

DAADA 1996

Questions and Answers

with

His Holiness

Suhotra Swami

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

FALLDOWN FROM THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
January 1, 1996

I found the following text in Srimad-Bhagavatam the other day, could you comment on this in light of the discussions we have had recently.

3.25.29

Sometimes it is asked how the living entity falls down from the spiritual world to the material world. Here is the answer. Unless one is elevated to the Vaikuntha planets, directly in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is prone to fall down, either from the impersonal Brahman realization or from an ecstatic trance of meditation. Another word in this verse, bhagavad-banah, is very significant. Banah means "arrow." The bhakti-yoga system is just like an arrow aiming up to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The bhakti-yoga system never urges one towards the impersonal Brahman effulgence or to the point of Paramatma realization. This banah, or arrow, is so sharp and swift that it goes directly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, penetrating the regions of impersonal Brahman and localized Paramatma.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 2, 1996

Srila Prabhupada writes:

"Unless one is elevated to the Vaikuntha planets, directly in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is prone to fall down, either from the impersonal Brahman realization or from an ecstatic trance of meditation."

The definition of the word prone that applies here is, "Having a tendency; inclined." An inclination, defined in terms of geometry, is a downward-slanting plane. For instance, the roof of a house consists of two inclined planes that meet at the apex. If you situate yourself on a roof, there is a strong tendency to fall down, because it is not flat. One slip and you tumble. Or, as Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter to Revatinandana Maharaja, one who is in brahmajyoti is already fallen. Fallen in the sense of insecurely positioned. In such an already fallen state of abstract mental speculation, there is certainly an inclination to fall down even more, into repeated birth and death. In Vaikuntha there is no such inclination. Although: it is possible to fall from Vaikuntha. But as a matter of free choice, not by inclination.

"Banah means arrow. The bhakti-yoga system is just like an arrow aiming up to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The bhakti-yoga system never urges one towards the impersonal Brahman effulgence or to the point of Paramatma realization. This banah, or arrow, is so sharp and swift that it goes directly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, penetrating the regions of impersonal Brahman and localized Paramatma."

The other yoga systems (karma, jnana and astanga) are deviations from bhakti yoga. Karma yoga, or varnasrama-dharma without surrender to Krsna, is worship of the Visvarupa, since the 4 social orders manifest out of the universal form. The Visvarupa is a material or external conception of the Paramatma. Jnana yoga is

worship of the Brahmajyoti. Astanga yoga is worship of the internal Paramatma. Worship is there in every case, but unless the worship is aimed at Bhagavan, it is deviated from the purna tattva, the complete truth. Here Srila Prabhupada writes of "an arrow aiming up to the Supreme Personality of Godhead." This means the arrow is already on course. The target was already identified by the devotee, and the arrow released; now it is speeding by own momentum towards the proper target. But karmis, jnanis and yogis, even the siddhas among them, have aimed their arrows of worship at the wrong target. Thus their arrows are not called bhagavat or bhakti bhana, rather they are karma bhana, jnana bhana, yoga bhana.

So where one directs the arrow of devotion establishes whether or not he is known as a bhakta. Even if one is so fortunate to be situated in the direct association of the Personality of Godhead and His eternal associates in Vaikuntha, he can fire his arrow in the wrong direction. There are many examples of this in sastra. King Satrajit, for instance. He was a resident of Dvaraka, the most opulent region of Maha Vaikuntha. But his arrow of devotion was deviated from Krsna by his attachment to the Syamantaka jewel, which he had received from Suryadeva. This is an interesting point. Suryanarayana is a form of the Lord. When devotees chant gayatri, they worship the Supreme Lord as the sun. A pure devotee, one who is attached only to the Lord, will not be deviated by material benefits that manifest out of sun worship. But King Satrajit became attached to the opulence of the Syamantaka jewel.

SUPERSOUL OF LAKSMIDEVI

*Question from bhn.Vida
January 3, 1996*

In SB 6.19.13 is written that Lord Visnu is the Supersoul even of Laksmidevi. Can you please explain that.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 4, 1996

This question is answered in the same purport. What you have cited is a view credited by Srila Prabhupada to Madhvacarya. Prabhupada then cites Baladeva Vidyabhusana's Prameya Ratnavali and the Kanti-mala commentary. The conclusion is:

"Although some authoritative Vaisnava disciplic successions count the goddess of fortune among the ever-liberated living entities (jivas) in Vaikuntha, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in accordance with the statement in the Visnu Purana, has described Laksmi as being identical with the visnu-tattva. The correct conclusion is that the descriptions of Lamami as being different from Visnu are stated when an eternally liberated living entity is imbued with the quality of Laksmi; they do not pertain to mother Laksmi, the eternal consort of Lord Visnu."

