport.

The sandhini portion of Sri Krsna's internal potency has manifested the all-attractive form of Sri Krsna, and the same internal potency, in the hladini feature, has presented Srimati Radharani, who is the attraction for the all-attractive.

How is it that Krsna is manifested from that which He alone is the source.

Is this what is meant by perpetual energy

In SB 4.22.16 purport

The highly advanced devotee is one who knows the conclusion of the Vedas in full knowledge; thus he becomes a devotee.

This sentence is a little confusing to me. How is that the highly advanced devotee becomes a devotee? Or is it we need a conference for people like me who do not understand the English language.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 24, 1997

>>How is it that Krsna is manifested from that which He alone is the source. Is this what is meant by perpetual energy<<

Krsna has a name: Mayin. This means He is the greatest magician. Think about it.

>>The highly advanced devotee is one who knows the conclusion of the Vedas in full knowledge; thus he becomes a devotee.<<

This refers to the bahunam janmanamante verse: sa mahatma sudurlabha. Highly advanced means highly advanced in knowledge. Thus he becomes a pure devotee. Think about it.

If you don't get it, then forget it.

SINFUL SACRIFICE

Question from Bhagadatta das

January 27, 1997

In his purport to SB 4.25.7 Srila Prabhupada writes, "Animal sacrifice is but one such sinful activity." Why the sacrifice of animals is sinful if after the animals are being sacrificed they are brought to life? It is said that the animals attain some kind of liberation after they are sacrificed. Is the animal sacrifice sinful only in the case when the goal of the sacrifice is to enjoy mat. happiness, or sacrificing animals automatically means incurring sinful reactions.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 28, 1997

The sacrifices in which the animal was brought back to life in a rejuvenated body Prabhupada compared to scientific experiments. Their purpose was to demonstrate

the power of the Vedic mantras. They were special displays of brahminical prowess. Not all sacrifices were performed simply for that reason.

In some scripturally prescribed sacrifices, the animal is killed and eaten. Whether this is sinful or not depends on who performs the sacrifice and why. Maharaja Prthu, the incarnation of God's ruling potency, was prepared to kill Bhumi in the form of a cow and feed the starving populace of his kingdom with her flesh. A sin? No. First of all, he is an incarnation. And secondly, his motive was pure. He was not calculating to gain personal material advantages from that sacrifice.

But when such an animal sacrifice is done by an ordinary person to fulfill a selfish material desire, it is sinful. For example, the sacrifice of goats to goddess Kali, even though it is prescribed in sastra, is sinful. The sacrificer has to become a goat in his next life.

FEW QUESTIONS

*Questions from Vrajendra Kumara das
January 28, 1997*

Can you please answer a few questions:

- 1. In the purport to BG 7.7 Srila Prabhupada quotes Svetasvatara Upanisad: "...He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies." Why Krsna here is compared to the SILENT tree?*
- 2. As we know Ganesh is a son of Lord Siva and Goddess Durga. Siva is a special tattva and Durga is supposed to be Sakti tattva. What is the position of Ganesh? Is he jiva or special tattva as well?*
- 3. The last sentence of the purport of SB2.5.31 says: "The mode of passion, however, is the product of the air element, as described before". I was searching before but couldn't find any explanation why the mode of passion is the product of the air. I used to think that air itself comes from ether and ether in turn is produced from the false ego in tamas. Can you please explain.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 28, 1997

- 1. I can't offer you more than my own reaction to that analogy. "Silent tree" is a symbol of quiet, supportive strength. Lord Visnu is the support of the whole creation, as a big strong tree supports so many living entities that live in and upon its body. Yet a tree never praises nor blames any of these living entities for their actions. The tree is strong, yet silent.*
- 2. I know of no ganesh-tattva, if that is the point of your question. His being the son of Lord Siva certainly means he is an expansion of the siva-tattva. But don't ask me what degree of Siva's potency Ganesh represents.*
- 3. Seems pretty clear to me what this means. SB 2.5.30 describes the appearance of 10 demigods from the mode of goodness, including "the*

controller of air" (Vayu). Each of these 10 takes charge of particular sensory functions in the human body, as stated in SB 2.5.31. The functions are "further transformations of the mode of passion." In other words, the relationship between the controlling deity and the organic function the deity controls is the relationship between goodness and passion. So the demigod Vayu represents goodness, but the pranavayu he controls within the human body represents the mode of passion. Passion expands from goodness. Thus Prabhupada's statement, "This mode of passion, however, is the product of the air element, as described before." "The air element" simply refers to Vayu in the previous verse. "This mode of passion" refers to the localized pranavayu.

TRANSCENDENTAL BODY

*Question from Bhagadatta das
February 2, 1997*

There is the following purport to SB.3.12.49 which I cannot understand:

*>In his former body, which was transcendental, affection for sex life was
>forbidden, and Brahma therefore had to accept another body to allow himself
>to be connected with sex. He thus engaged himself in the matter of creation.
>His former body transformed into fog, as previously described.*

Why SP is stating that Brahma had a spiritual body? How is it that in that spiritual body he became attracted to his own daughter?

I have also another question in connection to the same story. One devotee told me that actually the meaning of SB can be direct or allegorical. He mentioned that there are different(5-6 or so) ways to understand Bhagavatam. In connection to that story he said that Vak, the daughter of Brahma was actually his speech, and that Brahma became proud of his own speech, act which was a manifestation of lust on the subtle plane. I had good reasons to doubt this explanation because so far in my reading of SB I've noticed that if the stories are to be understood as an allegory Prabhupada points this out, like the story of Puranjana. So could you tell me something about the different ways of understanding the SB and if this applies to that particular story?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 2, 1997

Srila Prabhupada states that Brahma's former body was transcendental, but you have asked why does Srila Prabhupada say Brahma's body was spiritual.

You changed the word. And thus you have unnecessarily created confusion.

The word transcendental does not have to mean spiritual. In my English dictionary, it means "of a very high and remarkable degree," and "beyond or contrary to common sense or experience."

Brahma's former body was beyond and contrary to material sense gratification. That is why Srila Prabhupada states that it was forbidden for him to have sex life in that body.

There are certain verses and sections of the Srimad Bhagavatam which are allegorical, but these are identified as such by the acaryas, who explain the real meaning. Excepting these verses and sections, we must take the Bhagavatam as literal fact.

CHARITY TO KSATRIYAS

Question from Dikpala das
February 5, 1997

Could you help me understand the following passage?

SB.8.9.14-15 "[The demigods and demons]... gave charity to the cows and to the brahmanas and the members of the other orders of society, namely the ksatriyas, vaisyas and sudras."

1) How is it that they gave charity to these other orders, especially to ksatriyas (who aren't supposed to accept charity, if I am not mistaken), and to vaisyas?

2) How charity was given to 'the cows'? By decorating them, or?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 5, 1997

In the word for word it is said they gave charity to the brahmanas and living beings in general. The demigods and demons are superior beings. Their giving charity means the living beings in general are receiving benediction from them. Ksatriyas also seek the blessings of the demigods in the form of material benedictions.

For the cows, eatables. Maybe decorations also. But cows like to eat more than dress up.

TWO QUESTIONS

Questions from Vrajendra Kumara das
February 7, 1997

Dear Maharaj, could you please answer a couple of questions.

1. From Srila Prabhupada we know that devotional service to Krsna is the natural inclination of every living entity and it is not something that comes from outside. But in many places in SP's books we find that Krsna gives devotional service as if it is something external which we don't have. So the question is: do we activate the dormant tendency to serve Krsna by the process of sadhana or does Krsna give us this possibility to serve Him out of His sweet will? Can we say that Krsna has already given us His devotional service although we are still not perfect or should we understand that "Real" devotional service will be given to us some time later if we are going on with our regulated service?

2. There is some sastric statement (I don't remember exactly how it goes) something like "Until mantra is given by bona fide guru it doesn't work". My understanding is that this refers to Gayatri mantras and not to Hare Krsna mantra. Many new devotees take it to mean that until they get Hari Nam initiation all their japa chanting is

useless. And on this ground they want to get initiated asap hoping that immediately after the ceremony some miracle will happen. I argue that if this is the case then why do we ask new devotees to chant some time until they get initiated? So can we say that initiation is the moment when one started to chant Maha Mantra and follow regs. and formal initiation ceremony takes place when aspiring disciple proves to be serious and at this moment guru takes his karma and makes his progress easier? It is not that at the moment of Hari Nam initiation guru "gives" Hare Krsna mantra because disciple already chanted it at least for one year. Is it correct understanding?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 7, 1997

It is not simply a question of one or the other, internal or external development. Prabhupada compared the development of devotional service to learning a child's learning to walk on 2 legs. A child certainly gets external help for that from the parents. And sometimes the child falls down as she struggles to stand up and toddle along. She has to try and try again. But is her success simply a matter of external endeavor? Not at all. Ultimately she can walk only because it is human nature to walk on 2 legs. A snake can never learn to walk even after 100 years of endeavor.

Re chanting the HKM before initiation, the holy name is Krsna. It is not "like" Krsna, it does not "mean" Krsna, it *is* Krsna. Initiation is the formal contract between the devotee and the holy name. It is like marriage. It is not that the relationship between a young man and woman before marriage is void of any meaning whatsoever. If that were so, then why should they get married?

These matters are commonsense. They require a little, just a *little*, amount of brain to understand.

FEW MORE QUESTIONS

Questions from Vrajendra Kumara das

February 9, 1997

Could you please answer a few more questions:

1. Prahlad Maharaj was a Vaisnava but he had to rule the kingdom of asuras. Does it mean that he had to compromise with the principles of dharma because demons would never accept them directly or what was his way of ruling?

2. BG 2.13 purport says: "The Mayavadi theory of oneness of the spirit soul cannot be entertained, on the ground that the spirit soul cannot be cut into pieces as a fragmental portion". What kind of oneness is meant here? From this sentence I assume that Mayavadis establish the oneness of the soul and Prabhupada states the same thing confirming it with words that spirit soul cannot be cut into pieces ...etc. I can't get the point of that statement. Please explain.

3. BG 13.21 states: "Nature is said to be the cause of all material causes and effects, whereas the living entity is the cause of the various suffering and enjoyment in this world".

SB 6.17.19 states: "In the material world, neither the living entity himself nor others (friends and enemies) are the cause of material happiness and distress. But

because of gross ignorance, the living entity thinks that he and others are the cause". Please explain this apparent contradiction.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 9, 1997

1. He ruled according to varnasrama principles. Varnasrama, as Srila Prabhupada confirmed, is a very nice arrangement for material life. It also offers the opportunity for devotional service. An asura may not be inclined to spiritual development, but he will follow varnasrama because it is the best system of social organization.
2. The point is simple. Mayavadis say there is only one soul, not many souls. The one soul is Brahman, and we are all one in Brahman. Only due to illusion is that one Brahman divided into many souls. The Vaisnava reply is that sastra says the soul cannot be divided at any time.
3. Material happiness and distress is caused by the living entity in this sense: he is in pursuit of satisfaction in the material world. Under illusion he convinces himself that this particular situation in material nature is happy, and the opposite situation is distressful. The living entity does not cause his material happiness and distress in this sense: he is not the doer of his activities, therefore happiness and distress do not come to him as a result of his endeavor, but as a result of adrsta-karma, the unseen destiny of stored-up karmic reactions.

MEDITATION PROCESS

Question from Bhakta Adam

February 9, 1997

Could you explain meditation process mentioned in a following texts from IX canto Srimad Bhagavatam:

SB. 9.7.26

"Maharaja Hariscandra first purified his mind, which was full of material enjoyment, by amalgamating it with the earth. Then he amalgamated the earth with water, the water with fire, the fire with the air, and the air with the sky. Thereafter, he amalgamated the sky with the total material energy, and the total material energy with spiritual knowledge. This spiritual knowledge is realization of one's self as part of the Supreme Lord. When the self-realized spiritual soul is engaged in service to the Lord, he is eternally imperceptible and incoceivable. Thus established in spiritual knowledge, he is completely freed from material bondage."

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 9, 1997

This is the dissolution of the subtle body by the use of mystic yoga in devotional service. This subtle body is composed of subtle elements. The verse describes how the mystic returns each of the elements to the totality of elements (pradhana).

QUESTIONS ON SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Questions from Vaikunthesvari dd
February 9, 1997

I have some questions as I read the Srimad Bhagavatam. Please forgive me if these questions are not so important, or not too philosophical, but I couldn't get the answer to them, so please kindly enlighten me.

1. In the SB.5. volume 24. chapter I read that Siva lives in Vitala, and in the same chapter is stated that he lives at Ilavrata-varsa. Of course it is possible that he lives in two places. Is it like that, or there is another explanation?

2. Narada Muni says in the SB:7.15.59. that the body is not the combination of the five elements...etc. In other places, like SB.5.12.5-6 is stated that it consists of earth. And even the next verse 7.15.60. states it consists of the five elements.

3. When Lord Vamanadeva explains the story of Hiranyakasipu to Bali Maharaja, He doesn't mention his killing by Lord Nrisimhadeva. (The story in this way states that he was not killed) Why is that?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 9, 1997

Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.9.7 states *rudras tv atma saririnam*, "Lord Siva represents the Supersoul in all living beings." Thus Lord Siva dwells in many, many places at once, as does Lord Visnu.

The body is said to be made of earth because earth is the object of all five sense perceptions: hearing, touch, vision, taste and smell. As far as the meaning of SB 7.15.59 and 60 is concerned, I explained this in an earlier text to this conference. I am not going to explain it again.

Vamanadeva was praising the family of Bali. He even exaggerated the strength of Hiranyakasipu, and purposefully did not mention Hiranyakasipu's death at the hands of Lord Nrsimhadeva. This was a kind of flattery.

BRAHMAN REALIZATION

Question from Bhakta Miro
February 9, 1997

Sometimes devotees preach that those who HAVE REALIZED Brahman or have entered brahmajyoti actually have to finally come back to be again entangled in the 3 gunas. They generally use verse from SB 10.2.32 (ye'nye aravindaksa). But from the verse it is clear that they have only imagined their liberation. As far as those who are genuinely free from 3 gunas and have understood Brahman there are verses even in the Bg. which say that platform of realizing Brahman is permanent. (Bg: 8.23,24,26; 12.3,4; 14.26,27; 18.55; SB.1.2.11) Please explain whether it is permanent position or they really have to come down.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 9, 1997

The difference is the personal versus the impersonal conceptions of Brahman.

Comment by Bhakta Miro

February 16, 1997

Please excuse me maharaja, I would never dare to ask you a question to waste your valuable time. The real motive of my asking is to get rid of a doubt. I'll try to specify my question even more. I understand that impersonal brahman realization is inferior to the bhagavan realization. But my question was related to the first one. SB 1.2.11 says that this tattva is nondual - advaya, just it has got three names. Bg 15.16 and 8.13 is also defining brahman as aksara. By this I think the infallible nature of imp. brahman is established (by brahman I do not mean the jiva). So my question is again:

1)If one realizes (enters) the aksara-brahma (impersonal), can he still fall down to the material consciousness? Here I do not consider "possibility in the impossible situation". Rather practical situation. As it is explained in the SB 3.25.33 - one who has got subtle body dissolved, cannot have material desires.

2)Is there in the sastra mentioned such a category as " a fallible brahman"? Kindly put some light on this matter, please.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 17, 1997

You write:

>>(by brahman I do not mean the jiva)<<

The problem that I see with your question is that you mean something by Brahman that you have taken from your imagination.

Krsna Book ch. 86:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead has many parts and parcels; some are called svamsas, or His personal expansions, and some are called vibhinnamsas, the living entities. All such expansions, both svamsas and vibhinnamsas, are emanations from the original Personality of Godhead. Svamsa expansions are called visnu-tattva, whereas the vibhinnamsa expansions are called jiva-tattva."

Bg 8.3p

"Impersonalist commentators on the Bhagavad-gita unreasonably assume that Brahman takes the form of jiva in the material world, and to substantiate this they refer to Chapter Fifteen, verse 7, of the Gita. But in this verse the Lord also speaks of the living entity as "an eternal fragment of Myself." The fragment of God, the Libiny entity, may fall down into the material world, but the Supreme Lord (Acyuta) never falls down. Therefore this assumption that the Supreme Brahman assumes the form of jiva is not acceptable. It is important to remember that in Vedic literature Brahman (the living entity) is distinguished from Parabrahman (the Supreme Lord)."

It is quite clear from these two purports that the Lord's visnu-tattva expansions are Parabrahman and His jiva-tattva expansions are Brahman. The Mayavadis have a different idea. They, like you, do not mean the jiva when they say Brahman. They think Brahman *becomes* the jiva due to association with maya, but actually impersonal Brahman is *in itself* always infallible, because impersonal Brahman is God. No. It is the jiva.

Infallible Brahman is this:

"Perfect knowledge is that the Supreme Soul, Krsna, is the supreme shelter for all living entities, and giving up such shelter, the living entities are deluded by the material energy, imagining themselves to have a separate identity. Thus, under different standards of material identity, they become forgetful of Krsna. When, however, such deluded living entities become situated in Krsna consciousness, it is to be understood that they are on the path of liberation, as confirmed in the Bhagavatam (2.10.6): *muktir hitvanyatha-rupam svarupena vyavasthitih*. Liberation means to be situated in one's constitutional position as an eternal servitor of Krsna (Krsna consciousness)." [Bg 4.35]

Impersonal Brahman is the beginning of the living entity's material existence. It is the first state of kama or lusty desire. When a disciple asked Prabhupada whether the living entity fell into the material world from impersonal Brahman, he replied that impersonal Brahman is **already** a fallen condition. As seen in the previous puport, when the jivas give up the shelter of the Lord, they imagine themselves to have a separate identity than that of an eternal servitor of Krsna. That separate identity begins in the impersonal Brahman conception. Thus impersonal Brahman consciousness is a standard of material identity.

MAHAT-TATTVA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
February 12, 1997*

In the SB it describes that the mahat-tattva is the total material energy, then it is also mentioned that the causal ocean is within the maha tattva. It is also described that the causal ocean is transcendental and is never touched by the material energy.

It is interesting that something that can not be touched by something material is within something material.

Could you please explain. Also what is the source of the causal ocean?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 13, 1997

I wrote an answer, but then my computer ate it. So I'm frustrated. Don't think about the mahat-tattva. Just think about what happens when you video one event from different angles with different cameras simultaneously. Viewing the different monitors, you see many contradictions. Here a devotee is walking to the left of the screen, there the same devotee is walking to the right. Contradiction. Why? Think about it.

ERA OF SANKIRTAN MOVEMENT

*Question from Sarasvati dd
February 13, 1997*

In the SB 8.5.23 Srila Prabhupada states:"When caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared he ushered in the era for the sankirtana movement. It is said that for 10000 years

this era will continue". From wich purana and wich verse is this quoted. Thank you very much in advance.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 14, 1997

I do not think this prediction comes from a Purana. Srila Prabhupada told Tamal Krsna Maharaja that he had "heard" this, that's all.

Comment by Madana Mohana das

February 14, 1997

Please forgive me for inserting this note without being asked. I heard HH Jayapataka Swami give a lecture on SB, where he mentioned this specific prediction, referring a study of some brahmana of Brahma Vaivarta Purana. He said the Purana had given exact numbers of years of the sankirtana era (10.000 years) and the time that would elapse since departure of Lord Krsna till the birth of the person who would inaugurate this movement (Srila Prabhupada, 5.000 years), and thus made this brahmana believe in the authenticity of ISKCON. There were some other very interesting details mentioned in this prediction. Is this Purana considered authoritative?

Please forgive me for this intervention.

SUBTLE COVERINGS

Question from Bhagadatta das

February 13, 1997

In SB 6.15.15 p. it is said, "One who is liberated from the CONCEPTIONS of annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya and who is perfectly aware of the subtle coverings of the soul is called pancasikha.", and in KB "Prayers by the personified Vedas" SP refers to annamaya, prannamaya etc. as "five departments of existence" or "stages of consciousness". So my question is, does SP speak about two different things(subtle coverings and stages of consciousness), and if yes then, are these two explanations connected and how. Please excuse me for my poor ability to formulate questions.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 14, 1997

Srila Prabhupada is just using different words for the same thing.

Comment by Bhagadatta das

February 16, 1997

Sorry to bother you again with the same question, but one thing bewilders me in that connection. In my original question I mentioned two places from Prabhupada's books where he speaks about annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya etc. In the first place SB 6.15.15, SP speaks about these five "conceptions" as something from which one must be liberated. And in the other place - KB,"Prayers of the personified Vedas" he explains one after another these five "levels of consciousness" of which the

last - anandamaya stage is said to be "Krsna consciousness". I hope, that now it's clearer why it seemed to me that SP spoke of two different things. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 17, 1997

There are two kinds of anandamaya. One is the conception of Lord Brahma, who is a Brahman-realized jiva. This conception must be transcended. The other kind of anandamaya is the highest level of consciousness, Krsna consciousness, the level of the Lord and His personal associates in the spiritual world.

