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BEHAVIORAL DISCREPANCIES

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I beg to thank you very much for your letter pointing out some of the discrepancies of many of the devotees in New York. You are correct regarding the items which you have stated, such as sleeping in front of the deities, eating in front of the deities, taking of unoffered foodstuffs, drinking water from the bathroom, and non-chanting of rounds. But the thing is, discipline cannot be observed unless there is obedience. As you are obedient to me, you should be similarly obedient to my representative. Your statement about Brahmananda, that he is a wonderful devotee, is 100% agreed by me. He is in charge of the New York center, and, therefore, if proper obedience is not given to him it will be impossible for him to manage the affairs of the temple. Under the circumstances, the discrepancies you have observed in the temple may be referred to him. He is quite reasonable and will handle the matter with the respective devotees.

Please don't you take any direct actions because it will cause disruption. You are a very talented boy and I have every confidence in you, so I hope you will do this and oblige. (Letter to Nara-narayana. 7 February 1969.)

Regarding general state of affairs at Amsterdam temple, I can understand that there is some disturbance among you, but that is not to be taken very seriously. Real business is preaching work, and if there is full attention on this matter only, all other businesses will be automatically successful. Fighting amongst ourselves is not at all good, but if our preaching work is neglected, or if we fall down in following the regulative principles such as rising before four, chanting 16 rounds, like that, if these things are not strictly observed then *māyā* will enter and spoil everything. So my best advice to you is to strictly observe these things yourself and be the example so that all others may follow. We should not criticize each other, as *vaiṣṇavas*, because there is fault in everyone and we may be ourselves subject to criticism. Best thing is to be above suspicion ourselves, and then if we see discrepancies and make suggestion the others will automatically respect and take action to rectify the matters. That is cooperation. And we must exist on such cooperation, otherwise the whole thing is doomed if we simply go on fighting over some small thing. So try to organize things and preach together in this spirit, and that will please me very, very much. (Letter to Madhumangala. 18 November 1972.)

I have noted your several complaints against the devotees, but it would be better to set the example rather than to criticize the defects of the devotees. We should always remember that we recruit members from

people in general. It is not expected that every one of our members should be immediately to the standard qualification. The best thing for you is to set the example by your personal behavior and try to reform the others not by criticizing but by friendly behavior. If sometimes there are any disagreements, we should try to forget such incidences and be always in friendship with each other. (Letter to Vrinda. 14 October 1971.) ॥

TWO TYPES OF LIVING ENTITIES – PART 2

From Srīla Jīva Goswami's Paramātmā-sandarbhāḥ (47)

In the previous part it was explained that there are two types of living entities — those who from time immemorial have turned towards the Supreme Lord and those who from time immemorial have turned away. The eternally conditioned living entities are eternally unborn like the eternally liberated ones. However, the eternally conditioned entities experience what is known as a so-called birth in this material world. Srīla Jīva Goswami continues explaining the nature of the conditioned souls.

In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.87.31), the personified Vedic scriptures say:

*na ghaṭata udbhavaḥ prakṛti-puruṣayor ajayor
ubhaya-yujā bhavanty asubhṛto jala-budbudavat
tvayī na ime tato vīdha-nāma-guṇaiḥ parame
sarita ivārṇave madhuni likhyur aśeṣa-rasāḥ*

“Neither prakṛti, the material energy, nor puruṣa, the pure living entity, ever take birth, for they are both eternally unborn. The so-called birth of the living entity is like the formation of bubbles when water comes in contact with air. All these living entities along with their various names and qualities merge back into you, the Supreme Lord, during destruction, just like rivers merge into the ocean or like the nectar obtained from various flowers merge into one single substance known as honey.”

[**Translator's Note:** This verse explains that the conditioned living entities are eternally unborn yet experience a so-called birth in this world.]