Comment by Bankabihari dd

February 17, 1997

>There are two kinds of anandamaya.

Does this mean that there are also two kinds of the other four, lower levels of consciousness / subtle coverings, i.e. both the material (mental) and the spiritual (mental) body come complete with their five maya-s? Any textual source to find out more about it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 18, 1997

According to Madhvacarya's ontology, the sthula-sarira (gross body) corresponds to the annamaya-kosha (the sheath formed from anna, or food).

The sukma-sarira or linga-sarira (subtle body) encompasses the Kosmas (sheaths) of pranamaya (vital air), manomaya (mind) and vijnanamaya (intellect).

The karana-deha (creative body), which is enjoyed by the residents of Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, corresponds to the anandamaya-kosha, the bliss-sheath next to the jiva itself. This anandamaya-kosha is used as a body by yogis in mystic trance.

As Srila Prabhupada writes, the yogis who reach Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka are devotees of Brahma. Indeed, at the time of the mahapralayana they merge into his karana-deha and are taken by him to have darshan of Maha-Vishnu.

The ananda of the siddha-deha (the form of the soul liberated in the spiritual world) is not external to the soul. It is the intrinsic quality of the soul in pure Krsna consciousness: sat-cid-ananda vigraha.

ILLUSORY REPRESENTATIONS

Question from Kasya das

February 14, 1997

1. tejo-vari-mrdam S.B. 1.1.1

"...as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water."

Are these some phenomenons seen in common life?

2. To which category of 8,400,000 living beings belong devas, kimpurusas, kinaras, raksasas and bhutas?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 14, 1997

1. These are kinds of mirages, like water in a fiery desert, or an island that appears in the sea and then vanishes as one comes close to it.

2. They are within 400 000 human species.

WHICH BHARATA?

Question from Dikpala das

February 14, 1997

In purport to SB.5.5.18 Srila Prabhupada gives an example of how mother should be rejected if she cannot deliver her dependents from the repeatition of birth and death. He says, 'Bharata Maharaja rejected his mother (janani na sa syat).'

Which Bharata is Prabhupada speaking about here? Is that one who is Lord Rama's brother? Could you remind me of the incident when he did rejected his mother?

Unfortunately, I don't have Ramayana to check this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 16, 1997

Yes, this refers to Lord Ramacandra's transcendental brother, who rejected his mother when he found that she was responsible for Maharaja Dasaratha banishing Lord Rama to the forest for 14 years, so that Bharata could assume the throne.

QUESTIONS

Questions from Premavanya das

February 14, 1997

1. In one lecture some tell that there is a region some were betwen Brahmajioti and material world were go buddists. He say that this is complete void. If it's true can You please to explain more about this region?

2. In Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.7. that because of devotional servise we obtain knowledge and renunciation. I heard some state ments that we do nat to cultivate jnana for attaining bhakti. Becouse in devotional servise knowledge well be revealed in heart by Krishna. It seems from this that we should not cultivat knowledge, but just serve to Krishna. But devotional servise without knowledge is agiata sukriti. Agiata sukriti is not devotional servise. So, should we have knowledge in opder to attain bhakti.

3. In Srimad Bhagavatam canto 11.ch.21.36. there are some levels of understanding vedic sound - within the prana, senses and mind. Srila Hridayananda Maharaja explain all this in his purport, but I cannot understand this. How can we receive vedic sound on the level of prana, situated in adhara-cakra the mental phase situated in the area of the navel on the manipuraka-cakra. How to understand all this? What is cakras?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 16, 1997

1. This void region is the near shore of the Causal Ocean, the realm of the pradhana or unmanifest material energy.
2. Jnana is included in bhakti. We should not cultivate jnana *separately* of bhakti. That is the point. But there is no question of our advancing in bhakti without knowledge, otherwise why did Srila Prabhupada give us so many volumes of transcendental literature?
3. First you should understand Cantos 1-10 before asking questions about Canto 11.

SOUL

Question from Simheswara das

February 16, 1997

The soul is immovable. So, what will be the explanation for a yogi who can expand himself a certain number of times. Will all the bodies have souls? Or the same soul? Please clarify.

There is also the case of Sankaracarya who went out of his body and took over the body of a king. Does it mean the soul is movable by our desire even while in this present body?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 17, 1997

The soul is one thing, and the subtle body is another. It is the subtle body that expands. Sankara kept his soul in his own heart in trance but stretched his subtle body into the gross body of the king. A yogi can make up to seven copies of his subtle body; he assembles gross elements around those subtle copies so that they can be seen by others. As Prabhupada writes, these yogic expansions are like images of the one object in shown in eight different TV screens. They all look and act the same.

LEAVING FOR INDIA

Comment by Suhotra Swami

February 18, 1997

Today, February 18 1997, I am flying to India to prepare for the GBC meetings, which will start on February 24.

The meetings will last until March 9. During this period I shall be very busy, since I am the GBC chairman this year.

And immediately after the meetings conclude, the Mayapur festival begins.

Obviously, I shall not be able to put much focus on answering e-mail.

I ask you to think 10 times before you send me a letter during this upcoming period of time. If you do send me a letter, I cannot guarantee a speedy reply.

I shall be staying in Mayapur after the festival ends for about a month. Thus I shall return to Europe around the end of April/beginning of May.

My point of return in Europe is Warsaw, Poland.

I shall e-mail a schedule of my travels to the leaders in my zone after the GBC meetings have ended.

ILLUMINATION

*Question from Vrajendra Kumara das
February 17, 1997*

Dear Maharaj, can you please explain what does the following passage from BG 14.22 mean. "O son of Pandu, he who doesn't hate illumination, attachment and delusion when they are present or long for them when they disappear...etc" I wonder how can someone hate illumination?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
February 17, 1997

What if someone shines a light in your face while you are sleeping peacefully? You will hate that illumination.

There are many kinds of living entities who hate illumination ... not only the illumination of the sunlight, but also the illumination of transcendental knowledge. They prefer the darkness of ignorance.

ORIGIN

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
February 27, 1997*

The following appears in the purport to Mantra 16 of the Isopanisad.

"The all-pervading feature of the Lord—which exists in all circumstances of waking and sleeping as well as in potential states and from which the jiva-sakti (living force) is generated as both conditioned and liberated souls—is known as Brahman. Since the Lord is the origin of both Paramatma and Brahman, He is the origin of all living entities and all else that exists."

Could you explain exactly what this means. It seems to indicate that the living entity comes from the Brahman. One interesting point though, is that the conditioned souls and the liberated souls have the same point of origin.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 2, 1997

Srila Prabhupada explains this in his purport to Bg 7.10:

Bijam means seed; Krsna is the seed of everything. There are various living entities, movable and inert. Birds, beasts, men and many other living creatures are moving living entities; trees and plants, however, are inert--they cannot move, but only stand. Every entity is contained within the scope of 8,400,000 species of life; some of them are moving and some of them are inert. In all cases, however, the seed of their life is Krsna. As stated in Vedic literature, Brahman, or the Supreme Absolute Truth, is that from which everything is emanating. Krsna is Parabrahman, the Supreme Spirit. Brahman is impersonal and Parabrahman is personal. Impersonal Brahman is situated in the personal aspect--that is stated in Bhagavad-gita. Therefore, originally, Krsna is the source of everything. He is the root. As the root of a tree maintains the whole tree, Krsna, being the original root of all things, maintains everything in this material manifestation.

Brahman can be used in a generic or specific way. In the generic sense, it means the Absolute Truth. Absolute Truth can refer to the Lord, or His impersonal feature, or even to the jiva (that is, when the jiva is compared to material nature, but not when the jiva is compared to the Lord). In the specific sense, Brahman means (as Srila Prabhupada writes above) the impersonal feature of Krsna. Parambrahman is the personal feature. In one sense, both terms are interchangeable, but in another sense, one is impersonal, the other personal. Above, Prabhupada does not radically separate the two ... he says that Brahman is within Parabrahman. He says one is the root, the other is the tree. You have to keep this in mind when considering the Sri Isopanisad quotation. Just like, when a devotee from the Calcutta ISKCON temple arrives here in Mayapur conducting a busload of tourists, it is equally true to say this bus came from Calcutta, the tourists came from Calcutta, and that devotee came from Calcutta. But while the word Calcutta is one, it has different meanings in this case. We don't mean that the devotee came from some tourist bus depot or from some karmi family home in Calcutta. He came from the Calcutta ISKCON temple. The bus came from the depot, and the tourists came from their own homes. Still, all came from Calcutta. Think about it.

Comment by Nrsimha Kavaca das

March 10, 1997

Thank you for your as usual, very wonderful answer.

I have no problem understanding that Krsna is the ultimate source of everything this is also confirmed in the Bg 14.27 brahmano hi pratisthaham. But the question for me still remains the same.

In the original quote I gave from the Isopanisad Mantra 16 Srila Prabhupada very clearly refers to the "All-pervading feature of the Lord".

"The all-pervading feature of the Lord—which exists in all circumstances of waking and sleeping as well as in potential states and from which the jiva-sakti (living force) is generated as both conditioned and liberated souls—is known as Brahman. Since the Lord is the origin of both Paramatma and Brahman, He is the origin of all living entities and all else that exists."

This seems to indicate the brahmajyoti, and that everything is coming into existence through the brahmajyoti. Then Srila Prabhupada goes on to say that since the Lord is the origin of both the Brahman and Paramatma therefore He is the origin of everything. This is confirmed by the quote you gave from BG 7.10 as well as Bg 14.27. The point of everything coming from the impersonal Brahman seems to be also confirmed by the purport of Bg 7.10.

The impersonalists consider that everything is coming from the impersonal Brahman. In SB 1.17.19 Srila Prabhupada does not deny this, but simply points out that the Lord is the origin of the impersonal Brahman Madhya 6.143 verse and purport

"Everything in the cosmic manifestation emanates from the Absolute Truth. It remains in the Absolute Truth, and after annihilation it again enters the Absolute Truth.

PURPORT

In the Taittiriya Upanisad (3.1) it is said, yato va imani bhutani jayante: "The entire material cosmic manifestation is born of the Supreme Brahman." Also, the Brahma-sutra begins with the verse janmady asya yatah: "The Absolute Truth is that from whom everything emanates." (Brahma-sutra 1.1.2) That Absolute Truth is Krsna. In the Bhagavad-gita (10.8), Krsna says, aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate: "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me." Therefore Krsna is the original Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Again, Krsna states in the Bhagavad-gita (9.4), maya tatam idam sarvam jagad avyakta-murtina: "By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded." And as confirmed in the Brahma-samhita (5.37), goloka eva nivasaty akhilatma-bhutah: "Although the Lord always stays in His abode, Goloka Vrndavana, He is still all-pervading." His all-pervasive feature is understood to be impersonal because one does not find the form of the Lord in that all-pervasiveness. Actually, everything is resting on the rays of His bodily effulgence. The Brahma-samhita (5.40) also states: yasya prabha prabhavato jagad-anda-koti-kotiv asesa-vasudhadi-vibhuti-bhinna "Due to the rays of the Lord's bodily effulgence, millions of universes are created, just as planets are created from the sun."

It seems logical that Krsna would do these things through His energies rather than doing it directly

Another point of interest is given in the verse Yato va imani bhutani jayante yena jatani jivanti yat prayanty abhisam-visanti tad brahma tad vijijnasasva (Taittiriya Upanisad 3.1). Srila Prabhupada translates as "After creation, everything rests in His omnipotence, and after annihilation everything again returns to rest in Him."

Generally things merge into the brahmajyoti.

I guess that I'm trying to understand if everything actually does manifest through the the Lord's impersonal energy, and if so can you explain it further?

Please forgive me for bothering you with all these long winded questions. And please oblige me by demolishing any misconceptions I have in this matter.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 16, 1997

Srila Prabhupada compared impersonal Brahman to the government apparatus of a king. The king is a person, and his government is impersonal. But we should not forget that even within the array of the government, there are aspects that always depend upon the king as a person. For example, the queen, the prince and the princess are aspects of the king's government. But their placement within the government is not of the same order as the placement of some ministerial bureaucrat. The bureaucrat gets his post by some system that does not require the personal attention of the king. But it is very much a personal affair who is posted as queen, prince and princess.

I leave it to you to apply this example to the appearance of living entities within the creation. It is not intelligent to think that since everything is said to arise from Brahman, that nothing in creation therefore has a direct personal relationship to Krsna. That was the meaning of my example of the bus coming from Calcutta. Calcutta is comparable to Brahman. But within Brahman there is a personal cause of all causes, just as in Calcutta there is an ISKCON temple. The material energy makes manifest all living entities in creation. The bus represents that material energy; its source is Brahman (Calcutta). Among the living entities brought into view by the material energy (the bus) are devotees and nondevotees. The source of both is Brahman (Calcutta). Still, within Brahman (Calcutta), there is a difference where they come from. The devotees come from Krsna personally. The nondevotees come from His impersonal spiritual energy.

DHRTARAstra'S LIBERATION

Question from Kasya das

February 27, 1997

In SB. 1.13 is description of mystic yoga practice of Maharaja Dhrtarastra. At the end of the chapter is description of the his departure. I would like to know what kind of liberation he achieved.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 2, 1997

From SB 1.13.59:

"Vidura was certainly very liberal to bestow mercy upon his brother Dhrtarastra, whose past life was very materialistic. But ultimately the result of such mercy certainly depended on the will of the Supreme Lord in the present life; therefore Dhrtarastra attained liberation only, and after many such liberated states of life one can attain to the stage of devotional service."

This means liberation in santa-rasa, which through the mystic process begins in impersonal brahman and ends in Supersoul realization.

BRHASPATI

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

March 7, 1997

I have a question concerning the position of Brhaspati.

In the SB 4.22.62 Srila Prabhupada says,

"Brhaspati is the chief priest of the heavenly kingdom, and he is a follower of the philosophy known as brahma-vada, or Mayavada."

Often we see the reference that Brhaspati is the priest and spiritual master of the demigods. How is that the demigods, who are devotees of the Lord, have a Mayavadi as their guru?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 9, 1997

The term Mayavadi has different applications. Here Prabhupada uses it as a synonym for brahmavadi. In this context, it means a transcendentalist whose realization extends up to the impersonal brahmajyoti only. The four Kumaras are similarly brahmavadis in this sense. Sage Dattatreya, an incarnation of Visnu, taught this realization. Here, Mayavada does not mean the philosophy of Sankaracarya, which is offensive to the Lord by decrying His form as illusion. Nor does it mean the Buddhist philosophy of the "Saranatha Mayavadis" (see Adi 7.39).

SUBHADRA DEVI

Question from Vipramukhya Swami

April 9, 1997

Could you please explain to conditioned souls (like my useless self) the origin of Subhadra devi and who her parents are? Some say she appeared from Yasoda, and Kamsa attempted to kill her. Others say that was not Subhadra, but Durga (one of whose name is Subhadra). I ask because someone is asking me, and I finally decided to share the question and see what somelike yourself had to say. I'm sure your disciples would also be interested in the reply, so I posted it here in this conference for the benefit of everyone. I'm sure you have some information from Sastric references that could be enlightening for all, and I approach you with all seriousness and humility.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 10, 1997

Thanks for writing in, Maharaja. I've not been so attentive to the Danda conference lately because I am still in India. Here I'm keeping my COM correspondence down to essentials. Recent inquiries to Danda that I've not answered so far will probably not be answered, so it is best that the inquirers put their questions into other Q&A conferences. I won't be able to answer questions until next month.

But how can I refuse Vipramukhya Maharaja? To get to the bottom of his question about Subhadra devi, I did a bit of research in the Mayapur Academy Library.

The Mahabharata Adi Parva has a section called Subhadra-karana Parva. Therein we find that Subhadra devi is the favorite daughter of Vasudeva and the sister of Lord Krsna. But note: here Krsna tells Arjuna that Subhadra is the "uterine sister of Sarana" (in Sanskrit, *saranasya sahodara*). To be more clear, Subhadra is born

from the same womb as Sarana. I consulted another book that gives a list of wives and children of Vasudeva (Krsna's father) that is taken from the Padma Purana. According to this, Sarana was born from the womb of Vasudeva's wife Rohini. Thus Subhadra would be the maternal sister of Balarama, and the paternal sister of Lord Krsna, whose own mother is Vasudeva's wife Devaki. This could be verified by checking the original Sanskrit of the Padma Purana. Unfortunately the book I consulted does not give a chapter and verse reference for that Purana, and I don't have the time to hunt for the original reference myself.

In a book about Jagannath Puri prepared by the "Jagannath Temple Managing Committee," it is mentioned that some people say that the Subhadra deity is originally a Durga murti that was added to the altar of Jagannatha and Baladeva after the 7th century AD, when the Sakta religion (i.e. the worship of Durga) became very popular in India. Then later, under the influence of popular Vaisnavism, Durga was worshiped as Krsna's sister Subhadra. I should hasten to add that the authors of this book do not attempt to argue that this account is accurate. They disclaim it as only being a story. I mention it here to suggest that the controversy about whether Subhadra is really Krsna's sister or Durga-devi can be traced to the friction between the Saktas and the Vaisnavas. There was a similar controversy during the time of Ramanuja about the identity of the Balaji Deity in Tirupati. The Saivites claimed Balaji is Kartikkeya; but Ramanuja established Balaji is 4-armed Vasudeva. No doubt there are still Saivites who go around grumbling that Balaji is really the son of Lord Siva, but is worshiped as Visnu by the clever Vaisnavas. No doubt there are impersonalists who say, "No matter, Visnu, Siva and Kartikkeya are all one." So I suppose from that side we may hear that Subhadra and Durga are one. By the way, Bhadra is a name of Durga. "Su", as Srila Prabhupada explained when he gave me my name, means "very nice." "Bhadra" means auspicious. So if Durga is auspicious, Subhadra is very nicely auspicious. I would say that means she is transcendently auspicious.

Anyway, to me the claim that Subhadra is actually "just" Durga does not make sense when you consider that there are other sakti-tattva deities worshiped in the greater Jagannatha temple complex. Vimala devi (after whom Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was named Vimala Prasada) is accepted by everyone, including Gaudiya acaryas, as Durga herself. She is worshiped by the Jagannatha pujaris during Durga puja. Jagannatha prasada becomes Mahaprasada after it is offered to her. There is likewise a Laxmi mandir in the complex. She is worshiped as Lord Jagannatha's consort (Her yearly pastime with Lord Jagannatha, in which she obliges Him to return to Puri from the Gundica Mandira, is described in Cc). Besides Vimala and Laxmi devis, there are temples to Sarasvati (Brahma's consort) and Bhubanesvari (Siva's consort). So again, it seems senseless to identify Subhadra devi as Durga (who is there as Vimala), or even as Lord Jagannatha's consort (who is there as Laxmi), or as Sarasvati or some other demigoddess.

As usual, the only sensible conclusion is Srila Prabhupada's: Subhadra is Krsna's sister.

KADAMBA TREE AT KALIYA GHAT

Question from Kamalavati dd

April 11, 1997

I was reading today from the chapter of Krsna Chastising the Serpent Kaliya and I came across the following description (SB 10.16.5): "The wind blowing over that deadly lake carried droplets of water to the shore. Simply by coming in contact with that poisonous breeze, all vegetation and creatures on the shore died." In the

puport it is said:"The word sthira, "unmoving creatures", refers to various types of vegetation including trees...". the next verse describes how "the Lord immediately climbed to the top of a very high kadamba tree and prepared Himself for battle".

Guru Maharaja, could you please explain how it comes that this Kadamba tree was standing there if there wasn't any vegetation, including trees.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 14, 1997

Even if the kadamba tree did die, it would still be standing there. And as soon as Krsna touched it, it would be restored to life. So what is the problem?

NON-SASTRIC STORIES

Question from Kasya das

May 4, 1997

While giving lectures, devotees use different stories, which are not sometimes from sastra, or even nobody knows what is the origin of it, to illustrate some point or to entertain public. Even Srila Prabhupada sometimes uses stories which are more like folk stories. The question is if there is any need for considering where a particular story originates from?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 5, 1997

The question is whether there is any need of considering where a story told in a sastra class comes from.

There was a newspaper in America with the motto "all the news that fits." So, with stories it is similar: if a story fits a philosophical point, we can consider using it. There are many possible sources of useful stories besides those Prabhupada personally told. Prabhupada selected stories from Vedic culture, from other religious traditions, from his own life, from his schooling, from current events, from history, from legends, etc. We can follow suit. But Prabhupada selected stories with impeccable taste. This is the deciding factor whether a story is proper for a sastra class in an ISKCON temple: taste.

I'll give an example of a story I'd consider in bad taste, though it illustrates the philosophical point of detachment. A farmer in Japan had a beautiful wife. A samurai became smitten by her beauty and challenged the farmer to a fight, so that after killing the farmer he would be able to claim her for his own. They agreed the fight would take place in one month at a certain field.

The farmer had no experience of swordfighting. He went to a Samurai "guru" for training. The guru told the farmer he was too nervous to train properly. "Your nervousness is caused by attachment."

So when the month was up, the farmer met the samurai in the field. He was carrying his sword and a parcel, which he offered the samurai as a gift. Upon opening the parcel the samurai was shocked to see within the head of the farmer's wife. Then

the farmer, who was cool and detached, raised the sword and said, "Let's fight." And he killed the samurai, who was bewildered by the cruel loss of his attachment.

Philosophically, it makes a point we can agree with. But from the Vedic cultural point of view, the story is horrid. Who ever heard such a thing happening among cultured people of the Vedic civilization? So therefore I'd not want to hear such a story in a class.

Also there are stories from other religious traditions that would make people sentimental for those religions, not for Krsna consciousness. Better to avoid them.

EGOISM IN DIFFERENT MODES

*Question from Bhagadatta das
May 6, 1997*

First I'd like to express my (and I believe of all members of HDWT) gladness that now you are back from Mayapur and can answer perfectly all our philosophical questions.

Recently one devotee who was studying for his brahmana test asked me the following question to which I don't know the answer.

It is said in SB.3.26.31 Translation: "Egoism in the mode of passion produces two kinds of senses - the senses for acquiring knowledge and the senses of action...". And in the next text 32 it is said, "When egoism in ignorance is agitated by the sex energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the subtle element sound is manifested, and from sound come the ethereal sky and the SENSE OF HEARING."

So the question is, why first the egoism in passion is said to produce all senses (including the ear), and then the following verse states that the sense of hearing is caused (by succession) by the egoism in ignorance?

Does that have to do anything with tracing back the sequence in the phases of creation?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
May 7, 1997

Really, I don't find this question very important. But as an answer, I will just say that the modes of nature are constantly in rivalry with one another as Lord Krsna indicates in Bhagavad-gita. The gunas are not static. Nor is there any such thing as "pure" goodness, passion or ignorance in the material world. For example, within the general field of passion, there are subsets of goodness and ignorance. These subsets may wax at any time, gradually transforming the passionate field to goodness or to ignorance. The conclusion is that within the general field of passion from which all the senses arise, there is a subset of ignorance from which hearing develops.

SEAWEEDS

*Question from Madana Mohana das
May 10, 1997*

Is there any definite and explicit Vedic outlook on eating seaweeds. S devotees advocate that they are not prohibited and therefore are OK to offer and eat, especially because they are said to be healthy, whereas others they are in the mode of ignorance (what is inferred by the place they live). Is there any philosophical principle underlying the selection of food devotees are expected to offer and then eat besides patram puspam phalam toyam to stop useless discussions over this matters in the future?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 11, 1997

All I can say is that I know Srila Prabhupada declared such "healthy" items as mushrooms and brown rice unofferable. Which means if you follow the vow to eat only prasadam, these things are unedible.

I never heard about Srila Prabhupada saying anything about seaweed, but I cannot imagine that His Divine Grace would approve of offering seaweed to the Deity. As far as I know, seaweed as human food is unheard of in Vedic culture.

Comment by Bankabihari dd

May 11, 1997

*>All I can say is that I know Srila Prabhupada declared such "healthy"
>items as mushrooms and brown rice unofferable. Which means if you
>follow the vow to eat only prasadam, these things are unedible.*

Don't devotees also eat tofu products -- not only made out of soy bean, but cooked by non-devotees and perhaps fermented -- because of the protein content? What about oatmeal, which is also pre-cooked by non-devotees, yet it's offered to the Deities? Wouldn't it be better to have three categories of foodstuffs instead of just two -- offerable and not? Let's say:

[1] offerable to the Deities;

[2] offerable to one's guru -- items that some devotees will eat anyway, because of health reasons, travel, or other circumstances (seaweeds, garlic perhaps during illness, and other items to be specified by spiritual authorities) -- considering that it may be better for one's consciousness to somehow offer before eating than not offering at all (at least as an exercise for the mind);

[3] definitely unofferable and unedible items -- grains cooked by non-devotees, mushrooms, fermented stuff, etc. (Let's forget about milk -- homogenized and with added fish oil - and commercial cows invariably ending in slaughterhouses.)

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 12, 1997

What your text suggests to me is that a devotee should settle up his diet with his spiritual master. That is true. After all, as Srila Prabhupada writes in NOD, how exactly a disciple serves his SM is a detail.

I am a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. I know he considered brown rice unacceptable as food fit for a civilized human being. I therefore cannot imagine offering him brown rice. Brown rice is an item of the macrobiotic system of eating, which was developed in Japan. If I am not mistaken, seaweed is also a macrobiotic item. Tofu too, as far as I know. Prabhupada considered these kinds of food to be fit for sudras, not for brahmanas. We are personalists after all. Accepting that

Srila Prabhupada really receives what I offer him, why should I offer him something he does not want? That doesn't seem like service to me. I would not dare to think how Prabhupada would react if "in real life" I brought him a tray of seaweed, tofu preps, yellow cheese, and other fare some members of today's ISKCON are fond of.

At the same time, the spiritual master is merciful. He will accept an offering of items he himself would not eat, if these items are *needed* by the devotee--say for health reasons. However, this allowance can easily be misused for tongue indulgence. In ISKCON, health fads come and go. I have a Godbrother who went on a strict macrobiotic diet for one and a half years. He did not do this to indulge the tongue, not at all. He didn't like the stuff all that much, but he was told by a macrobiotic doctor that this diet would cure him of his health problems. Well, after a year and a half of eating brown rice and other weirder Japanese preps, his health had not improved. So he quit that diet.

My point is that it is not hard to convince ourselves that we "need" to take seaweed, brown rice, tofu or God knows what for our health, when actually we don't need it. And if our tongues *do* hanker for this sort of stuff, and if our health does not require such a diet, all we are doing is indulging the tongue. So, not forgetting that we should offer things acceptable to the Founder-acarya of ISKCON, and not forgetting that he did not like macrobiotic-type things (seaweed and tofu is included here), we should be very, very sure that our state of health actually requires us to eat such stuff before we offer it to the guru. If you are a disciple of a disciple of Srila Prabhupada, remember that what you offer your guru he has to offer to Srila Prabhupada anyway. Prabhupada said the Deity is not a prasadam machine. Neither is the guru a prasadam machine.

Anyway, that's my opinion.

Comment by Bankabihari dd
May 13, 1997

Thank you very much for your thoughts. I apologize if I disturbed you with my note. I agree. Myself I not only do never eat tofu (which is in the mode of ignorance due to having been cooked more than six hours before the "offering"), but not even rolled oats (oatmeal) because it is also cooked by non-devotees, and more than six hours as well. I have enough with my own karma. Why increase it with somebody else's?

From a mere medical and biological point of view, my understanding is that the macrobiotic diet is passe. The state of the art now is to increase vegetables while diminishing starchy carbohydrates, based on the impact of food on blood sugar levels, energy vs. fat, etc. Many thanks again for your time and patience.

TIME IN SATYA-YUGA

Question from Mundita Mastaka das
May 9, 1997

It's said that everybody in Satya-yuga lives for 100 000 years. But on the other hand, it's said that normally everybody in the universe, even Lord Brahma, lives for one hundred years.

How to understand this, applying to the same planet? Does it mean that in Satya-yuga they live literally for 100 000 our years, but for them this time passes as

quickly as 100 years for us? Then how they deal with day, night and seasons changes? It seems it should change too fast.

Or do they live 100 years that are equal to our 100 000 years, i.e. one year of Satya-yuga is equal to 1000 our years? If so, then does it mean that in Satya-yuga days, nights and seasons on the Earth change 1000 times more slowly than now and planets therefore are moving also more slowly? I know that my way of looking at this is very primitive. Could you kindly give a way to understand this question?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 12, 1997

Definitely an interesting question. But I do not know the answer.

REIKI

Question from Varadaraja das

May 16, 1997

I wanted to ask, what should be our opinion about Reiki... I see that more and more devotees are practicing it... While others are saying that it is Maya. so I wanted to ask, if devotees can practice this?. Or should it be avoided?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 16, 1997

This is a philosophical conference. Reiki is not part of our philosophy, that is for sure.

HIRANYAKSA

Question from Kasya das

May 16, 1997

In S.B. 3.18.24 there is a description of inauspicious qualities of Hiranyaksa. One of them is nirankusam - selfsufficient. Please kindly explain to me, I would like to know, what was his selfsufficiency a kind of? Was he self satisfied or nonparel in material power or something like that?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 17, 1997

He was self-sufficient in the sense that since he was such a powerful demon, he could take what he wanted from anyone and did not need to depend on the mercy of others.

CAPACITY TO PREACH

Question from Varadaraja das

June 2, 1997

One book distributor can maybe distribute 100 books a week, and another devotee 500. But if both however, are giving their everything to Krishna, then they are equal. Only their capacity is different... What is that "capacity" consisting of? Is it a material qualification, or is it dependent on spiritual advancement? We often say, that Krishna gives according to our desires. How this goes together with the fact that we have specific capacity to preach?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 2, 1997

Serving Krsna means pleasing Krsna. Such service may **engage** material qualification, but pleasing Krsna does not **depend** upon material qualification. Prabhupada relates the story of the bridge-building efforts of the spider in Ramalila to prove this point. Just because Hanuman could move big boulders and the spider could move only tiny grains of sand does not mean the spider pleased Lord Rama any less.

When a person surrenders to Lord Krsna's service his capacity to do something, that capacity is not to be considered material. Actually, in your example of the 2 book distributors, neither of the 2 were distributing books before they became devotees. So what does their capacity to distribute have to do with their material karma? Each is empowered by Krsna, that's all.

Why does one sell more books than the other? People are individuals. There is the example of birds--each bird flies as high as it can according to its own ability. Different birds flying in the sky at different heights is a beautiful sight to see. Similarly, the sincere efforts of different devotees to satisfy the Lord is beautiful for the Lord to see. If all birds flew at the same height, if all trees grew to the same height, if all mountains were the same height, if all human beings were the same height, and if each book distributor did exactly the same number of books every day as all the rest, the lack of variety would diminish the beauty. "Variety is the mother of enjoyment."

Or take the example of an orchestra. One musician plays the violin solo. Another crashes the cymbals once in a while. So it seems that the violin player is the "expert" musician, more important than the cymbal-crasher. But so what? The real point is the enjoyment of the total performance of the orchestra, not what this or that musician is doing. Even though the cymbal-crasher is not doing so much as the star violin player, if he neglects to crash the cymbals at the right time, then the whole performance suffers.

At the same time, quantity is also important. Srila Prabhupada was certainly pleased by the **amount** of books a disciple distributed. So therefore we praise the distributor who does more. That is natural. Even though the totality of birds flying at different heights is beautiful, still the one that flies highest is special. The expert violin soloist rightfully gets more attention in the press than the cymbal-crasher.

The conclusion is that individually or collectively, the capacities of the devotees are meant for pleasing Krsna. Only then are these capacities perfect.

PRAYERS

Question from Bhakta Robert Kowalski

June 5, 1997

I must say, I am happy to participate in this wonderful conference and this is all by your mercy! In fact this is my debut here, so please forgive me, if I put some foolish question.

Last time during a Bhagavatam class the question was arised: "Does the spiritual master (who is still present on earth) hear the prayers offered to him by his disciple?" The answer was: "Krishna hears."

Is this the proper answer to that question? Thank you in advance for answering.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 5, 1997

The spiritual master is the external representative of the internal Supersoul, the caitya-guru (the original spiritual master in the heart).

So when a devotee prays to the spiritual master, the guru in the heart most certainly hears those prayers. And as there is a confidential relationship between the caitya-guru and the external spiritual master, the Lord arranges the appropriate response to those prayers.

AFFECT ON THE GURU

Question from Lalita Gopinatha dd

June 11, 1997

I have understood that once one has taken formal initiation, if he/she breaks the reg principles, the SM gets part of the reaction to a degree depending upon his spiritual strength & relationship with Krsna.

What then if one is an aspiring disciple, has not yet taken formal initiation & yet chanting the SM pranam mantras whilst periodically breaking the principles. Does the SM still take part of the reaction? In general, what symptoms become manifested in such cases?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 11, 1997

If there is any reaction that a spiritual master takes for an aspiring disciple who chants the SM pranam mantra yet who falls down repeatedly, it is only a social reaction, in the sense that this aspirant does not reflect to the public a good image of someone on the path of KC, especially one on the path of this particular SM.

But as far as I know, the spiritual master is not responsible for an aspiring disciple in the same *spiritual* sense he is responsible for an intitiated disciple.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

June 11, 1997

I have a related question (from "Lives of the Saints" under Devananda Pandita):

"One day Srivasa Pandita went to hear the Srimad-Bhagavatam class given by Devananda Pandita. After some time, Devananda began giving his lecture. He was surrounded on all four sides by his students, who listened carefully to his reading. Srivasa Pandita was a highly exalted rasika bhakta, a devotee experienced in tasting the mellows of devotion.

Hearing the sweetness of the verses of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Srivasa Thakura fell to the ground with tears of ecstasy in his eyes. Weeping and wailing with tears of ecstasy in his eyes, he began rolling on the ground with his voice choked up with emotion.

"Seeing all this, the students of Devananda said, "This man is mad. He is not properly giving his attention to the Srimad-Bhagavatam. Throw him out! Eject him!" Devananda Pandita saw all this, but did nothing to prevent his disciples from ejecting Srivasa Pandita from the class. If a disciple commits a sin as a result of the guru's ignorance, the guru partakes of the sinful reaction. Therefore Devananda Pandita also partook of the sinful reaction of offending Srivasa Pandita. Without saying a word of this to anyone, and without telling anyone of his suffering at the hands of Devananda Pandita, Srivasa Thakura returned home."

The guru accepts all the sinful reactions of his initiated disciples but here it seems to indicate that this is true only in case he doesn't instruct them properly. Is it true?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 11, 1997

At that time Devananda Pandit was not a sampradaya-guru. Lord Caitanya declared him unfit for teaching Srimad-Bhagavatam. So he was a "guru" only in a euphemistic sense. The qualities of a genuine guru did not apply to him...not until he was rectified by Lord Caitanya.

GANESH

Question from Dharmasetu das

June 11, 1997

I am wondering one thing about Ganesh. In some pictures and figures that I saw in India there is Ganesha accompanied with some rat (who is usually beneath him or carrying him).

Can you please say something more regarding the connection between these two persons and what is the story behind it!

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 11, 1997

The rat is Ganesh's *vahana* or carrier.

NEGLECTING THE MIND

*Question from Madana Mohana das
June 13, 1997*

In SB 5.11.17 it is literally said: "This uncontrolled mind is the greatest enemy of the living entity. If one neglects it or gives it a chance, it will grow more and more powerful and will become victorious..."

But in the very first sentence of his purport Srila Prabhupada writes: "The is an easy weapon with which the mind can be conquered - neglect."

Does he mean any other usage of this word 'neglect' than is implied in the verse itself?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 13, 1997

The word **upeksa**, translated in the verse as "neglect," is also used in connection with envious persons. For example:

"The word **upeksa** means neglect. One should neglect an envious person." (from Cc Madhya 1.128p)

Neglecting an envious person means to keep distance from him, to not associate with him. However, if an envious person attacks the spiritual master, the Deity, the Vaisnavas and holy paraphernalia (scripture for example), you cannot "neglect" that in the sense of just letting him do what he likes while you keep distance. Such a rascal must be stopped. Otherwise if you do nothing you share in his offense.

And so it is with the mind. We keep distance from it. But you cannot "neglect" the mind if it begins to conjure up offensive thoughts against guru, God, devotees and sacred items. Nor if it meditates on illicit activities. If we take neglect to mean giving the mind a free hand to do whatever it likes, it will finish us off, just as this verse explains.

BHISMA ON RAJASUYA

*Question from Madana Mohana das
June 18, 1997*

Thank you very much for your explicit answer regarding mind control.

In SB 1.9.41 Bhismadeva, lying on the bed of arrows, said he remembered how Lord Sri Krsna had been worshiped at the Rajasuya ceremony, as he said he had been present there himself. In the purport Srila Prabhupada writes the Rajasuya sacrificial ceremony was performed by Maharaja Yudhisthira, the Emperor of the world, after the victory in the Battle of Kuruksetra. But if I am not mistaken, Bhismadeva was shot through with arrows during the Battle and thus was lying on the bed of arrows since right after the Battle was over for the next six months. So how was it possible for him to attend the yajna in such a disabled condition?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 18, 1997

The Rajasuya sacrifice that Bhismadeva refers to is described in the Sabhaparva of the Mahabharata, chapters 2-7. This is well before the account of the Kuruksetra war. In chapter 7, we find that Duryodhana came away from the sacrifice insulted by the bewildering opulence of the Pandava's assembly house, constructed by Maya Danava. In chapter 8, he hatched a plan with Sakuni to cheat the Pandavas out of all their wealth by a crooked gambling match. This led to the Pandavas being exiled for 13 years. The war began soon after the 13th year ended.

After the war ended, indeed just after Bhismadeva departed this life, Maharaja Yudhishthira held another great sacrifice, the asvamedha-yajna. This was to establish Yudhishthira's rule over the kings of the world who had not perished at Kuruksetra.

The two sacrifices--the Rajasuya, many years *before* Kuruksetra, and the asvamedha, immediately *after* Kuruksetra--should not be confused.

BOW OR CONCH

(the question is missing)

*Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 20, 1997*

This question would be best answered by consulting an expert in Sanskrit. I have no reason to believe that the word *sarnga* refers to anything other than Lord Krsna's bow.

Comment by Bankabihari dd
June 20, 1997

*>I have no reason to believe that the word *sarnga* refers to
>anything other than Lord Krsna's bow.*

*Monier-Williams says:
saarnga (from srnga = horn) adjective: made of horn, horny, corneous... armed with a bow, etc. neuter noun: a bow (especially that of Vishnu), MBh.; fresh ginger (popular meaning)*

KSETRA

*Question from Gauranga das
June 23, 1997*

In Bg. 13. 6-7 Krsna, describing the ingredients of the field of activities describes the aggregate (sanghatah) and the living symptoms (cetana). Could you explain what these two expressions exactly mean?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 23, 1997

You may have heard the expression, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Therefore the aggregate--the totality of ingredients that make up a person's material identity, or that make up the whole universe, and ultimately the

mahat-tattva--is greater than the sum of its parts. Thus it is counted a separate element. For example, take a kirtan group. You can make a list of all the ingredients: five musical devotees, two mrdangas, two karatals, one gong; but your total experience of the entity called "a kirtan group" is still greater than these parts.

"Cetana" means consciousness under the influence of the three modes of nature. "Living symptoms" are the finer elements of our embodied life, as Srila Prabhupada describes in these sentences:

Perfection of pure devotional service is attained when all attention is diverted towards the transcendental loving service of the Lord. To cut off the tie of all other affections does not mean complete negation of the finer elements, like affection for someone else. This is not possible. A living being, whoever he may be, must have this feeling of affection for others because this is a symptom of life. The symptoms of life, such as desire, anger, hankerings, feelings of attraction, etc., cannot be annihilated.

According to the Sankhya-yoga conception of psychology, *citta* (i.e. cetana) is an individualized canalization from a pool of *guna-prakrti* (material energy) The pool, of course, is the complete balance of the three modes. According to an individual soul's karma, a canal of energy is drawn out of that pool which forms the subtle body of that living entity. In that particular canal, the gunas are entwined like a rope. They are never independent of one another, yet each guna keeps its own separate identity at the same time. The strength of one guna over the other in this canal is always changing. Only the predominant guna at a certain moment will be recognized as that person's symptom of consciousness: now lustfulness (rajas), now anger (tamas), now peacefulness and satisfaction (sattva). These changing manifestations of the three gunas within the individual canal of cetana are the life symptoms.

WORSHIPERS OF BRAHMAN

Question from Gauranga das
June 23, 1997

In the Bg. 12. 3-4 Krsna speaks about the worshipers of the impersonal Brahman. Why does He say that they are engaged in the welfare of all and why do they achieve Krsna?

What does it mean to "perceive the Supersoul within the individual soul", as Prabhupada states in the purport?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 23, 1997

This is in reference to the *santa-bhaktas*, who are impersonalists or semi-personalists. Yet they are not offenders to the Lord, as the Mayavadis are. Even the impersonalists among the santa-bhaktas--Lord Caitanya has described 13 kinds of santa-bhaktas in his explanation of the atmarama verse, including those merged in the Brahmajyoti--have a worshipable attitude to the divine light of the Lord's transcendental body. That attitude distinguishes them from the offensive Mayavadis

who are so determined to be one with God that they have no sense of devotion at all. Such impersonalist santa-bhaktas are called Brahmanandis. The semipersonalists are called Paramatmavadis. These two classes are distinguished from the Premanandis (the pure devotees), who serve the Personality of Godhead in rasas beginning with Dasya. The Brahmanandis want everyone to realize the Brahman-nature. Thus in holy places like Haridwar and Hrsikesa where Brahmanandis congregate, they greet pilgrims with the slogan "Kalyan ho!", which means "Let there be auspiciousness." Brahmanandis can achieve full Krsna consciousness (after great difficulty) because they are not averse to the spirit of devotion, though they are more attracted to the impersonal than the personal feature of the Lord.