*prakṛtes traigunyaṁ, puruṣaḥ śuddho jīvaḥ. tayor dvayor
apy ajatvād udbhavo na ghaṭate, ye ca asubhṛta ādhyātmika-
rūpāḥ sopādhayo jīvā jāyante tat-tad-ubhaya-śakti-yujā
paramātmanaiva kāraṇena jāyante. prakṛti-vikāra-
pralayeṇa supta-vāsanatvāt śuddhās tāḥ paramātmani līnā
jīvākhyāḥ śaktayaḥ sṛṣṭi-kāle vikāriṇīm prakṛtim āsṛjya
kṣubhita-vāsanāḥ satyaḥ sopādhikāvasthām prāpnuvantya
eva vyuccarantīty arthaḥ.*

In this verse, prakṛti refers to the three modes of material nature, and the term puruṣaḥ refers to the living entity, who is ultimately pure. Since both of them are unborn, they can never be created at any time.

However, those living entities who have gotten designated as āsubhṛtāḥ, conditioned by a body having a material living breath, acquire a so-called birth. It is only due to the Supreme Lord acting as the Supersoul, and as the controller of both the living entity and the material world, that these living entities took birth in the world.

These living entities will again become pure when the material world is destroyed due to the fact that their vāsanā (deeply rooted material inclination) becomes dormant. These living entities then merge into the Supreme Lord. However, at the dawn of the next creation, the prakṛti again becomes activated, the dormant vāsanā of these living entities becomes revived, and they again acquire temporary designations and disperse back into the material world.

For this reason, the third canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.5.23) says:

*kāla-vṛtyā tu māyāyām guṇa-mayyām adhokṣajāḥ
puruṣeṇātma-bhūtena vīryam ādhatta vīryavān*

The Personality of Godhead, the master of all living entities, existed prior to the creation as one without a second.

Another verse (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 3.5.26) says, “The Supreme Living Being in his feature as the transcendental puruṣa incarnation, who is the Lord’s plenary expansion, impregnates the material nature of three modes, and thus by the influence of eternal time, his vīrya, the conditioned living entities, appear.”

*ity anena vīrya-śabdoktasya jīvasya prakṛtāv
ādhanam uktam. evaṁ śrī-gītopaniṣatsv api mama
yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham
ity atroktam. ṭikā-kāraīs ca brahma-śabdena prakṛtir
vyākhyātā, garbha-śabdena jīva iti | punar eṣa eva ṛṭīye,
daivāt kṣubhita-dharmīnyām svayāṁ yonau paraḥ pumān
ādhatta vīryam sāsūta mahat tattvaṁ hiraṇmayam
ity atra vīryam cic-chaktim iti ṭikāyām vyākhyātam, ataḥ
śaktitvam asya ṭikā-sammatam.*

This verse, through the term vīryam, speaks of the conditioned living entity that is placed in the womb of prakṛti, material nature. In the Bhagavad-gītā (14.3) the Lord also says, “My womb is known as brahman, and within it I place my garbham, seed.” The commentators [Srīla Sridhar Swami, Srīla Ramanujacharya,



Unknown artist. Rajput Painting, Kota, c. 1720-40

Sri Sri Radha Shyamasundar

Sri Adi Shankaracharya, etc.] say that in this verse of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the term *brahman* actually means *prakṛti*, the material nature, and the term *garbham* means the conditioned living entities. This same thing is again spoken of in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.26.19): “The Supreme Personality of Godhead deposited his *vīryam*, seed, in the material nature, whose modes were agitated by the *vāsanā* of the living entities. She thus delivered the *mahat*, which was golden in effulgence.”

In the commentary by Srila Sridhar Swami to this verse, the term *vīryam* is interpreted as *cit-śakti*,

spiritual potency. Therefore, the commentary agrees that the *vīrya*, the conditioned living entities, are the Lord’s potencies.

tato ’kasmād udbhava-mātrāmśe dṛṣṭāntaḥ — jalabudbudavad iti. ataḥ punar api pralaya-samaye ime sopādhikā jīvās tvayi bimba-sthānīya-mūla-cid-rūpe raśmi-sthānīya-cid-eka-lakṣaṇa-suddha-jīva-śaktimaye. tata eva svam hy apīto bhavati ity-ādi śrutau sva-śabdābhidheye parame paramātmani vividha-nāma-guṇair vividhābhir devādisanjñābhir vividhaiḥ śubhāśubha-guṇaiś ca saha lilyur līyante.