SOUL - CONSCIOUSNESS

Question from Gauranga das
June 23, 1997

In Bg. 13.33 it is stated that the soul doesn't mix with the body. But in the next vers it is said that the living entity illuminates the body with consciousness.

So what is this consciousness? Is it a real substances that is somewhat different from the soul (as the soul is undividable, but the consciousness can spread like sunshine)? Is the consciousness spiritual or not? If it is, then how does it come into contact with the body and how does it make the soul aware of matter? How is the consciousness and hence the soul influenced by the body?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 23, 1997

There is consciousness that is visesa, nirvisesa and savisesa. Visesa means "with material qualities." I explained that in my answer to your first question. Nirvisesa consciousness is impersonal--no qualities. In the quotation I provided in my first answer, Srila Prabhupada says that annihilation of life symptoms is impossible. Therefore nirvisesa consciousness cannot be sustained, though impersonalists try for it. Savisesa consciousness is consciousness of spiritual variety.

In the quotation referred to, Srila Prabhupada writes:

The symptoms of life, such as desire, anger, hankerings, feelings of attraction, etc., cannot be annihilated. Only the objective has to be changed.

Therefore material consciousness is consciousness with a distinct material objective. Impersonal consciousness is consciousness with no distinct objective. Pure Krsna consciousness is consciousness with a distinct spiritual objective.

These different objectives are revealed to the soul by Krsna, according to the soul's desire. Krsna says He is jnanam jneyam jnana-gamyam: knowledge, the source of knowledge and the object of knowledge. The visva (the universe of material qualities), the brahmajyoti and the personal form of the Lord are each appearances of Krsna.

KARMA TATTVA

*Question from Dharmasetu das
June 23, 1997*

Why the karma is mentioned as tattva, as the part of other tattvas mentioned in Bhagavad-gita? Does it mean the karma is also eternal (as other tattvas are) in some sense?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 23, 1997

When Srila Prabhupada clearly states in his introduction to the *Bhagavad-gita*:

After giving up one type of body, he enters another type of body, as we put on and take off clothes. As the soul thus migrates, he suffers the actions and reactions of his past activities. These activities can be changed when the living being is in the mode of goodness, in sanity, and understands what sort of activities he should adopt. If he does so, then all the actions and reactions of his past activities can be changed. Consequently, karma is not eternal. Therefore we stated that of the five items (isvara, jiva, prakrti, time and karma) four are eternal, whereas karma is not eternal.

why do you ask me a question like this:

>>Why the karma is mentioned as tattva, as the part of other tattvas mentioned in Bhagavad-gita? Does it mean the karma is also eternal (as other tattvas are) in some sense?<<

Before thinking up questions that go over the limit into the realm of unsastric mental speculation--is karma eternal even though Srila Prabhupada clearly says it is not?--you should exhaust your intelligence to the fullest by trying to understand Srila Prabhupada's teachings under the guidance of your spiritual master.

Otherwise you are just wasting my time.

RADHA & KRISHNA MARRIED

*Question from Krsnadas Kaviraja das
June 23, 1997*

I heard in a lecture that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took two principles of each of the four Vaisnava sampradayas and combined them into the highest truth. From Nimbarkacarya He took the concept of Krishna being always consorted by Srimati Radharani, so it was said. As the icing of the already delicious cake, so to speak, Mahaprabhu added as a ninth aspect the notion of Radha and Krishna not being married, since the fear of being caught by Radharani's husband intensified Her love for Krishna. The followers of Nimbarkacarya had worshiped Radha and Krishna as being married.

Did Nimbarkacarya and all the other sampradayas including our own not know the Srimad Bhagavatam where They are not married? How can it be said that Caitanya Mahaprabhu revealed this intimate aspect that is already described in the Srimad Bhagavatam which was written ca 4500 before His appearance?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 23, 1997

The pastimes of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna are unlimited. They are both married and not married. There is a Puranic description of their marriage. There is even a Vaikuntha region within Goloka Vrndavana in which Radha and Krsna are worshiped in the mood of Laksmi-Narayana--where of course they are husband and wife, just as Laxmi-Narayana are. Yet simultaneously they enjoy an "illicit" relationship in which Srimati Radharani is **apparently** (but never actually) married to Abhimanyu. This relationship, called **parakiya**, is considered by Lord Caitanya to be even more relishable than the **svakiya** or marital relationship.

Sometime devotees try to impose their limited "black/white" mentality on the Lord's pastimes, believing that **either** Radha and Krsna must be married, **or** they must not be. We have to get used to what the word "inconceivable" means, and give up our attempt to limit the Absolute to the space within our skulls.

WASHING GURU'S PLATE

Question from Bhakta Ivar

July 2, 1997

If a temple has only two sinks, one for the Deities and one for the devotees plates, then in which one should the plate of the spiritual master, visiting sannyasis, etc. be washed? One devotee just told me that it should be washed in the Deities sink. Is this really proper?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 3, 1997

My policy in this conference is to not answer such questions as this--**unless** I happen to be in the direct association of HH Bhaktividyapurna Maharaja--then I would just ask him and put his answer in Danda. But as for myself, a question about plate washing is not a philosophical question, and this is a philosophical conference. If I were to answer your one question about plates, I would get 10 new questions from other Danda subscribers about: what should be done with 10-year old dried up prasadam that is found in some hidden corner of the temple on maha-cleanup day; what should we say to matajis who bring blue or red beadbags into the temple room; since Srila Prabhupada did not like avocados except when prepared as guacamole, how can ISKCON devotees offer avocados prepared any other way, and so on--thus philosophy would fly out the window.

You should refer this question to HH BVP Maharaja, who is expert and never tires of such practical-detail questions. Unfortunately last time I checked he had no facility to go on COM.

REACTION

*Question from Gauranga das
July 2, 1997*

I have heard that in the Kali yuga we don't get a reaction for those sins that we commit in mind.

- 1. Is there any reference in sastra and in Srila Prabhupada's books in connection with this?*
- 2. Does this apply only to sinful thoughts or to offenses also?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 3, 1997

>>1. Is there any reference in sastra and in Srila Prabhupada's books in connection with this?

2. Does this apply only to sinful thoughts or to offenses also?<<

1. Yes, I believe there is, but I do not remember exactly where. If you have the Vedabase Folio you can search the references yourself. If you don't, perhaps someone else subscribing to this conference knows the references or is prepared to look them up for you.
2. I don't see what the difference is, if I take into consideration offenses like sinning on the strength of chanting, maintaining material attachment in spite of hearing so many instructions, and inattention while chanting.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares
July 3, 1997

Dear Maharajas and Prabhus,

/\o

>>>1. *Is there any reference in sastra and in Srila Prabhupada's books in connection with this?*

>

>1. *Yes, I believe there is, but I do not remember exactly where. If you have the Vedabase Folio you can search the references yourself. If you don't, perhaps someone else subscribing to this conference knows the references or is prepared to look them up for you.*

See SB 1.18.7.

I've got this reference recently and I am happy to share it with you.

Comment by Varadaraja das
July 4, 1997

>See SB 1.18.7.

>

>I've got this reference recently and I am happy to share it with you.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1: Chapter Eighteen, Text 7

TEXT 7

nanudvesti kalim samrat
saranga iva sara-bhuk
kusalany asu siddhyanti
netarani krtani yat

na--never; anudvesti--envious; kalim--unto the personality of Kali;
samrat--the Emperor; saram-ga--realist, like the bees; iva--like;
sara-bhuk--one who accepts the substance; kusalani--auspicious objects;
asu--immediately; siddhyanti--become successful; na--never;
itarani--which are inauspicious; krtani--being performed; yat--as much
as.

TRANSLATION

Maharaja Pariksit was a realist, like the bees who only accept the essence [of a flower]. He knew perfectly well that in this age of Kali, auspicious things produce good effects immediately, whereas inauspicious acts must be actually performed [to render effects]. So he was never envious of the personality of Kali.

PURPORT

The age of Kali is called the fallen age. In this fallen age, because the living beings are in an awkward position, the Supreme Lord has given some special facilities to them. So by the will of the Lord, a living being does not become a victim of a sinful act until the act is actually performed. In other ages, simply by thinking of performing a sinful act, one used to become a victim of the act. On the contrary, a living being in this age is awarded with the results of pious acts simply by thinking of them. Maharaja Pariksit, being the most learned and experienced king by the grace of the Lord, was not unnecessarily envious of the personality of Kali because he did not intend to give him any chance to perform any sinful act. He protected his subjects from falling prey to the sinful acts of the age of Kali, and at the same time he gave full facility to the age of Kali by allotting him some particular places. At the end of the Srimad-Bhagavatam it is said that even though all nefarious activities of the personality of Kali are present, there is a great advantage in the age of Kali. One can attain salvation simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord. Thus Maharaja Pariksit made an organized effort to propagate the chanting of the Lord's holy name, and thus he saved the citizens from the clutches of Kali. It is for this advantage only that great sages sometimes wish all good for the age of Kali. In the Vedas also it is said that by discourse on Lord Krsna's activities, one can get rid of all the disadvantages of the age of Kali. In the beginning of the Srimad-Bhagavatam it is also said that by the recitation of Srimad-Bhagavatam, the Supreme Lord becomes at once arrested within one's heart. These are some of the great advantages of the age of Kali, and Maharaja Pariksit took all the advantages and did not think any ill of the age of Kali, true to his Vaisnavite cult.

ACCIDENTAL FALLDOWN

*Question from Gauranga das
July 2, 1997*

We read about accidental falldown in several places in Bg, SB and CC. My question is that is there actually such a thing as an accidental falldown? If someone is practicing KC nicely, and doesn't want to fall down, is it possible that he still can become victimized by maya without any reason? I think there must be some reason, although it may be hidden. Could you elaborate on this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
July 3, 1997

My understanding from various purports on this topic is that a falldown is considered accidental when it is impelled by bad association and/or by a deeply ingrained sinful habit that the devotee was addicted to before he/she took up devotional service. Not that the devotee actually desires to fall down. But being neophyte, he/she is weak. And by chance, without intending to, he/she comes into an unfortunate situation where the urge to do something sinful suddenly grows very powerful, due to the inauspicious combination of present association and past habit.

If the falldown is truly accidental, the devotee will recognize it as a falldown afterward, regret it, want to rectify it and want to move to a higher stage of realization where such accidents won't happen again.

If the falldown is deliberate, then it is not really recognized as a falldown because there is no regret, no attempt to rectify, no concern for higher realization. This is the mentality of sinning on the strength of chanting. For example, the sahajiyas deliberately incorporate sinful behavior into their so-called bhakti. Or as Srila Prabhupada said about Catholics, the practice of confessing one's sins to the priest is a weekly affair because there is no intention of stopping sin. Even though there is a formal request of "Father, please forgive my sins," there is no substantial regret because the confession is a mechanical ritual. Such sins are not accidental. They are deliberate. These people simply don't want to stop sinning.

CHANGED ORDER OF YUGAS

*Question from Kasya das
July 3, 1997*

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 1: Chapter Four, Text 14

TRANSLATION

Suta Gosvami said: When the second millennium overlapped the third, the great sage [Vyasadeva] was born to Parasara in the womb of Satyavati, the daughter of Vasu.

PURPORT

There is a chronological order of the four millenniums, namely Satya, Dvapara, Treta and Kali. But sometimes there is overlapping. During the regime of Vaivasvata Manu, there was an overlapping of the twenty-eighth round of the four millenniums, and the third millennium appeared prior to the second. In that particular millennium, Lord Sri Krsna also descends, and because of this there was some particular alteration. ...

What is the direct cause of the change order of the ages?

What is the purpose of it?

What are those particular alternations mentioned in purport?

Does the time duration, yuga dharma and longevity of people of particular yuga remains as it is, according to the name of yuga?

Does Sri Krsna choose to descends only when ages overlap?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 4, 1997

I answered the first question in a previous text in this conference. You've asked further questions that go beyond the answer I gave then. But I have nothing further to say. To find that earlier answer you'll have to search through the backlog of Danda texts yourself.

QUESTIONS

Questions from Premavanya das

July 11, 1997

- 1) In order to advance in Spiritual life, should the Spiritual master be personal involved in the life of his disciple, or can we make advancement just by hearing His instructions?. And what does it mean to have a relationship with Spiritual master on the philosophical level?*
- 2) When we study Srila Prabhupadas books, then we get a theoretical understanding (Jnana.) But how dose it become realized knowledge (vijana.)*
- 3) In one lecture you said " We should not see Krsna consciousness in terms of religion, but should seek the real knowledge of God. The result of knowledge is that you are not any more in illusion." So by which symptoms can we understand that we are not any more in illusion?*
- 4) All people ascribe their own ideals to God, on the basis of their own cultural background and qualities. So how can we say that the Vedic culture is not influenced by this?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 12, 1997

>>1) In order to advance in Spiritual life, should the Spiritual master be personal involved in the life of his disciple, or can we make advancement just by hearing His instructions?. And what does it mean to have a relationship with Spiritual master on the philosophical level?<<

The relationship is transcendental. It functions under the auspices of the Paramatma. So it is certainly possible, if one is very qualified and sincere, to made advancement by hearing only. Like Sukadeva Goswami in the womb. That's first class: hearing and understanding everything. Of course, he was not an ordinary soul. Second class is understanding through hearing and experience. Third class is to fail to understand even after hearing and experience; in this case, one has to keep trying, depending upon Krsna. A philosophical relationship? I don't know what you are trying to say by this. "Philosophical level" often means mental speculation. This is not the process of spiritual transference of knowledge.

>>2) When we study Srila Prabhupadas books, then we get a theoretical understanding (Jnana.) But how dose it become realized knowledge (vijana.)<<

You get jnana if that is all you want, or all you are capable of getting at your level of development. Srila Prabhupada's books have incalculable potency. People have started following the four regulative principles just after reading one of His Divine Grace's books. That is already vijana.

>>3) In one lecture you said " We should not see Krsna consciousness in terms of religion, but should seek the real knowledge of God. The result of knowledge is that you are not any more in illusion." So by which symptoms can we understand that we are not any more in illusion?<<

Read Bhagavad-gita 8-12.

>>4) All people ascribe their own ideals to God, on the basis of their own cultural background and qualities. So how can we say that the Vedic culture is not influenced by this?<<

To a degree the Vedic culture is influenced by this. That part is called aparavidya, or relative knowledge. Krsna consciousness is para-vidya, transcendental knowledge.

Comment by Adipurusa das

July 12, 1997

>Read Bhagavad-gita 8-12.

Probably, this should mean "Bhagavad-gita 13.8-12"?

PERSONIFIED ENERGIES

Question from Dharmasetu das

July 12, 1997

In Krsna Book, chapter 88, it is mentioned:

"The Lord was surrounded by His personal associates Nanda and Sunanda, and the personified Sudarsana disc was also standing by Him. As stated in the Vedas, the Lord has innumerable energies, and they also stood there personified. The most important among them were as follows: pusti, the energy for nourishment; sri, the energy of beauty; kirti, the energy of reputation; and aja, the energy of material creation. All these energies are invested in the administrators of the material world, namely Lord Brahma, Lord Siva and Lord Visnu, and in the kings of the heavenly planets, Indra, Candra, Varuna and the sun-god. In other words, all these

demigods, being empowered by the Lord with certain energies, engage in the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

In which way the energies of Maha Visnu, namely Pusti, Sri, Kirti and Aja, become manifested and how they respond to overruling the gunas?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 13, 1997

As far as I know these are aspects of the Lord's sakti (His feminine potency), which acts as yogamaya in the spiritual world and as mahamaya in the material world.

ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GURU

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

July 23, 1997

Recently a devotee was questioning me about their loss of faith in their spiritual master due to their perception of certain dealings of the spiritual master with other devotees.

The way I understood this is that their relationship never really got off the material or sentimental platform as the guru - disciple relationship is a transcendental relationship and is therefore eternal. It can never be affected by these material emotions and is not subject to diminishing with time.

What is your understanding of this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 23, 1997

Hmmm. You're generalizing a conclusion from a specific instance that you've only hinted at. While there's nothing philosophically wrong with your general conclusion, whether it actually applies to the specific situation, I couldn't know. It would be better to ask this question to the spiritual master whom you are referring to. Even if you now inform me more about this situation, I don't like to get drawn into contributing editorial comments on specific dealings between a spiritual master and his disciples.

Comment by Gauranga das

July 24, 1997

This message made me think about a few questions.

In the Bg. 2.16 Krsna makes clear distinction between the definitions of eternal and temporary. According to my understanding the Vedic philosophy accepts only two categories: Eternal things are thosa with no beginning and no end, and all others are temporary, i.e. with beginning and end. The guru-disciple relationship however sometimes seems to have a beginning, but from then on is accepted as an endless one. How does this fit into the above categories? Or maybe htere is another explanation to the guru-disciple relationship being called eternal?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 25, 1997

Krsna is the original and eternal guru. The initiating/instructing spiritual master is His external representative. It "appears" that the external representative intercedes in our lives at a certain point in time; thus it "appears" that the relationship with the spiritual master begins at that point, then has no end. But the relationship with Krsna, the original guru, has no beginning. And since all souls are Krsna's parts and parcels, it follows that our relationship with them-- including the particular devotee who intercedes in our lives as siksa/diksa guru--likewise has no beginning. Your question involves only appearances, not reality.

OFFERING IMPURE BHOGA

Question from Varadaraja das

July 24, 1997

Sometimes devotees prepare bhoga to be offered to Krsna, and then we later on we find out that some ingredient is not bonafide. Like in case with margarine wherein the ugrakamis put in gelatine, that is made by boiling skins, bones, and connective tissues of animals. So how will the law of karma act in this case?

Will Krsna ever accept such a offering?. Will all those who eat the "Prasadam" get some reactions?. And what about the person who prepared it (thinking it to be bonafide,) or the person who authorized it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 25, 1997

Krsna personally is not bound by rules and regulations. But we are. So in coming to an answer to this question, a certain degree of leeway must be allowed.

Purity in devotional service does not ultimately depend on material considerations. It is a question of consciousness. There is a narration of a great devotee who was obliged to prepare fish as an offering to the Lord, but by his powerful devotion combined with the Lord's powerful mercy, the fish was transformed into nectar. Other examples can be given.

I believe if a devotee is sincere, and honestly doesn't know that an ingredient uses in an offering is impure though he tried his best to gather pure ingredients, that Krsna accepts the offering and by His mercy it is transformed into prasadam. After all, in Kali Yuga things are so contaminated that it is almost impossible to assemble ingredients of a level of purity like that demanded by Vedic culture. However, this state of affairs cannot be taken as a license. We who must follow rules and regulations are obliged to offer preparations that are as pure as we can manage to arrange. We are in no position to permit carelessness. Carelessness in this regard is sahajiya-ism.

SUBHADRA VS. RADHARANI

Question from bhakta Robert Kowalski

September 1, 1997

In SB 10.22.4 there is the description how gopis were worshiping the Katyayani goddess in order to get Krishna as their husband. In the purport it is written:

"..The name Durga therefore refers also to that personality who functions as the internal potency of the Lord and who is thus on the platform of suddha-sattva, pure transcendental existence. This internal potency is understood to be Krishna's sister, known also as Ekanamsa or Subhadra."

I always thought Srimati Radharani is the personification of Krishna's internal potency. In fact I have problems with distinguishing the positions of Subhadra, Laksmi-devi and Durga devi. What is their identity? What is their relation to Srimati Radharani?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 3, 1997

(Unfortunately the answer is missing.)

Comment by Bhakta Robert Kowalski

September 3, 1997

Guru Maharaja, I still have some doubts regarding this subjectmatter:

> The internal potency is one--Yogamaya.

So, why is that distinction dividing Lord's saktis into internal and external made? Since the sakti is one, what for introduce so many categories? Is it because people in general judge transcendental topics according to their dualistic vision and just have to divide object of their understanding into opposite parts? Or is there any other answer?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 3, 1997

The answer is that spiritual reality is inconceivably, simultaneously one and different. What you are proposing--that so many categories were introduced to help dualistic people understand--is called Mayavadi philosophy. Don't speculate in this way.

UNBROKEN GURU PARAMPARA

Question from Kasya das

September 5, 1997

Following FAX arrived here in Stockholm in Hare Krsna Center. It's obviously written by non-ISKCON person, despite his "spiritual" name. It would be surely enlightening for us if you could comment on it. We will then fax this man the very same answer back.

Your servant

Kasya dasa

...

Hare Krsna! Please accept my dandavat pranam.

I have a question that perhaps someone of the devotees can answer.

It is said in the Scriptures that we must be initiated in an unbroken Guru-parampara. So, I want to know what the Diksa-parampara of your movement is. In another words which nitya siddha associate of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu does the parampara descend?

The so-called parampara mentioned in for example the Bhagavad-gita (ISKCON's edition) is not a Diksa, but a "Siksa-parampara" that Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati "invented". Sri Gaura Kisora Babaji was not a disciple of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, neither was the latter a disciple of Sri Jagannatha das Babaji, etc. So, what is the parampara as per Diksa that descended to Sri Gaura Kisora das Babaji?

Jaya Radhe Syam!

Premananda dasa

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 6, 1997

I have a public q&a site on the ISKCON page of the NE BBT. Sometimes questions like this are sent there...in fact it seems like I've seen this very question before. My policy is that I do not answer such questions. I ignore them. In my view that question represents the most poisonous of poison, the ugliest of ugly points of view. It represents the kind of disease one can get by floating through Vrndavana town and gathering view-points from anybody and everybody. It is unfortunate that some ISKCON devotees feel they have a duty to pursue a "broader perspective" by dragging their minds through Vrndavana town as if the mind is meant by Krsna to be a trawling net and Vrndavana is meant to be the deep blue sea. The mind becomes crammed with a smelly load of slippery fish that way.

This person, whomever he is, represents the viewpoint of the Radhakund Babajis who think that "real" diksa means siddha-pranali (in other words, that in order for initiation to be bonafide, the guru must reveal the svarupa of the jiva by informing the disciple "you are a gopi named such and such in Krsna's pastimes"). The siddha-pranali babas present themselves as nityasiddhas. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura completely rejected them and their process. He presented the meaning of parampara as a line of humble service to the sankirtana mission, which is the only entrance to Lord Caitanya's movement that is open for fallen souls in Kaliyuga. This is the siksa line, because siksa (instruction, or preaching) is the essence of sankirtana. The babaji conception is, as Siddhanta Sarasvati put it, merely a kanistha idea of "me and Krsna." They do not preach. Rather, as Srila Prabhupada said, they imitate Rupa Gosvami. And thus they are fallen. "Babajis means cigarette and three women." Prabhupada forbade his disciples from associating with them.

Yet until recently one Sanskrit scholar adhering to a version of this point of view was giving regular Sat-sandarbha classes in the Krsna-Balarama temple to groups of fascinated ISKCON devotees from Europe...

Forget about arguing with this person. We have our missionary work, and he has his own reward.

Comment by Gauranga das

September 8, 1997

I'm sure that Maharaja will have perfect philosophical arguments for the validity of our siksa-sampradaya, but for the satisfaction of this Premananda dasa I have done a little research on our Diksa-parampara. The result is as follows (in ascending order):

*Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Srila Bhkatisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada
Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji Maharaja
Srila Bhagavata dasa Babaji Maharaja
Srila Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja
Srila Madhusudhana dasa Babaji Maharaja
Srila Uddhava dasa Babaji Maharaja
Acarya Baladeva Vidyabhusana
Radha-Damodara dasa
Nayananda dasa
Rasikananda Murari
Syamananda Gosvami (Remember that he got his name and tilaka from Radharani)
Hridaya Caitanya dasa (cusin of Gadadhara Pandita)
Gauridasa Pandita (yunger brother of Suryadasa Sarakhela, Jahnava Mata's father)*

He is mentioned in Cc. Adi 11.26-27 and in Cc. Antya 6.62 According to the Gauraganoddesa-dipika (128) Gauridasa is Subala in Krishna's lila and one of the dvadasa-gopalas, Lord Nityananda's main associates.

Besides that Bhaktivinoda Thakira was initiated by Vipina Bihari Gosvami, who came in Jahnava Mata's line.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's diksa line was as follows: Radha-Ramana Cakravarti, Krsna-carana Cakravarti, Ganga Narayana Cakravarti, Narottama dasa Thakura, Lokanatha Gosvami.

Krishnadasa Kaviraja was initiated by Lord Nityananda, who in turn was the disciple of Laksmipati Tirtha. Nityananda's godbrother was Madhavendra Puri, whose disciples were Sri Advaita and Isvara Puri, who in turn was the diksa-guru of Lord Caitanya.

And the siksa-parampara was invented not by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, but by Lord Caitanya, who didn't formally initiate all the six Goswamis, despite that everyone accepts them as His direct successors. Lord Krishna also didn't initiate Arjuna, although He made him the member of his parampara by instructing him. we also don't doubt Sri Madhvacarya's validity as th founder-acarya of the Brahma-sampradaya although he is not in any diksa-contact with Lord Brahma.

Dear Maharaja, please confirm or correct the above statements. I intentionally didn't give reference. That will be Premananda's job to check them if he doubts.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 8, 1997

I've not investigated the diksa-parampara to this extent. What you've done looks very valuable and I am glad it is posted here in this conference. If some member of Danda has the resources to check this list sastricly, please give us an opinion.

Thanks for your contribution.

BEAUTIFUL KRISHNA

*Question from Bhakta Robert Kowalski
September 10, 1997*

In Krishna Book, chapter thirty-one, Srila Prabhupada writes:

" When Lord Krsna finally reappeared and assembled with the gopis, He looked very beautiful, just be fitting a person with all kinds of opulences. In the Brahma-samhita, it is stated, ananda-cin-maya-rasa-pratibhavitabhih: Krsna alone is not particularly beautiful, but when His energy--especially His pleasure energy, represented by Radharani--expands, He looks very magnificent."

I do not understand the statement that "Krsna alone is not particularly beautiful". We know that the very word "Krishna" means "the all attractive person". Then how can Bhagavan be devoid of the opulence of the all beauty? Could you please enlighten me in this concern?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
September 11, 1997

You should also keep in mind such statements Prabhupada makes as "Krsna is never alone" and "the beauty of Krsna's adornments are made more beautiful by decorating His transcendental body."

The spiritual world, and Krsna's pastimes, exist to facilitate a reciprocation of opulences between master and servant. In Bhagavatam canto 1 Srila Prabhupada writes that every jiva is endowed with 6 opulences...beauty, strength, knowledge, etc. But now these are covered by maya. When the jiva becomes Krsna conscious, then the opulences of the jiva and the Lord are exchanged in rasa. When we say Krsna is the enjoyer (Purusa), it means Krsna enjoys this exchange. It also means Krsna enjoys Himself, since all the jivas and all opulences originate in Him. But then again, "enjoying Himself" is never static and isolated: it always means rasa, reciprocation. It never means Krsna standing alone, denuded of all associates and paraphernalia. And that is the reason for the statement that Krsna alone is not particularly beautiful, which is a paradoxical idea anyway since Krsna is never alone. Prabhupada said, giving the example of the Lord's smiling exchanges with the gopis, that by transcendental reciprocation, both the Lord and the gopis become ever more beautiful. At the same time it must always be remembered that Krsna is the original starting point of the process.

Message from Bhaktividya Purna Swami
September 23, 1997

HH Bhaktividya Purna Maharaja is at last a member of the (Have) Danda (Will Travel) conference. Give him a rousing hand of applause and seat him nicely, with chandan and garland. No need to bring water, he always has his big lota with him. He sent me the following comment as his observation on the question why Krsna is said to be less beautiful alone.

As Krsna is the embodiment of rasa, all rasas are within Him and He is known as the visaya, the enjoyer of exchange of rasa. The particular devotee (such as Srimati Radharani) is known as the asraya, or the shelter of the rasa. On His own, Krsna will not be manifesting any particular mood except that of Atmarama, but when His devotee, who is the shelter of their rasa with Him, performs service for Krsna, then Krsna reciprocates with that devotee by that rasa (ye yatha mam prapadyante...). When the internal potency expands, Krsna then reciprocates with those dealings, and as it is said that the conjugal rasa is the most intimate, naturally His reciprocation with the devotees of that rasa will be the most sweet (madhurya). Therefore the point - as the internal potency expands, He becomes more beautiful.

Jai Nitai!
Ys, BVPS

Comment by Jahnu das
September 25, 1997

<The sound of roaring applause, horns, drums, and buggles>

Jaya Maharaja!! <offering full dandavats>

DESTINY

Question from Bhakta Robert Kowalski
September 12, 1997

Krishna is said to know past, present and future of everything. He also confirms that Himself in Bhagavad-gita 7.26. My question deals with His knowledge of future. Does He know when we are going to surrender to Him, or does His knowledge extend only to our karma interactions which concern only future of "material (bodily)" affairs?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
September 17, 1997

This is a revival of an old question, answered long ago in Danda.

Krsna knows everything. But that does not interfere with your independence. Because what you will do depends upon your taste. If I know you like ice cream, and I know that ice cream is being served in the next room though you do not know it, and I see you wandering in the direction of that room, then I can predict you will soon be eating ice cream. That I know this does not interfere with your independence. Similarly, Krsna knows when you will surrender to Him. Still, it depends not upon His knowing, but your getting the taste of Krsna consciousness.

BRAHMAN AS KNOWLEDGE

Question from Bhakta Robert Kowalski
September 13, 1997

In purport to Bhagavad-gita 13.18, second paragraph I found the following statement:

"The vedic literature confirms that Brahman is concentrated transcendental knowledge."

Many times I tried to understand this, but so far I didn't succeed. Could you please explain it to me?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 17, 1997

What are you trying to understand? The words, or the concept? The words are plain, they have no double meanings. The concept is also not that difficult. A laser beam, so powerful that it cuts through metal, is concentrated light. Knowledge is like light. Therefore when you understand something, you say "I see." When knowledge becomes so concentrated that it cuts through the material conditioning and liberates the soul from its false dependence upon the body, that concentrated knowledge is brahman realization.

RASA WITH LORD VAMANADEVA

Question from Adipurusa das

September 14, 1997

What rasa Bali Maharaja has with Lord Vamana?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 17, 1997

Vatsalya. Also Bali's daughter had the same mood of attraction, but when her father was arrested, she became angry with Lord Vamana and vowed to kill him. Thus she became Putana in her next life, who approached Lord Krsna in a motherly mood with the intent to kill him.

BHARATA VARSA

Question from Kasya das

September 26, 1997

Why, at the present, only the India is considered as Bharata-varsa and not the whole Earth, as it was before Maharaja Parikhsita?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 26, 1997

Srila Prabhupada explained in 1968:

India is known as Bharatvarsa. Perhaps most of you know it. This is after the name of King Bharata. There was a great king, Bharata, who was the emperor of the world, and this planet was named Bharata-varsa after his name. Before that this planet was known as Ilavati-varsa. And after Maharaja Bharata, this planet was named as Bharata-varsa. But gradually, there was partition. As recently also there has been partition of India, Hindustan and Pakistan, similarly, this planet, known as Bharatvarsa, was partitioned gradually, one after another. So then the other names, Europe, Africa, or America, or Germany, these names gradually developed.

Comment by Kasya das

September 26, 1997

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave direction how to unite all the nations, under the flag of Bharata-varsa. Am I correct to say like that?

Than what reason have all the other different 'uniting organizations', to be jolly? Why they call it uniting, when they are actually breaking?

DEATH IN THE HOLY DHAM

Question from Lomancita das

September 30, 1997

Recently I heard some discussions about "leaving body in Holy Dham like Vrndavana". Some devotee said that when one comes to Vrndavana, even being for many years out of Iskcon, living materialistic life, still Krsna's mercy is unlimited. And when one manages to leave one's body there one will go back to Godhead. I just wonder about Krsna's statement in BG 8.6 "Whatever state of being one remember when he quits his body, O son of Kunti, that state he will attain without fall", is minimized by the power of Holy Dham or if it is valid. Because one can speculate in such way, that it doesn't matter what I do in the time of death if I manage to go to Vrindavana I will go back home to Godhead.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

September 30, 1997

Leaving the body in Vrndavana is not an ordinary event because Vrndavana is not an ordinary place. For someone to leave the body in Vrndavana is arranged by Lord Krsna only. That person must be special to Krsna for Him to make that take place. The verse from Bhagavad-gita is only about what the living entity is thinking at the time of death. Krsna is not neutral to one who is dear to Him. Krsna also thinks of His devotee at the time he departs from the body. And that is why dying in Vrndavana is so important, because Lord Krsna thinks of the residents there in a most loving, merciful, special way.

HARI BHAKTI VILASA

Question from Kasya das

September 30, 1997

In Room Conversation, London, July 16, 1973, Srila Prabhupada says:

... condemned by Bhaktivinoda Thakura, smarta and jata-gosani. Smarta-pandita, very serious about performing ceremonial rituals, they are called smartas. This Hari-bhakti-vilasa, also Vaisnava-smrti, that is also imitation of smartaism. It is called smrti. So at least in Europe and America, they will never be able to take all these things. The things should be made shortcut; at the same time, they should be successful. So that is chanting of Hare Krsna maha-mantra, depending on...

In what context can I understand that Hari-bhakti-vilasa is imitation of smartaism? (I didn't read Hari-bhakti-vilasa.)

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 1, 1997

Smarta comes from the word smṛti, which means memory. So in the smṛti-sastras are many rules and regulations that human beings are supposed to remember and follow in life. The smarta-brahmanas have devised a religious system from these rules and regulations, but they neglected the essential rule: always remember Kṛṣṇa, never forget Him. The Haribhaktivilāsa is an imitation of the smarta system in this sense: that it gives rules and regulations for all the same kinds of religious activities as the smarta-brahmanas consider important, but Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has expertly presented these rules and regulations in such a way as to make one always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. You can learn more about this system by studying Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī in the Madhya-līlā of Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta.

JAMADAGNI'S BEHAVIOUR

Question from Madhura dd

October 1, 1997

1. I find something like a contradiction in the behaviour of Lord Parasurama's father Jamadagni. When Lord Parasurama kills Kartaviryarjuna for having stolen his father's kamadhenu cow, Jamadagni is not pleased and tells him that "The duty of a brahmana is to culture the quality of forgiveness." And at the next Ch.16 when Jamadagni's wife mentally commits adultery he orders his son to kill her. At the end he tells Parasurama to kill his mother and brothers. Why Jamadagni doesn't show the brahminical quality of forgiveness in that case?

2. Why in the same Ch.16 it is said that Lord Parasurama was infected by sin because of killing Kartaviryarjuna while according to Vedic injunctions the six kinds of aggressors, one of which is that who plunders property, are at once to be killed without getting a sinful reaction for this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 2, 1997

In SB 9.16.9p, Śrīla Prabhupada writes:

Jamadagni was certainly very powerful due to his austerities, but because of a slight offense by his poor wife, Renuka, he ordered that she be killed. This certainly was a sinful act, and therefore Jamadagni was killed by the sons of Kartaviryarjuna, as described herein. Lord Parasurama was also infected by sin because of killing Kartaviryarjuna, although this was not very offensive. Therefore, whether one be Kartaviryarjuna, Lord Parasurama, Jamadagni or whoever one may be, one must act very cautiously and sagaciously; otherwise one must suffer the results of sinful activities. This is the lesson we receive from Vedic literature.

The answer to your first question is here. Jamadagni should have shown the brahminical quality of forgiveness to his wife and sons. His order to Parasurama to kill them was sinful. Thus Jamadagni was later struck down by the sons of King Kartaviryarjuna.

The answer to your second question is also indicated above...it was sinful for Parasurama to kill the king, but it was not very offensive. Why was it not so offensive? You said it: because the king acted as an aggressor. But why was there at least a little sin attached to killing Kartaviryarjuna? Being a brahmana, it was not Parasurama's dharma to take up weapons against the ksatriyas. The same thing is seen in the case of Dronacarya. When he took up weapons at Kuruksetra, his brahminical forefathers appeared to advise him that he was going against the dharma of his varna. So Parasurama, to show all brahmanas that what he did was not an example for them to follow, did penance to relieve himself of sinful reaction.

SMALLER THAN ATOM

*Question from Gauranga Premananda das
October 5, 1997*

Could you please answer my following questions?

[1.] In one conversation Hyderabad, april 14 1975, tapebox vol.65 "the new ministry", tape 97-209, Srila Prabhupada states that there is something smaller than the paramanu: the "anupra-paramanu" (I don't know the correct spelling). Is this Krishna or the paramatma?

[2.] Is it that every jiva, after going through all 8.400.000 species of life becomes a "suksma-jiva" (as described in C.C. antya-lila, ch. 3, text 79), and then gradually comes up again to the human form of life?

[3.] Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.22.7 describes that "subtle elements expand and transform into progressively denser elements." Does this mean that the paramanu's shrink?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 6, 1997

The passage from the tape you refer to is rendered as follows by the BBT into text:

[Begins]

Prabhupada: No, smaller than atom there is. Atom is called paramanu. Then it is anugra paramanu, smaller than the atom.

Devotee: Does that mean the electrons?

Prabhupada: Whatever you say. But sastra is there. (devotees laugh) Be convinced of your footing, (chuckles) otherwise you'll be defeated.

[Ends]

You ask "Is this Krishna or the paramatma?" Srila Prabhupada indicated that a word like "electron" might be applied to the anugra-paramanu unit. That means Srila Prabhupada is speaking in terms of material measurement, not in terms of atma, paramatma or Krsna. According to the Sankhya philosophy, a paramanu is defined as the smallest portion of any substance that exhibits the characteristic qualities of that substance--earth, water, fire, air, ether. Thus a paramanu is not without parts and is subject to disintegration. This unit is therefore also known as arambhaka-paramanu (mixed substance). Thus materially speaking (not getting into

questions of paramatma or Krsna), the paramanu certainly has subdivisions, referred to by His Divine Grace as anugra paramanu. But when does a unit of matter become so small that it loses its elemental qualities? The gross elements are said to reduce to the subtle elements (mind, intelligence, false ego). But it is stated in SB 11.22.8 that all elements are found in any element. The effect (gross elements) must already be in the cause (subtle elements), otherwise how can the subtle manifest the gross? Thus we must conclude that in Vedic science a unit such as a arambhaka-paramanu or anugra-paramanu is a mathematical denotation, not a specific "thing." As one Sankhya scripture states,

The same figure 1 stands for 100 in the place of 100,
for 10 in the place of 10, and 1 in the place of 1.

That means that the unit "paramanu" can denote 1 unit, 10 units or 100 units or more depending upon the frame of reference.

Srila Prabhupada said "whatever you say but sastra is there." This indicates to me that our trying to sculpt a mental model of what is a paramanu can only go so far; ultimately we just have to accept sastra.

The answer to the 2nd question is no, because the suksma-jiva status is not part of the cycle of 8,400,000 species. Suskma-jiva status is when a soul is covered by such ignorance that no outward life symptoms manifest at all. Life symptoms manifest in bodies of 8,400,000 kinds. So to be a suksma-jiva is to have no body, neither gross nor subtle. One is devoid of awareness and merged into material potential.

What "subtle elements expand and transform into progressively denser elements" means is explained in the next verse and purport. All elements, gross or subtle, are found in any element. My understanding is simply this--there is matter, which is subtle; but when matter stimulates the perception of sound, it is called gross ether; when it stimulates touch, it is called gross air; form, gross fire; taste, gross water; smell, gross earth. Scientists (including Vedic scientists) can theoretically analyze matter this way and that, but actually it is all speculation. Indeed, what is matter other than the subject matter of mental speculation, which is the material process of knowledge?

LORD ANANTA

*Question from Kalakuta das
October 7, 1997*

In the 5th canto, where the glories of Lord Ananta are described, I couldn't figure out what is actually the original form of Him: snake or man like? The descriptions suggesting both forms are found there. The other unclear thing is where He is situated? If he resides "at the root of the planet Patala" then how is it that He keeps our universe like a mustard seed on one of His hoods?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 8, 1997

Lord Anantadeva's body is transcendental to the laws of physics. Therefore He exhibits both a snake form and Purusa form at the same time. He has others forms besides. Lord Anantadeva is God. Therefore He is all-pervading. Thus He supports

the planets on His heads, though He is situated at the bottom of the universe. He simultaneously supports the universes on His heads also, as Sesa (with Maha-Visnu).

It's easier to understand these things when we stop equating "form" with "matter."

PIOUS ACTIVITIES

*Question from Ramananda Raya das
October 8, 1997*

Why does it say in the Bhagavatam that the cowherd boys performed many pious activities for many lifetimes, why not devotional service ? The word punyam is used. How should we understand this ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 8, 1997

There are three kinds of piety (sukrti): that generated by karma, that generated by jnana and that generated by bhakti. The cowherd boys attained their positions by bhakti-sukrti. Karmic sukrti positions one in the heavenly planets. Jnana-sukrti positions one in the impersonal Brahman.