[Returning back to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.87.31 verse above,] the example of bubbles arising in water was only to show the sudden appearance of the living entities. These living entities, conditioned by temporary designations, merge into the Lord at the time of destruction. The Lord is comparable to the original orb of the sun and the living entities are comparable to the rays of that sun.

The *śruti* (*Chāndogya-upaniṣat* 6.8.1) also describes the same as follows, “The living entity attains the self.” This means that the living entity, along with its various names, qualities and temporary designations such as demigod, etc., and along its good as well as bad qualities, merges into the Supersoul at the time of destruction.

pūrvavat pralaye 'pi dṛṣṭāntaḥ — sarita ivārṇava iti aśeṣa-rasā iva madhuni iti ca. atra deva-manuṣyādi-nāma-rūpa-parityāgena tasmīn līne 'pi svarūpa-bhedo 'sty eva, tat-tad-aṁśa-sad-bhāvād ity abhiprāyaḥ. atra śrutayah, hantāham imās tistro devatā anena jīvenātmanānupraviṣya nāma-rūpe vyākaraṇvāṇīti iti.

Similarly, two analogies are given in the same verse [*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.87.31)] regarding the destination of the conditioned living entities at the time of destruction: “like rivers merge into the ocean” and “like the nectar obtained from various flowers merge into one single substance known as honey”. Here it should be understood that although the living entities have given up their temporary designations

such as demigod, human, etc., and merged into him, yet they remain constitutionally distinct from him due to them being eternal fragments of that Lord.

The *śruti* (*Chāndogya-upaniṣat* 6.3.2) describes [how the living entities remain eternally separate from the Lord]: “That Lord desired, ‘May I enter through the various individual living entities into the world and manifest various forms and names.’”

[Translator’s Note: This shows that even after destruction the living entities remain separate from him. If they would have merged into him and become one with him he would not have thought in this way.]

Also, another *śruti* (*Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣat* 4.5) says, “The individual conditioned living entity enjoys the material nature, but the Paramatma does not, considering her already enjoyed by the conditioned living entities.”

[Translator’s Note: This quote also specifies the eternal distinction between the living entities and the Supreme Lord. Srila Jiva Goswami concludes with two examples of quotes from the Upanishads that are very similar to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.87.31) verse quoted above and which can be easily misunderstood to be indicating the permanent merging of the living entity with the Supersoul at the time of destruction. However, these quotes should be understood according to the interpretations given till now. In other words, anyone reading these quotes should remember that the individual conditioned living entity never loses its individuality, even after destruction.]

The *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣat* (3.2.8) says:

*'stam gacchanti nāma-rūpe vihāya
tathā vidvān nāma-rūpād vimuktaḥ
parāt paraṁ puruṣam upaiti divyam iti*

Just like flowing rivers give up their names and forms and merge into the ocean, similarly the wise attain the divine Supreme Person, who is greater than the greatest.

The *Chāndogya-upaniṣat* (6.9.1 – 2) also says:

yathā saumyamā madhu madhu-kṛto nistiṣṭhanti, nānā-rūpāṇām vṛkṣāṇām rasān samavahāram ekatām rasam gamayanti, te yathā vivekaṁ na labhante 'muṣyāhaṁ vṛkṣasya raso 'smy amuṣyāhaṁ vṛkṣasya raso 'smīti, evam eva khalu saumyamāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sati sampadya na viduḥ, sati sampadyāmahe iti.

O gentle one! Just as honeybees extract nectar from various types of trees and combine them to give a single flavored substance (honey), and after such combination the individual nectars cannot identify themselves, similarly all the living entities become one with the Supreme [at the time of destruction] and cannot identify themselves. 🍯

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.net).

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