VYASADEVA

*Question from Gauranga das
October 12, 1997*

I would like to know whether Sriya Vyasadeva is a visnutattva or jiva-tattva? I tried to analyze the statements given in the Folio, but Srila Prabhupada usually states only that he is a saktavyesa-avatara. I know that in every Kali-yuga there is a Vyasadeva, but who in particular is our Krsna-Dvaipayana Vyasa? Is anything known about his spiritual identity? I also wonder, who are Sukadeva Gosvami and Pariksit Maharaja in the spiritual world?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1997

The position of Vyasadeva is a post, like that of Indra. The person in the post changes. See SB 8.13.15-16. The present Vyasa as well as Asvathama will change posts to become Saptarishis in the 8th manvantara.

He is said to be an incarnation of Narayana, but he's not eternally Vyasa. Therefore my conclusion is that this present Vyasadeva is a jiva-tattva empowered by the sakti of Lord Narayana.

Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, so it is stated in some Gaudiya acarya literature (I've forgotten which book and which author), is the incarnation of Suka, one of the two parrots (Suka and Sara) of Vraja that alight in the tree above where Radha and Krsna meet. They converse about the transcendental pastimes of the Divine Couple.

About the identities of this present Vyasadeva and Maharaja Pariksit, I don't recollect reading any such revelation. There may be some account of this, and I may have even read it once, but now I've forgotten. Though I doubt it.

MATTER OR SPIRIT

Question from Gauranga das
October 12, 1997

In one of the previous answers You wrote that actually every atom of the material world is a jiva, but their consciousness is not manifest, thus they are called suksma-jivas. I have a few questions in connection to this.

1. In Bg. 4.24 p. Srila Prabhupada states: "Everything that exists is situated in that brahmajyoti, but when the jyoti is covered by illusion (maya) or sense gratification, it is called matter. (...) The Absolute Truth covered by maya is called matter." How can the Absolute Truth be covered by maya? If we take it that maya covers only his energy (the jivas), then what is maya? What is the difference between matter and maya? Is maya a factually existing substance separate from the soul (Brahman) or some illusion? What is the relationship between the three energies (internal, external and marginal). If the jiva can become matter, then can it also become internal energy?

2. If all the atoms are suksma-jivas, then what's the difference between an air-atom and a fire-atom for example. Does ether and the subtle elements also have an atomic structure? If not then do they also consist of jivas or else? How does the soul fall down to the position of a suksma-jiva and how is he elevated again to the platform of a sentient living being?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1997

>>How can the Absolute Truth be covered by maya? If we take it that maya covers only his energy (the jivas), then what is maya? What is the difference between matter and maya? Is maya a factually existing substance separate from the soul (Brahman) or some illusion? What is the relationship between the three energies (internal, external and marginal). If the jiva can become matter, then can it also become internal energy?<<

Matter is Krsna's energy of illusion. It is factual ignorance. Prabhupada called it unreal reality. It is therefore also known as sad-asad. I could explain more, but it would take too much time.

About the jiva and the atom...I think you are interpreting what I said. I don't exactly remember the text, but now let me make clear that an atom is a material thing. I don't know why you are equating an atom with a jiva and asking about the difference between the jivas of air and fire atoms and so on. A jiva is a spirit soul, and the spirit souls are all-pervading. So therefore there are jivas everywhere, pervading all material elements. But they exist in the spiritual dimension. They have nothing to do with material elements. An atom may be focused around a jiva, just like a material body is focused around another jiva. But we don't start speculating about the kind of soul in a white man's body as opposed to the soul in a black man's body, because we know that the soul is transcendental and has nothing to do with the body. About structure, that emanates out of the akasa (ethereal element). Akasa is the realm of non-spatial forms. The forms in akasa become spatial within the grosser elements (air, fire, water, earth). The creative energy behind the non-spatial forms in akasa is the Vedic sound vibration.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1997

About matter as "unreal reality", here is an example:

Military aircraft use "chaff" or "window" to confuse enemy radar. "Chaff" or "window" is a large quantity of bits of tinfoil, just like the aluminum foil you buy in the shop. When enemy radar tries to lock onto the aircraft, the pilot releases the bits of foil, which scatters in the air behind the plane, totally blinding the radar apparatus on the ground.

So: Maya is Krsna's "chaff." Prabhupada said Maya is there to prevent any rascal from bothering Krsna. The rascals want to lock onto God to destroy Him. But Maya blinds them. Now, in their blindness, they can see neither the Lord or the real form of His illusory energy. We call that blindness Maya also. But think of the airplane analogy. The blinded radar sees neither the airplane nor the "chaff." It is just blind. But there is something real that blinds that radar. And beyond the real form of the blinding energy (the chaff) there is the airplane, which is the source of the chaff.

VAIKUNTHA

Question from Gauranga das

October 12, 1997

In Bg. 15.6 p. Srila Prabhupada writes:

" The shining effulgence of all those planets (called Vaikunthas) constitutes the shining sky known as the brahmajyoti. Actually, the effulgence is emanating from the planet of Krsna, Goloka Vrndavana. Part of that shining effulgence is covered by the mahat-tattva, the material world. Other than this, the major portion of that shining sky is full of spiritual planets, which are called Vaikunthas, chief of which is Goloka Vrndavana."

To me this means that the brahmajyoti consists of jivas either coming out of Goloka Vrndavana and going to the material world, or coming from the material world to the brahmajyoti or the spiritual planets. Does this mean that all the souls originally come from Goloka? If this is so, then how can we accept being a Vaikuntha-vasi a permanent situation?

This might be confirmed with the following passage from the Nectar of Devotion (Ch. 4):

"Some of the liberated persons who have achieved these four stages of liberation may also develop affection for Krsna and be promoted to the Goloka Vrndavana planet in the spiritual sky. In other words, those who are already promoted to the Vaikuntha planets and who possess the four kinds of liberation may also sometimes develop affection for Krsna and become promoted to Krsnaloka.

So those who are in the four liberated states may still be going through different stages of existence. In the beginning they may want the opulences of Krsna, but at the mature stage the dormant love for Krsna exhibited in Vrndavana becomes prominent in their hearts."

Please comment on this. Do all the souls really have an original eternal relationship to Krsna (not Visnu)?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1997

Prabhupada once compared Lord Narayana to a high court judge. The judge has his personality in the courtroom, and another personality at home. But he is the same person. You ask if it is possible for some souls to have a relationship with Visnu but not with Krsna. If you just consider this example, you can answer the question yourself. Do the officers of the court, the prosecuting and defense lawyers, the baliff, the guards, the jury and so on have a relationship with the judge at his own home? Some of them may have. Maybe even the judge's own wife is an officer of the court. But not all people in the courtroom will go home with the judge at the end of the day. Yet still at the same time they *all* have a relationship with the same person. This only becomes problematic if you think of the judge at home and the judge at work as two different people.

Comment by Bhagadatta das

October 15, 1997

Jaya! Thank you very much for this wonderful analogy. I can never get close to grasping your deep realisation of our Vaisnava philosophy. Thank you for tirelessly providing us with this constant flow of nectar.

LUST

Question from Visvahetu das

October 15, 1997

Recently I have studied B.G. 3.36-43 .I found a few points what I tryout to understand by my little intelligence I fell . I decided that the best is to ask You for your kind comment . In a few places there is mentioned how to overcome the Lust , purport to verse 37 Prabhupad said :

" ... And the Supreme is defined in Srimad-Bhagavatam as janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas ca, or,"The origin of everything is the Supreme Brahman." Therefore the origin of lust is also in the Supreme . If, therefore, lust is transformed into love for the Supreme , or transformed into Krsna consciousness - or, in other words , desiring everything for Krsna - then both lust and wrath can be spiritualized..."

In the next purport Prabhupad advised that :

" ...In the human form of life , one can conquer the enemy, lust, by cultivation of Krsna consciousness under able guidance . "

Then Krsna disclosed where the lust took place and advised Arjuna in verse 41 that:

" Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bharatas, in the very beginning curb this great symbol of sin [lust] by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization "

On the end this chapter verse 43 Krsna has given the instruction that :

" Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses mind and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate

spiritual intelligence [Krsna consciousness] and thus - by spiritual strength - conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust ."

I'd like to ask how can I put together that we should transformed the lust again into love for the Supreme , or conquer the enemy, lust , or slay this lust. Guru Maharaj please kindly improve my thinking and give proper understanding .

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 17, 1997

You conquer lust by transferring the attraction to material things to Krsna, in practical devotional service. Prabhupada said when we serve guru and Krsna without expectation of material reward, that is already love.

SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Question from Aisvarya das

October 18, 1997

This question I get asked many times while on the street. Who put the Bhagavatam down on paper as we have it now. Srila Vyasadeva is the author but his pastimes are in it.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 19, 1997

>>Srila Vyasadeva is the author but his pastimes are in it.<<

I don't follow why that is a problem.

I can give you the example of a well-known book published in 1996 entitled **Inventing the AIDS Virus** by Dr. Peter Duesberg. He presents the history of AIDS research from the early '80's up to now, and recounts his own role with statements written in this format:

"In 1990, Duesberg attended the AIDS convention in Berlin and sparked an uproar when he presented findings that showed the HIV virus is not the cause of AIDS."

The point I'm making is that it is an accepted literary style for an author to write about himself in third person--as "he" or "Duesberg" (or Vyasadeva) instead of "I" and "myself." Just because Vyasadeva is portrayed as a character within the narrative of the Bhagavatam does not rule him out as the author.

But people love to speculate. Thus in a few centuries no doubt, scholars will be arguing about who the author of **Inventing the AIDS Virus** really was--"it could not have been Peter Duesberg because his pastimes are in it."

ANUPAMA

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

October 23, 1997

Is there any information of who Anupama (the brother of Rupa and Sanatana Goswamis), was in Krsna lila, or would that be Rama lila?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 24, 1997

If a member of this conference has access to the Gaur-gana-desa-dipika, that book will probably reveal the nitya-lila identity of Anupama.

MATERIAL ELEMENTS

Question from Bhakta Didzis Melbiksis

October 24, 1997

In Bg. 7.4. Krishna says:

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego_all together these eight constitute My separated material energies."

Sometimes I wonder what are those elements actually. Is the air mentioned here the air we breath? If it is so then what is ether anyway?

But maybe it is not like that? Here is another quote (LCFL, the first morning walk, "The universe in the atom"):

"Karandhara: How about the atom?"

Srila Prabhupada: .. all these constituents are within the atom. .. This means that whether something is extremely large or infinitesimal, it is still made of the same basic elements."

Sounds very interesting to me. All the elements are in the atom!

But in Bg. Bg. 13.33 purport Prabhupada gives the example of air which is in the mud and stool, and from this I can conclude that the air element is the air we breath. And how can this air be in the atom?

So should we accept those five gross elements as some kind of "principles" or something like that or should we think that the earth element is the earth we see, the water element is the water we drink etc. ? Please enlighten me, Maharaja.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 25, 1997

It seems to me that in my last text about atoms I answered most of these questions. In any case, I'm tired of talking about atoms. Please, for the time being, direct your atomic questions to some other q&a conference. All I have to say is: "Atoms? Madame, Adam had'em."

Calling all Vedic scientists: instead of speculating about atoms, why not do something practical and perform an experiment to try to prove that certain kinds of living entities take birth from foul gases, like the Vedas say. The following may be the way to go. Andrew Crosse (1784-1855) arranged to synthesize silica crystals in the manner described next, in 1837:

- 1) He fused 60 grams of powdered flint with 170 grams of potassium carbonate in a furnace.
- 2) He ground this fused substance into powder.
- 3) He dissolved the powder in hydrochloric acid to the supersaturation point.
- 4) This solution was set to drip slowly over a porous stone containing iron oxide; Crosse kept the stone electrified by battery connection.

On day 14 of the drip Crosse noticed tiny that white crusts had formed at the edges of wherever the fluid had contacted the rock. On day 18, filaments branched off from the white crusts. On day 26, with the aid of a hand lens, Crosse could see that these objects had formed into complete insects. On day 28, the insects began to move about. During the next few weeks, more than 100 such insects appeared on the rock in this way. Later Michael Faraday performed the same experiment and got the same result.

Try this. If you get insects, let us know. Then we can talk more about atoms.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

October 25, 1997

SB 4.29.73p:

"One is called bija (the root), another is called kuta-stha (the desire), and another is called phalonmukha (about to fructify). The manifest stage is called prarabdha (already in action)."

The image is that of the cultivation of a plant. The root of karma grows from a seed (bija). Our hearts are full of desire seeds. Thus the *Bhagavatam* 5.11.16 calls the heart or mind *avapanam*, "the growing ground." Kuta-stha is the stage when one feels a certain desire in the heart, for example sex desire at puberty. The root of that desire was already there in childhood, but we became aware of the desire (kuta-stha) in adolescence. The next stage is phalonmukha, the appearance of the fruit of that desire--for example, the appearance in a person's life of another person willing to enter into sexual relations, which increases one's desire for sex to great intensity. The final stage is the enjoyment and suffering of that fruit (marriage, children, etc.). What is left at the end is a seed which in the future will give rise to the same cycle, also in future lifetimes.

KAMADEVA

Question from Aprameya dd

October 25, 1997

Is this Kamadeva which is described in SB 5.18.15 the same Kamadeva which is meditated upon by the seventh Gayatri mantra? If not, then what is this form in the Kama-gayatri mantra? How to understand that:"Although this Kamadeva is visnu-tattva, His body is not spiritual but material"/the purport of 5.18.15/ if from the point of view of Krsna(or Visnu) the energy is one and only from our conditioned point of view it appears like spiritual and material?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 26, 1997

The kamadeva addressed in the kamagayatri is Lord Krsna Himself. See *Brahma-samhita* 5.30 The kamagayatri evokes transcendental lust for Krsna, as impelled by Krsna in the heart. But the heart must be pure of the influence of the material kamadeva. Therefore we chant the Hare Krsna Mahamantra to purify the heart.

THE SUN AND THE MOON

Question from Aprameya dd

October 25, 1997

In the Purport of SB 5.23.3 Srila Prabhupada writes: "...even the LARGEST and most powerful planet the sun...". But how the sun is the largest planet if the moon, which according 5.22.8 is above the sun, appears the same size like the sun? Of course this question is based only on my pratyaksa experience from this earth planet that if two objects standing on different distances towards the observer appear to have equal size, then for sure the more distant one is bigger. So should I disbelieve my eyes when observing the sun and the moon that they look equal size or I should disbelieve my anumana conclusion that the moon must be bigger than the sun? If yes then sabda is completely inconceivable for me.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 26, 1997

Read Sataputa Prabhu's book on Vedic cosmology.

EKADASI

Question from Krsna Nama das

October 26, 1997

Today we have Rama Ekadasi. What does it mean? What is the meaning of the names of other Ekadasi during vaisnava year?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 26, 1997

I invite Bhaktividya-purna Maharaja, who is a member of this conference, to answer Kasi Misra Prabhu's question about ekadasi.

GURUS IN ISKCON

Question from Aprameya dd

October 26, 1997

I am sorry that this question is not really philosophical, but I am a little bit confused how I should regard such statements that nowadays we should not see the spiritual masters in ISKCON as siddhas or perfect devotees, but as very advanced devotees who are also struggling more or less with the material modes and may also have problems in their spiritual life.

Is it true that the spiritual master may be uttama-adhikari, madhyama-adhikari and also kanishtha-adhikari?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 27, 1997

In a letter, Srila Prabhupada said we should not be utopian. We must accept that to be a person *means to have some fault.* Even Krsna sometimes makes mistakes...as when he milks a bull instead of a cow. The gopis have their faults, as seen when they quarrel amongst themselves for Krsna's favor. Sometimes in their haste to meet Krsna they dress themselves in complete disarray. So for a person with utopian ideals of perfection, these faults mean that the spiritual world is also not perfect. But a devotee finds the "faults" of the Lord and His associates most relishable. It's a matter of taste.

The same principle of taste applies to our perception of the spiritual master. I have a Godbrother (I'll not give his name) who once tried to get me to listen to Srila Prabhupada's japa tape so that he could point out to me "objectively" how His Divine Grace was not chanting the complete mahamantra. I avoided to enter into his way of listening to Srila Prabhupada's japa. To say the least, that way of listening is in poor taste. A disciple should not look for faults in his spiritual master's devotional service. Rather he should look for ways to glorify his spiritual master's devotional service.

But it is true that beyond the faults of our own perception, there are factual, objective faults that may wreak havoc in the devotional sphere. It cannot be denied that about half of the 11 disciples Prabhupada chose to initiate after his departure from our vision are no longer members of ISKCON. Also among the ISKCON gurus who began taking disciples after these first 11, there have been some unfortunate incidents.

To my mind, it says NOTHING to try to explain why a devotee fell by proposing that he left his service in ISKCON because he was struggling with the material modes--as if there are other "really advanced" devotees (in the Gaudiya Math, for example) who "don't struggle with the modes", therefore we should follow them as our authorities, and not follow these ISKCON weaklings who have so many problems. Everything in the material world is produced from the modes. We can therefore accurately say Srila Prabhupada also struggled with the modes. He often struggled with illness, and at least once he said he had lost all his enthusiasm due to the offenses of his disciples, and he said we have to push this body for Krsna. The acarya shows us how to struggle with the modes, otherwise his followers would not struggle, we would just succumb to the modes.

Someone may say, well, struggling with illness is one thing, but struggling with materialistic habits is another. Yet Krsna Himself says that a devotee may do some abominable thing, but as long as he remains situated in devotional service, he is to be considered a sadhu. And Srila Prabhupada, explaining this, says in several places that this means a devotee may have bad habits from his pre-Krsna conscious life that persist even in his devotional life. But if that devotee, despite sometimes showing weakness for old habits, pushes ahead in devotional service, then we are not to find faults in him.

Even if someone's bad habits drag him away from devotee association back into the association of karmis, Narada Muni states (SB 1.5.19) that he does not really fall down--he only imitates the karmis, because he cannot forget the superior taste of

devotional service. This means he won't be able to find happiness within material affairs and will quickly return to the shelter of the devotees. This is not really a falldown.

One **falls down** when he loses his higher taste. Losing the higher taste is due not to struggling with the modes and with bad habits, but to offenses that one does not rectify, especially Vaisnava aparadha for which one is too proud or careless to seek forgiveness. When I consider those among the first 11 who fell and have not returned, I see a pattern of unredeemed Vaisnava aparadha. Nothing displeases Krsna more than this. But as far as the struggle with old bad habits goes, Krsna doesn't take that very seriously as long as the devotee remains firm in his spiritual position. The proof is Bhagavad-gita 9.30.

But it is an embarrassment, no doubt, when bad habits are apparent **in a devotee holding the post of spiritual master.** However, the problem of bad habits in a guru has more to do with social opinion than his spiritual standing. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has said:

loka-lajja haya, dharma-kirti haya hani
aiche karma na kariha kabhu iha jani'

"Thus one becomes unpopular in the eyes of the people in general, for this damages his religiosity and fame. A Vaisnava, especially one who acts as a spiritual master, must not act in such a way. One should always be conscious of this fact."
(Cc Adi 12.52)

Comment by Dadhibhaksa das

October 27, 1997

Maharaja, thank you very much for such a nice explanation.

Comment by Aprameya dd

October 27, 1997

Thank you, Guru Maharaja, for so nicely clearing away my confusion. I've never failed and will never fail to see you as my perfect master and guide on my long journey toward Krsna.

THE DESIRES OF THE LIVING ENTITIES

Question from Vijnana das

October 27, 1997

A question came up in Bhagavad Gita class this evening regarding the desires of the living entities. It was said in the class that the living entities have unlimited desires that cannot be satisfied in this limited material world. Another devotee proposed that actually the living entity only has one desire, that is to serve Krishna. When he comes to the material world then he gets a material body which has certain desires that are part of the body and not coming from the soul. That the soul only has the initial desire to leave the spiritual world and after that everything is on automatic pilot except for when he desires again to go back to Krishna.

The question is: The desires that the living entity has when in material bodies; are they coming from the soul or the body.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 27, 1997

Desires are the perverted outcome of our original needs as persons. The soul is a person. And persons have desires. Those desires are meant to be satisfied in relation to Krsna. When we separate from Him, they become perverted.

A book I will publish in a couple months, *Transcendental Personalism*, will explain this in great detail.

THREE AND A HALF

Question from Atmarama das

October 29, 1997

I wonder why it is said that Madhavidēvi was only a halph an intimate devotee of the Lord Caitanya. Is there some special meaning behind it?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 29, 1997

She was a woman. Therefore as a sannyasi, Lord Caitanya had to exercise more restraint in the relationship than He did with His other close associates.

NO SEX LIFE IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Question from Kasya das

October 29, 1997

SB. 5.17.12, a part of Purport:

"People still have sex life, but there is no pregnancy. In the spiritual world, people are not very attracted to sex life, due to their exalted devotional attitude. Practically speaking, there is no sex life in the spiritual world, but even if sometimes it does occur, there is no pregnancy at all."

Could you kindly explain to me what Srila Prabhupada means by stating: "but even if sometimes it does occur"?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 31, 1997

In connection with Kubja's attachment to Lord Krsna at Mathura, Srila Prabhupada writes (I've edited and rearranged the following text so as to bring out the essential point as clearly as possible):

Actually, the activities of sense gratification are material. In the spiritual world there are symptoms like kissing and embracing, but there is no sense-gratificatory process as it exists in the

material world...In a spiritual relationship, sense gratification is most insignificant. Anyone who desires a relationship of perverted sense gratification with Krsna must be considered less intelligent. His mentality requires to be reformed.

But this society girl, Kubja, was actually captivated by a lust to satisfy her senses with Krsna. When Krsna desired to go to the house of Kubja, He certainly had no desire for sense gratification. By supplying the sandalwood pulp to Krsna, Kubja had already satisfied His senses. On the plea of her sense gratification, however, He decided to go to her house, not actually for sense gratification but to turn her into a pure devotee. Krsna is always served by many thousands of goddesses of fortune; therefore He has no need to satisfy His senses by going to a society girl. But because He is kind to everyone, He decided to go there. It is said that the moon does not withhold its shining from the courtyard of a crooked person. Similarly, Krsna's transcendental mercy is never denied to anyone who has rendered service unto Him, whether through lust, anger, fear or pure love. In the Caitanya-caritamṛta it is stated that if one wants to serve Krsna and at the same time wants to satisfy his own lusty desires, Krsna will handle the situation so that the devotee forgets his lusty desire and becomes fully purified and constantly engaged in the service of the Lord.

She was thus allowed to embrace Krsna with both her arms and mitigate her long-cherished desire to have Krsna as a visitor in her house.

Godhead has multipotencies. According to expert opinion, Kubja represents the purusa-sakti potency of Krsna, just as Srimati Radharani represents His cit-sakti potency. Although Kubja requested Krsna to remain with her for some days, Krsna politely impressed upon her that it was not possible for Him to stay. Krsna visits this material world occasionally, whereas His connection with the spiritual world is eternal.

To sum this up, Kubja is a form of that potency of the Lord by which He creates the material world. His association with her is rare. Her desire for the Lord's association takes the form of sexual lust. Krsna has no such desire, but He entertained her proposal for her purification. She factually did experience sense gratification in the company of the Lord, but in such a way that she became afterward constantly engaged in His devotional service. She is the personification of the material world, but Krsna visited her in Mathura, which is His own transcendental abode. You've quoted Srila Prabhupada's statement--

Practically speaking, there is no sex life in the spiritual world, but even if sometimes it does occur, there is no pregnancy at all.

So, on this rare occasion in Mathura, Kubja experienced sexual satisfaction by her contact with Lord Krsna, but no pregnancy resulted.

Comment by Kasya das

October 31, 1997

Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS

Questions from Gopicandra das

October 30, 1997

I would like to ask you about some explanation of sastras:

- 1 Two of four principles of knowlwdge are vairagya and tyaga. What is the difference between them?
- 2 Does creation happen at the same time in all universes, or are the Brahmas born and do they die at the same time?
- 3 Are mystic yogis able to manipulate time?
- 4 How much time passes between passing from one body and entering the next one?
- 5 Will the Golden Age of 10.000 years also reach the lower planets? At the end of Kali-yuga mercy will come in the form of scent. What does it mean and who will get it?
- 6 Jaya and Vijaya appeared in different ages as eg. Hiranyakasipu, Ravana etc. What were they doing between two such appearances?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 2, 1997

>>1 Two of four principles of knowlwdge are vairagya and tyaga. What is the difference between them?<<

The first means to renounce attachment, the second means to perform austerities.

>>2 Does creation happen at the same time in all universes, or are the Brahmas born and do they die at the same time?<<

The universes form from the breathing of Maha-Visnu's body like bubbles of foam. Think on this, the answer will come clear.

>>3 Are mystic yogis able to manipulate time?<<

To a certain extent if they have sufficient power, but they are not God.

>>4 How much time passes between passing from one body and entering the next one?<<

Depends upon the karma of the individual. In Kali-yuga, many people become ghosts. Of course, to become a ghost is also to get a kind of body, so with that in mind it can be said the change happens as soon as the old body dies.

>>5 Will the Golden Age of 10.000 years also reach the lower planets?<<

Yes, to a certain degree at least, it must. Whatever happens on earth must affect the lower planets, as the demons are always involved in earthly affairs, in competition with the demigods.

>>6 Jaya and Vijaya appeared in different ages as eg. Hiranyakasipu, Ravana etc. What were they doing between two such appearances?<<

They were merged in the body of the Lord.

This "mercy in the form of scent at the end of Kali-yuga" question is some kind of hilarious misunderstanding that I suppose is created by an extemporaneous translation from English into Hungarian of the 11 Canto predictions about Kali-yuga. I will only offer in response these words from Srila Prabhupada:

Now, in the Kali-yuga, that is called prasadan. Just like, every country, the system is, after taking bath, you dress your hair, add something scented. So in India it was the system that after taking bath, having tilaka, going to the Deity room, offering obeisances, then the prasadan, candana prasadan was taken from the Deity room and it was used. This is called prasadanam. In Kali-yuga, in the, it is said that: snana eva hi prasadanam. If one can take bath nicely, that is prasadan. So much. No more this cosmetic or sandalwood oil or rose scent or rose water. They are finished. That snana eva prasadanam. Simply by, taking bath... While I was in India, in the beginning, so taking bath is very ordinary thing because even the poorest man will take early morning bath. But actually when I came to your country I saw that taking bath is also difficult thing. Taking bath, that is also not in practice. Perhaps once in a week. We are accustomed to see in India thrice in a day. And I have seen in New York that friends are coming to another friend's house because one has no facility for taking shower bath. So coming to a friend's house. Is it not? I have seen it. So the symptoms of Kali-yuga described that it will be very difficult also to take even bath. Snana eva hi prasadanam.

RASA DANCE

*Question from Toke Lindegaard Knudsen
November 2, 1997*

I am a 23 year old student and I am currently chanting 16 rounds, following the 4 regulative principles and coming on a regular basis at the Copenhagen temple and at the preaching center in Copenhagen. I have some questions regarding the Krsna Book. The senior devotees I have asked here could not answer and suggested that you would be the right person to ask.

The question is concerning the rasa dance. In the Krsna Book we read:

"While all the gopis were hurriedly leaving their respective places, their husbands, brothers and fathers were all struck with wonder to know where they were going. Being young girls, they were protected either by husbands, elderly brothers or fathers. All their guardians forbade them to go to Krsna, but they disregarded them."

One implication of this seems to be that the gopis left the company of their husbands, brothers and fathers in a form which the husbands, etc., could perceive. They were not allowed to leave but did so never the less. However, later in the Krsna Book we read the following:

One implication of this seems to be that the gopis left the company of their husbands, brothers and fathers in a form which the husbands, etc., could perceive. They were not allowed to leave but did so never the less. However, later in the Krsna Book we read the following:

"Another important point is that all the gopis who danced with Krsna were not in their material bodies. They danced with Krsna in their spiritual bodies. All their husbands thought that their wives were sleeping by their sides. The so-called husbands of the gopis were already enamored by the influence of the external energy of Krsna; so by dint of this very energy they could not understand that their wives had gone to dance with Krsna. What then is the basis of accusing Krsna of dancing with others' wives? The bodies of the gopis, which were their husbands', were lying in bed, but the spiritual parts and parcels of Krsna were dancing with him."

Here the implication seems to be that the husbands, brothers and fathers did not perceive the gopis leaving. The material body of the gopis were left behind when they went to see Krsna; only their spiritual body went.

These two passages appears to be contradictory and I am confused about how to understand them properly. If you could kindly explain the true nature of things to me I would be very happy.

Another question I have is concerning Banasura. It is stated in the Krsna Book that he was awarded immortality by Krsna. How is this immortality of Banasura to be understood? The material body can never become immortal and the spirit spark is always immortal, so I am confused as to in what respect Banasura became immortal.

I hope that you can answer these questions for me. Thank you.

Your servant,
Toke Lindegaard Knudsen.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 2, 1997

>>These two passages appears to be contradictory and I am confused about how to understand them properly. If you could kindly explain the true nature of things to me I would be very happy.<<

Let me draw your attention to SB Canto 5 chapter 25, "The Glories of Lord Ananta." Here you'll find that Lord Ananta appears like a gigantic serpent with many hooded cobra-heads 240,000 miles beneath the planet Patala within this universe. At the same time the whole universe is said to be like a tiny mustard seed on one of His hoods. And though He is described as being a serpent, at the same time He is also said to have toenails and arms, and wear blue garments and carry a plow on His back.

This too is contradictory. We have to learn to accept that transcendental forms and activities are not subject to the logical systemization that we habitually apply to material forms and activities. The literal descriptions of sastra sketch

imagery on our material minds to orient our consciousness to the Lord and His pastimes, but the reality is infinitely more rich and variegated than the sketch.

If you train two video cameras on an aquarium tank in which a few dozen exotic fish are swimming around, aiming one camera at the front of the tank and aiming the other at the side, and connect the cameras one to one of two video monitors in another room where some people sit who can't see the original tank and cameras, they will be surprised when you come in a little later and tell them that each monitor shows them *the same* aquarium. The images shown in the two monitors will appear contradictory to them. Human logic would prefer that the images be of two different tanks. But the reality is richer and more variegated than logic.

This example shows that even material forms and activities sometimes baffle our powers of understanding. There are even stranger examples. There is a man in Russia whose body is magnetic. Weighty metal objects like pots and electric irons stick to his bare chest and back. There is a woman in Philadelphia who makes glass break when she stands near it for more than a minute. Medical examiners detect an unusual electrical charge in her body. These cases contradict our logical sketch of the world we live in. But they are real nonetheless.

>>Another question I have is concerning Banasura. It is stated in the Krsna Book that he was awarded immortality by Krsna. How is this immortality of Banasura to be understood? The material body can never become immortal and the spirit spark is always immortal, so I am confused as to in what respect Banasura became immortal.<<

Please consult SB 10.63.49. The benediction was that Banasura would become a principle associate (mukhya-parsada) of Lord Siva. In this post he would enjoy freedom from old age and death. The context of that blessing is in terms of the standard of life in Kailasa, or the heavenly abode of Lord Siva in this universe. The residents there have material bodies but they enjoy a span of life that extends to the end of the universe. Thus they are deathless and ageless. And at the time of cosmic devastation, just as the residents of Brahmaloaka go with Brahma to Maha-Visnu, so also the associates of Lord Siva retire to Sadaa-sivaloka, just on the border of Vaikuntha. When Maha-Visnu again breathes out universes, the residents of the eternal Sadaa-sivaloka planet return to Kailasa.

MADHVA SECT

*Question from Amaraprabhu das
November 4, 1997*

Reading the chapter 9 in CC. Madhya-lila, vers 245 coming along to the part of explanation the Madhva sampradaya (from their own view) starting with: (1) Hamsa Paramatma and going up to (12) Acyuta Preksacarya Tirtha (afterwards we know, Sripad Madhvacarya). Is it that the Tattvavadis accept the former mayavadi sampradaya (were sripad Madhvacarya converted them into a vaisnava tradition), and don't accept the Lord Brahma tradition (SriKrsna-Brahma-NaradaMuni-Vyasadev and than Madhvacarya) as their own?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
November 4, 1997

The Mayavadi sampradaya of Sankara is different from the Tattvavadi line. Never suggest to a Tattvavadi that his sampradaya has anything to do with Sankara's-- he'll probably curse you. The Gaudiya sampradaya is known as a siksa-sampradaya,

which means that it focuses upon the prominent teachers (siksha-gurus), leaving out of the list those who sustained the sampradaya just by initiating others into it. Acyutapreksha is an example of a diksa (initiating) guru. He initiated Madhvacarya but could not instruct him, indeed Madhva instructed *him.* So this is why the Gaudiya list goes from Brahma to Narada to Vyasa to Madhva, because they are the prominent teachers in the line.

To my knowledge Madhva did not receive initiation from Vyasadeva, though he had Vyasa's darsana at Badarikasrama. Because the Tattvavadis seek validation of their sampradaya in the diksa relationship, therefore Acyutapreksha is listed as the acarya previous to Madhva.

SOUND

Question from Amaraprabhu das
November 4, 1997

I heard that melodies taken from the Baul's and other apasampradaya's into a new playing Mahamantra rythmn poluts the consciousness, and is not accepted either by the Lord nor by the pure Devotees. But can the Holynome not purify the former idea of sahajism to the pure desire of the devotee into a accepted melody?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 4, 1997

The proper system by which one is rectified for one's errors in devotional service is to take shelter of a bona fide spiritual master. It's absurd to suppose that a sahajiya who offends the holy name--not by using this or that melody, but by his fraudulent bhakti--will become a pakka Vaisnava by continuing to chant in nama-aparadha. That's the sahajiya philosophy, in fact: that by chanting alone, not even caring for 4 regulative principles, one becomes a pure devotee.

The problem with Bauliya melodies is not that they are composed of a certain sequence of musical notes that is somehow offensive--another absurd idea--but that these melodies are handed down from a long line of nama-aparadhis. The Bauls and other sahajiya traditions go way, way back in history to the Sahajayana Buddhists and ultimately to Tantra. Their melodies come out of this milieu. Prabhupada says milk touched by the lips of a serpent is poisonous. So the holy name touched by this Sahajiya tradition similarly is poisonous.

SAKAMA

Question from Kasya das
November 4, 1997

Are the sakama devotees and sukrti janah (artah, artharthi) the same? Or they are different categories?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 5, 1997

Why not? Sakama means bhukti-kama, mukti-kama, siddhi-kama. Only the pure devotee is niskama.

Comment by Kasya das

November 5, 1997

>Why not? Sakama means bhukti-kama, mukti-kama, siddhi-kama. Only
>the pure devotee is niskama.

SB. 5.18.21, purport

"...The Supreme Lord personally takes care of anyone who is completely engaged in His devotional service. Whatever he has, the Lord protects, and whatever he needs, the Lord supplies. Therefore why should one bother the Lord for something material? Such prayers are unnecessary. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura explains that even if a devotee wishes the Lord to fulfill a particular desire, the devotee should not be considered a sakama-bhakta (a devotee with some motive). In the Bhagavad-gita (7.16) Krsna says:

catur-vidha bhajante mam
janah sukrtino 'rjuna
arto jijnasur arthartha
jnani ca bharatarsabha

"O best among the Bharatas [Arjuna], four kinds of pious men render devotional service unto Me--the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute." The arta and the arthartha, who approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead for relief from misery or for some money, are not sakama-bhaktas, although they appear to be. Being neophyte devotees, they are simply ignorant. Later in Bhagavad-gita the Lord says, udarah sarva evaite: they are all magnanimous (udarah). Although in the beginning a devotee may harbor some desire, in due course of time it will vanish. Therefore the Srimad-Bhagavatam enjoins:

akamah sarva-kamo va
moksa-kama udara-dhih
tivrena bhakti-yogena
yajeta purusam param..."

... because I read this, where Srila Prabhupada says "are not sakama bhaktas."

Can you, please, explain this to me more?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 6, 1997

The purport seems clear to me. Just roll with it.

TWO QUESTIONS

Questions from Vrajendra Kumara das

November 7, 1997

1. Dear Maharaj, BG 16.1-3 purport says "...If the parents want a child in the godly qualities they should follow the ten principles recommended for the social life of the human being." What are these 10 principles?

2.CC Adi lila, ch4.62 in the end of the purport says "Each of the three divisions of the internal potency - the sandhini, samvit and hladini energies-influences one of the external potencies by which the conditioned souls are conducted. Such influence manifests the three qualitative modes of material nature ...etc" My question is: Does it mean that 3 aspects of spiritual energy correspond to the 3 gunas or in other words they are the spiritual prototypes of the 3 gunas? Can we say that sandhini corresponds to sattva, hladini to rajas and samvit to tamas? Or is there any other connection among them?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 8, 1997

I think it refers to the ten kinds of samskaras. See SB 10.1.58p.

Yes, there is a connection between the three saktis and the three modes, as Srila Prabhupada states in SB 2.6.32p.

Comment by Gauranga das

November 14, 1997

Dear members, PAMHO, AGTSP.

in addition to Maharaja's reply, I would like to add some information.

Srila Prabhupada stresses the importance of the ten samskaras in His purport to Bg. 7.15 as follows:

" It is the duty of the guardians of children to revive the divine consciousness dormant in them. The ten processes of reformatory ceremonies, as enjoined in the Manu-smṛti. which is the guide to religious principles, are meant for reviving God consciousness in the system of varnasrama. However, no process is strictly followed now in any part of the world, and therefore 99.9 percent of the population is naradhama."

The ten samskaras for vaisnavas are described in detail by Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami in His Sat-kriya-sara-dipika. A translation of this is available from the Bhaktivedanta Academy, Mayapur. The ten samskaras in details are as follows:

Garbhadhana-samskara impregnation
Pumsavana Causing the birth of a male child
Simantonnayanam Parting the hair
Sosayanti homa Safe delivery
Jatakarma Birth ceremony
Niskramanam First outing
Nama-karana Name giving
Pausti karma Nourishment
Anna-prasana Grain giving
Karana-vedha Piercing of the ears
Putra Murdhabhighranam Smelling the son's head
Cuda karanam Hair cutting
Vidyarambha Entering school
Upanayanam Sacred thread ceremony
Samavartana Graduation

Actually these samskaras, adding vivaha (marriage) and antyesthi (funeral) are material processes that help the souls to attain to the mode of goodness.

For the vaisnavas the most important samskaras are panca samskara, which we receive through the harinama and mantra-diksa. They are as follows:

Tilaka-dharana (Putting on tilaka)

Mudra dharana (Placing Visnu's symbols on the body, such as conch, lotus, gada and cakra)

Nama-grahana (Taking the name of Visnu)

Mantra-grahana (To receive a Vaisnava mantra)

Salagrama-arcana (Receiving the right to worship a salagrama sila)

Comment by Suhotra Swami

November 14, 1997

Thank you, Prabhu.

FIVE LEVELS OF REALIZATION

Question from Gauranga das

November 14, 1997

This morning You have given a class in Budapest where You have explained about the five levels of realization in Krsna consciousness. Could You explain them briefly for the other members of this conference and maybe put them into parrallel with the levels of advancement in Devotional service beginning from sraddha? I'm also curious to know where this can be found in the sastra.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 14, 1997

I will simply refer you to my book **Substance and Shadow**, Chapter 3, and Lord Krsna's indication of 5 states of realization via hearing Him in Bg 7.1.

QUESTIONS

Questions from Vaiyasaki das and Mahaksa das

November 22, 1997

Vaiyasaki has the following question: Why did SP always ride on Lady Subhadra's rath and once refused to ride on Jagannath's rath when he was offered? Second question from Mahaksa dasa: When the Pandavas were in exhile in the forest, the author Pal of the 12 volume Mahabharata describes how they killed many deer in the forest while hunting - beyond what they needed to eat. It appears that they were sharpening their skills on the animals, but it appears to Mahaksa that they were overdoing it from the descriptions. And thirdly, my question, why is it that in the verse "nasta prayesv abadesu..." the translation says that all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed..." I thought that if a person were to read the SB, then he you could be completely purified. Please enlighten us. Thank you.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 23, 1997

>>PAMHO AGTSP Vaiyasaki has the following question: Why did SP always ride on Lady Subhadra's rath and once refused to ride on Jagannath's rath when he was offered?<<

I'm afraid I can't help you with this one. Vayasaki Prabhu would probably do better asking someone who had extensive personal association with Srila Prabhupada during his travels to different Rathayatras. Hari Sauri Prabhu, for example. I could **speculate** an answer...but I'd rather not.

>>Second question from Mahaksa dasa: When the Pandavas were in exile in the forest, the author Pal of the 12 volume Mahabharata describes how they killed many deer in the forest while hunting - beyond what they needed to eat. It appears that they were sharpening their skills on the animals, but it appears to Mahaksa that they were overdoing it from the descriptions.<<

The principle here is the same as with Garuda. Garuda is a non-veg pure devotee. His diet is snakes, elephants, turtles and fish. But any creature he eats is delivered from the cycle of birth and death. Therefore his "appetite" is not material, and if we dare to criticize him for eating fish for example, we will fall down like Saubara Muni did. So the eagerness of the Pandavas to kill living entities in the forest is an eagerness to deliver them from birth and death.

>>And thirdly, my question, why is it that in the verse "nasta prayesv abadesu..." the translation says that all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed..." I thought that if a person were to read the SB, then he you could be completely purified. Please enlighten us. Thank you.<<

Yes, the context of that verse is what **you** must do...i.e. you must regularly hear Bhagavatam and render service to the pure devotee. So what **you** do **almost** is enough, but not quite. Because ultimately our deliverance from material existence is up to Krsna, not up to our own endeavors, even our devotional endeavors. What we can do is situate ourselves in a position conducive to receiving that mercy. You do your best, then He'll do the rest. Just as He tells Arjuna in the Gita, "Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, bow down to Me, then you will come to Me...**I promise you this** because you are My very dear friend." If deliverance were just a matter of following prescribed activities, there would be no need for Krsna to make that promise. Again He tells Arjuna, "Give up all dharma and just surrender to Me. **I shall protect you**, do not fear."

KAMSA AND THE KAURAVAS

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

November 24, 1997

One question that has puzzled me for some time. In the Krsna book it describes Kamsa's as occupying many different kingdoms and forming many dangerous alliances.

If the Kauravas were actually the emperors of the whole world why did they do nothing to curb Kamsa atrocities?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 24, 1997

I don't see how I can give any sort of precise answer to that question. But the world of politics is full of such mysteries.

SUN-GOD, MOON-GOD AND THE MIND

*Question from Subhalaksmi dd
December 13, 1997*

I am reading the 24th chapter of 4th canto of SB "Chanting the song sung by Lord Siva". I found a very interesting verse-36 where Lord Aniruddha is adressed as the controler of the mind in the form of the sun-god. I have a few questions in this regard:

1. In SB 2.10.30 is stated that Candra, the moon-god, is the predominating deity of the mind. {In verse SB 4.24.38 Lord Aniruddha is described to be the predominating deity of the moon but in the purport Srila Prabhupada explains His function as giving ability of the living entity to relish the taste of food.} Are both the sun-god and the moon-god expansions of Lord Aniruddha and in this way controlling deities of the mind?

2. Can we conclude that just as Lord Krishna displays different qualities and has particular names according to these qualities {ex.-as Govinda He is the giver of pleasure of the senses and cows, as Hrishikesha is the controler of the senses etc.} The same principle aplies to the demigods (in this case the moon-god as Candra is the controler of the mind and as Soma enables to relish the taste of food)?

3. In the end of the purport to verse SB 4.24.38 Srila Prabhupada explains the influence of the sunshine in the proces of cleansing the mind. "When there is sufficient sunshine, the mind remains clear and transparent...the sun-god helps the mind...to become situated on the platform of paramahamsa. Lord Siva prays to Aniruddha...that His mind will always be in perfect state of cleanliness and will be engaged in devotional service to the Lord. Just as fire sterilizes all unclean things, the sun-god also keeps everything sterilized, especially dirty things within the mind, thus enabling one to attain elevation to the platform of spiritual understanding." This sounds quite mystical or even esotheric to me for I understand the meaning of it, but HOW does this happen remains unclear to me. Could you please elaborate on this subject? Is there any connection of these quotations to the first Gayatri mantra? Do we meditate on the sun in order to get help from the sun-god to purify our mind? Excuse me for the long presentation and thank you in advance for answering my questions.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 13, 1997

1. Yes, precisely. Whatever power the sun, moon and any other demigod has comes from the Lord, who is the source of all power. Actually these demigods simply manage that power as their service to the Lord.

*2. Yes. But Krsna also expands into one-and-different forms--like His Visnu forms--that have names according to a narrower range of pastimes pertaining to the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material world. Similarly, the great demigods have their expansions. Actually, the cosmic demigods (sun, moon etc.) are already expansions of causal demigods that exist *outside* the universe as personal*

energies of the Lord. In fact there are demigods managing nature in Goloka Vrndavana. Anyway, the cosmic demigods have local expansions. For example, there are jaladevatas (water deities) for every river, lake and stream in the world. These are expansions of Varuna.

3. Yes, your connecting the gayatri mantra to this passage is appropriate. A devotee remembers that the Lord is the power behind all so-called material phenomena. When that link is fully operative in the devotee's life, then he experiences no material phenomena at all. Everything is spiritual. This is not a matter of esoterica or mysticism. It is Krsna consciousness.

KAMADEVA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
December 13, 1997*

In the Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.18.15 purport Srila Prabhupada says "This Kamadeva, who appears as Krsna's son named Pradyumna, is visnu-tattva." Then he goes onto explain that although He is visnu-tattva his body is "material not spiritual" So the same point is explained thus in the Krsna Book chapter 55. "It is said that Cupid, who is directly part and parcel of Lord Vasudeva and who was formerly burned to ashes by the anger of Lord Siva, took birth from the womb of Rukmini, begotten by Krsna. This is Kamadeva, a demigod of the heavenly planets especially capable of inducing lusty desires. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, has many grades of parts and parcels, but the quadruple expansions of Krsna-Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha—are directly in the Visnu category. Kama, or the Cupid demigod, who later took his birth from the womb of Rukmini, was also named Pradyumna, but he cannot be the Pradyumna of the Visnu category. He belongs to the category of jiva-tattva, but for special power in the category of demigods he was a part and parcel of the superprowess of Pradyumna. That is the verdict of the Gosvamis."

So I am wondering is he visnu or jiva tattva, a combination of both or is it simply an editing error in the Krsna Book?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 13, 1997

>>So I am wondering is he visnu or jiva tattva, a combination of both or is it simply an editing error in the Krsna Book?<<

The possibility that it is an editing mistake precludes my attempting to answer this question. I suggest you place this inquiry before Dravida ACBSP, the BBT editor in America.

Comment by Ekanath das
December 14, 1997

> *In the Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.18.15 purport Srila Prabhupada says "This
> Kamadeva, who appears as Krsna's son named Pradyumna, is visnu-tattva."
> Then he goes onto explain that although He is visnu-tattva his body is
> "material not spiritual" So the same point is explained thus in the Krsna
> Book chapter 55. "It is said that Cupid, who is directly part and parcel
> of Lord Vasudeva and who was formerly burned to ashes by the anger of Lord
> Siva, took birth from the womb of Rukmini, begotten by Krsna. This is*

> Kamadeva, a demigod of the heavenly planets especially capable of inducing
> lusty desires. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, has many grades
> of parts and parcels, but the quadruple expansions of Krsna-Vasudeva,
> Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha—are directly in the Visnu category.
> Kama, or the Cupid demigod, who later took his birth from the womb of
> Rukmini, was also named Pradyumna, but he cannot be the Pradyumna of the
> Visnu category. He belongs to the category of jiva-tattva, but for special
> power in the category of demigods he was a part and parcel of the
> superprowess of Pradyumna. That is the verdict of the Gosvamis."
>
> So I am wondering is he visnu or jiva tattva, a combination of both or is
> it simply an editing error in the Krsna Book?

Dear Nrsimha Kavaca Prabhu,
Please accept my humble obeisances.

I somehow got added receiver to this exchange, perhaps because I am mainly engaged
in finding solutions from the acaryas' commentaries to such puzzling questions.
This is what I found.

This story is a little complicated. In SB.10.55.1 appears the following purport
which should explain the matter sufficiently:

<<In his Krsna-sandarbha (Anuccheda 87), Srila Jiva Gosvami cites the following
verse of the Gopala-tapani Upanisad (2.40) to prove that the Pradyumna who is the
son of Krsna and Rukmini is the same Pradyumna who is a member of Lord Krsna's
eternal fourfold plenary expansion, the catur-vyuha:

yatrasau samsthitah krsnas
tribhiih saktya samahitah
ramaniruddha-pradyumnai
rukminya sahito vibhuh

"There [in Dvaraka] the almighty Lord Krsna, endowed with His full potency, resided
in the company of His three plenary expansions—Balarama, Aniruddha and Pradyumna."
The Krsna-sandarbha goes on to explain, with reference to the present verse of the
Srimad-Bhagavatam, that "the Cupid whom Rudra burned up with his anger is a demigod
subordinate to Indra. This demigod Cupid is a partial manifestation of the
prototype Cupid, Pradyumna, who is a plenary expansion of Vasudeva. The demigod
Cupid, being unable to attain a new body on his own, entered within the body of
Pradyumna. Otherwise Cupid would have had to remain in a perpetual state of
disembodiment, a result of Rudra's having incinerated him with his anger." In his
English rendering of the Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.14.30 purport), Srila Prabhupada
confirms the absolute status of Pradyumna, Lord Krsna's first son: "Pradyumna and
Aniruddha are also expansions of the Personality of Godhead, and thus They are also
visnu-tattva. At Dvaraka Lord Vasudeva is engaged in His transcendental pastimes
along with His plenary expansions, namely Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and
therefore each and every one of Them can be addressed as the Personality of
Godhead....">>

From this description it appears that one could say, as you proposed, that this
Kamadeva/ Cupid, was indeed a combination of both tattvas.

Still, the KB passage seems to have more stress on the jiva aspect and because Srila Prabhupada states that this is the verdict of the Gosvamis, there is an element of confusion being introduced here. Therefore we must present this issue to Dravida Prabhu, whom I shall add receiver to this text.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, in his commenatry to SB.10.55.1, explains that Kamadeva is or was a demigod with a material body. He entered the spiritual body of Pradyumna. VCT explains further that this was not done by the personal power of Kamadeva, but was only possible by the desire of the Lord, who is an ocean of wonderful pastimes. In this light, we should understand Srila Prabhupada's emphasis (in KB) on Pradyumna being jiva tattva. It must be understood in the sense of, "Pradyumna's functioning as Kamadeva, is being carried out by the jiva-tattva personality who was allowed to enter His body."

Your servant
Ekanatha dasa

ps:
Madhvacarya's complete verse (from SB.5.18.15) runs as follows, and is, by the way, not to be found in the Brahmanda-Purana:

kamadeva-sthitam visnum
upaste sri-rati-sthita
kamadevam ratis capi
visnos tu prakrtam tanum

Comment by Suhotra Swami
December 14, 1997

Thanks for this text. Most informative.

Comment by Dravida das
December 15, 1997

All I can say is that 1) the KB passage is not an editing error in the sense that the printed text reflects accurately what Srila Prahupada said on the tape, and 2) such contradictions between the Srimad-Bhagavatam and the Krsna book are legion (though often not quite as obvious). In such cases we may try to find a reconciliation between the two versions by reference to various commentaries or in another way. I think Ekanatha Prabhu has done an admirable piece of research in this case. I remember this issue when we first worked on the Bhagavatam; we felt we had to go with Pradyumna as visnu-tattva because His being so was amply supported in Jiva's commentary, in the next verse of the chapter, and, most importantly, in that quote from the purport to 1.14.30.

BRAHMA'S CHALLENGE

Question from Visvahetu das
December 15, 1997

I have one question to the S.B. 10.14.15. In the end of this purport is mentioned:

"...In other words, Lord Brahma should not have challenged the Personality of Godhead, the Lord of all mystic power."

So I was thinking that there isn't anything wrong to Brahma's act. He was simply (as Maharaja is saying in this purport) bewildered as to his whereabouts function and identity, and therefore he was searching for clear information. I wonder how he challenged the Personality of Godhead? Please help me to understand it.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 16, 1997

>>I wonder how he challenged the Personality of Godhead?<<

He challenged by trying to bewilder Lord Krsna by his own mystic power. If one wants to gain knowledge about the Lord, the non-challenging way is to inquire submissively from the Lord personally or his pure representative.

MATTER AND SPIRIT

Question from Kasya das
December 18, 1997

My realization on the subject bellow is that from Krsna's point there is no distinction as spirit or matter as Srila Prabhupada says it in the last paragraph. Only from the view of the living entity something seems to be alive and something seems to dead. The alive is combination of spirit soul and matter, and the dead is matter. But that dead matter is Krsna who is alive. Then what is it when Srila Prabhupada speaks of Krsna's converting matter to spirit and spirit to matter? Is it that He makes the dull matter, without a spirit soul, into fully conscious being (cintamani prakara...), and vice versa? Or it is fully conscious all the time, because it is Krsna (his energy), but Krsna makes it seemingly dull matter without any consciousness or desires, for the vision of living entities, by manipulating his illusory energy? (This second one seems to me more appropriate, with accordance of engaging the matter in devotional service, and thereby seeing it non different from Krsna.)

Please, I would like to have proper understanding on this point.

SB.1.5.33, purport:

"...should we reject material things. The best way to make the best use of a bad bargain is to use everything in relation with the supreme spiritual being. Everything is an emanation from the Supreme Spirit, and by His inconceivable power He can convert spirit into matter and matter into spirit. Therefore a material thing (so-called) is at once turned into a spiritual force by the great will of the Lord. The necessary condition for such a change is to employ so-called matter in the service of the spirit. That is the way to treat our material diseases and elevate ourselves to the spiritual plane where there is no misery, no lamentation and no fear. When everything is thus employed in the service of the Lord, we can experience that there is nothing except the Supreme Brahman. The Vedic mantra that "everything is Brahman" is thus realized by us."

Light of the Bhagavat:

"...spirit, not matter. When He is in the mortal world, the material qualities cannot work upon Him. An electrician knows how to take work from electricity. With

the help of electricity he can turn water into cold or heat. Similarly, the Personality of Godhead can turn matter into spirit and spirit into matter by His inconceivable power. Everything is therefore matter and spirit by the grace of the Almighty, although there is a difference between matter and spirit for the ordinary living being."

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 19, 1997

Matter and spirit are features of one energy. Because matter is ignorant of its own existence, there is no display of consciousness. Because spirit at least knows itself to exist, it is conscious. Matter is actually the limitation of consciousness. But matter is controlled by a supreme consciousness, Krsna, who is unlimited. Thus behind all unconscious matter is conscious spirit. The supreme spirit sets the limits and removes the limits. Thus matter can become spirit, and spirit can become matter.

The Medieval Christian scholars used to debate on the question of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. The crucial issue was whether angels are spiritual or material. If they are spiritual, then there should be no limit to the number that can dance on the head of a pin, as there is no limiting material feature to their forms. If, however, only a certain number--no matter how great it might be--could dance on the head of a pin, that meant the angels must be material.

This kind of approach is fruitless. The Lord's energy is acintya-sakti, inconceivable. In pursuit of our effort to categorize His energy as matter versus spirit, we inevitably reach a point of bafflement. The impersonalists are concerned only with distinguishing jada from jiva (dead matter from living soul), and they are baffled. The devotees are concerned with Krsna, who Himself is Acintya. A jiva cannot begin to understand the workings of Krsna's energy from any standpoint other than that given by Krsna personally. And even then, a jiva cannot understand His energy to the extent that Lord Acintya knows it, because Lord Acintya has full power over matter and spirit, and the jiva does not.

When is something deserving the designation "matter?" When Lord Krsna says it is matter. When is something "spirit?" When He says it is spirit. End of story.

PHILOSOPHICAL SPECULATION

Question from Cit Sakti das

December 20, 1997

Recently I was reading in introduction to NOD statement by Srila Prabhupada that by philosophical speculation one can nearly attain pure devotional service to the Lord. What should be our attitude while reading of Srila Prabhupada books so it is not philosophical speculation and then we can achieve pure devotional service? And when is philo speculation recommended?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 20, 1997

Srila Prabhupada recommended philosophical speculation when it is within the context of Vaisnava philosophy, with the aim of advancing our realization. The

example he gave is of considering, while drinking water, how that taste is Krsna Himself.

But there are other kinds of philosophical speculation that are not conducive to pure devotional service, when karmavada and jnanavada get mixed into our considerations of Vaisnava philosophy.

UTOPIAN PERFECTIONALISTS

*Question from Cit Sakti das
December 20, 1997*

In morning lectue you were explaining about impersonalism behind try of "perfectionalists". Isn't there dangerous of impersonalism when we stick to rules, regulations or only to the way of acting in terms of niyamaagraha and we judge devotee only according that? For example Srila Prabhupada answered to objection of devotees regarding one of his sannyasi disciples that he doesn't chant his rounds, that but he has great potential of action. On the other hand if one is sencirous he sticks to rules and regulations and behaves according ethitegute, but again also being a person everyone has different ability and understanding according to modes of nature.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 20, 1997

Niyamaagraha means either not to follow the rules and regs or to follow strictly but for some purpose other than satisfying guru and Krsna—for example to advance one's prestige as a great sadhaka. It is a question of motivation: "purity is the force." A pure intention should drive one's execution of duty.

Someone who does not chant 16 rounds daily after taking the vow to do so is in difficulty, no matter if they have a great potential for action. That potential won't be realized properly unless the sadhana is maintained. We should be active intelligent and not become active foolish. I remember personally a case of a quarrel between two leading disciples of Srila Prabhupada. One argued that the legitimate demands of his service cut into his execution of sadhana, the other argued that regardless of service, sadhana should always be maintained. Srila Prabhupada settled the debate by favoring the first position. But that devotee gradually became so loose in his behavior, thinking that his spiritual master had authorized slackness in sadhana, that he left ISKCON altogether. Better be safe than sorry. While there is scope for "emergency work," as Srila Prabhupada termed it, an emergency in which we have to cut down sadhana should be understood to as the exception, not the rule.

One may ask why Srila Prabhupada would favor a devotee's slackness when in fact that slackness led to falldown. I see that Prabhupada taught us by various strategems. You can find enough statements in which His Divine Grace insists on strict sadhana. But you can also find some exceptions, as I've described above. You have to look at the end result of the exceptions. You'll find they mostly tend to be exceptions that prove the rule. This is another way of teaching the rule, by demonstrating that the exceptions mostly prove that cutting back on sadhana means cutting down spiritual strength. If there is an exception that is really an exception, then it must be a real case of emergency.

SANTA

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
December 24, 1997

Round the 5th of December the Batavians (now Holland) had a festival dedicated to Wodan (Odin) and his son Thor, who would ride through the sky on Wodan's eight legged, white horse Sleipnir, announcing the change of year. Later their names changed into Kunne Klaas and Tijl, and during the Christian invasion into Sinterklaas (from Sint Nicolaas). (One of the strategies used by the Christians for the conversion of heathens in Europe.)

His white horse was still there, but now with four legs, and his son had disappeared. Now he was supposed to simply have come from Spain for chastising the naughty children and rewarding the brave ones with gifts from his never ending sack of presents, stuffing them through the chimneys while riding his horse on the rooftops. Of course he also had a huge book in which everything was noted down about the kids and a bunch of black, dwarfy helpers (supposed to be Moors from Spain).

Later Sinterklaas and his entourage were banished to the North Pole, to become the fatty Santa Claus and his dwarfs of modern times.

Could you please tell if Odin and Thor have their counterparts in the Vedic thearchy and if yes, what are their names?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 24, 1997

>>Could you please tell if Odin and Thor have their counterparts in the Vedic thearchy and if yes, what are their names?<<

Yes, they are Pranay Aggarwal and Ganesh Gupta, who run a lassie stand on Park Street in Calcutta.

Comment by Bhaktividya Purna Swami
December 24, 1997

> >>Could you please tell if Odin and Thor have their counterparts in the
> >>Vedic

> thearchy and if yes, what are their names?<<

>

> Yes, they are Pranay Aggarwal and Ganesh Gupta, who run a lassie stand on
> Park Street in Calcutta.

Actually I checked for their shop on Park Street today and it has now been relocated around the corner on Russel Street next to the Hare Krishna Karma Free Confectionary.

Comment by Suhotra Swami
December 25, 1997

Thanks, Maharaja.

SUKRITINAS

*Question from Atmarama das
December 28, 1997*

I have hard time to understand one point from the Seventh chapter of the Gita, regarding the verse that four pious men begin to render devotional service to Krsna. In the purport of the verse (16) Srila Prabhupada says that they are NOT pure devotees. But right in the next verse Krsna says of the jnani that he is nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir, "Always engaged in PURE devotional service" and that he is the best. Whats more, just in the begining of the purport, Srila Prabhupada says, "Free from all contaminations of material desires, the distressed, the inquisitive, the penniless and the seeker after supreme knowledge can all become pure devotees. But out of them, he who is in knowledge of the Absolute Truth and free from material desires becomes a REALLY pure devotee." This is again confusing. What does it mean really? Does this verse refer to the preliminary stage of devotional service - if yes, how come Krsna says that the jnani is always engaged in pure devotional service? That would mean that he is a pure devotee while still on the preliminary level of devotional service. If not, if it refers to the ultimate end, I don't get it why the searcher for the knowledge of the Absolute would be dearer to Krsna, since on the end they are all pure devotees? Srila Prabhupada near the end of the purport does say that, "But in the preparatory stage, the man who is in full knowledge of the Supreme Lord is very dear to the Lord.", but that does not solve the puzzle - at least, not for me.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 28, 1997

The answer is this sentence from the purport of 7.17: "He who is situated in pure knowledge of the transcendence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is so protected in devotional service that material contamination cannot touch him." Elsewhere Srila Prabhupada explains that the jnani is distinguished from the karmi in that he has renounced sense gratification. So when one renders service to Krsna from the renounced position, material contamination cannot touch his service. Thus his service is considered pure. Whereas when one renders service to Krsna with a touch of material desire, as do the other three types, the door is open for material contamination to enter. Thus their service is not "really pure."