AN EXCHANGE WITH KARUPPIAH CHOCKALINGAM

*Posted by Suhotra Swami
January 4, 1996*

From: Internet: KaruppiaH CHOCKALINGAM <kchock@ecr.mu.OZ.AU>
Date: 31-Dec-95 11:42 -1100
To: Suhotra Swami [7260]

Subject: Bg 12.12

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am a student in Melbourne who visits the Melbourne Temple weekly to attend (and sometimes preach in) a youth program that is held on Saturdays.

I write to you expressing a doubt that I have had for quite some time - it concerns the Sanskrit-to-English translation by Srila Prabhupada of certain slokas of Bhagavad Gita As It Is, the following two slokas in particular:

* 12.12: I always have a habit of trying to turn the word-for-word transliteration into a full translation myself before I read a verse translated by Srila Prabhupada. Normally when I do this, I end up with my "own" translation being either identical with or extremely close to Srila Prabhupada's translation. With sloka 12.12 of Bhagavad Gita, however, not only was "my" translation not consistent with Prabhupada's, but my translation of the first line of Sanskrit appeared to be exactly opposite to the translation given by Srila Prabhupada. At first I thought I was at error, but after much consultation I discovered that my version of the first line of this verse was one that was commonly accepted, even by the previous Vaisnava acaryas. What I still cannot understand is how to make any connection between the given translation and the Sanskrit words spoken by Krsna. I wonder whether you might just be able to help me out in this regard.

* 3.9: In this famous verse the word "yajna" is translated as Visnu. Thus, Prabhupada's translation suggests that any work other than work done for Lord Visnu (including, I assume, work done for the demigods) cause bondage to this material world. However, in the verses immediately following 3.9, the same word yajna clearly refers to sacrifice done for the demigods. I simply cannot see how in one verse, Krsna can use yajna to mean Lord Visnu, and then all of a sudden use the same word to refer to sacrifice for the devas. Such a sudden change of meaning just does not seem to be very logical. I understand that Krsna emphasises in later chapters that He is the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices (and therefore that He should be the object of all sacrifices), but this does not seem to me to be Krsna's main emphasis in Chapter 3. So, my question is: Why does not the "yajna" in Verse 3.9 refer to sacrifice for the demigods, as it does in the rest of Chapter 3?

These are questions that have been on my mind for well over a year now, and in a way they have impeded my steady growth in Krsna consciousness. I hope that you might be able to find some time to answer them.

Please forgive me for any offenses I may have committed above.

Hare Krsna.

Your fallen servant,
Karuppiah Chockalingam

Dear Karuppiah,

Hare Krsna. Please accept my greetings. Thank you for your letter of 31 December.

Your question is about *sabda.* According to standard Sanskrit dictionaries, *sabda* means "sound, noise, voice; speech, language; right word, correct expression; name; verbal testimony, oral tradition, verbal evidence."

Sabda is the manifestation (in thought and speech) of Goddess Vac, the Veda-mata, Mother Veda personified. There are two statements in the Rg-Veda concerning Vac which I would like to share with you here.

Rig-Veda 10.71.3:

*yajnena vaacah padaviiyam aayan taam
anv avindann rsisu pravistaam taam*

"By means of *yajna* (sacrifice), they followed the tracks of Vac and found she had entered in the sages."

The second, from *Rig-Veda* 10.125.5, is spoken by Vac herself.

*yam kaamaye tam-tam ugram krnomi tam
brahmaanam tam rsim tam sumedhaam*

"He whom I love, that one I make terribly powerful, that one I make a *brahmana*, that one a *rsi*, that one a wise sage."

The idea that I hope comes across in this *pramana* is that knowing *sabda*, or Vac, is not a matter of academic scholarship. First of all, seeking the true repose of *sabda* (taking its meaning to be "the right word," since your questions focus on this concern) requires sacrifice, like that described by Krsna in the verses leading up to Bg 4.34. Then, after having done sacrifice, one finds that *sabda* (again, taking "the right word" as the meaning) is known only to the sages. Now, who is a sage? One who is *ugram krnomi*, terribly powerful with Vedic knowledge.

Srila Prabhupada once explained,

Not that I am talking something nonsense. It is because...Sruti-pramanam. Whatever we talk, it must be supported by Vedic injunction. Then it is right. Just like we sometimes challenge these big, big scientists and others, and what is our strength? I am not a scientist, but how I can challenge? The Veda gaya. We are got evidence from the Vedas. Just like so many people are thinking that the moon planet is first. We are challenging, "No, moon planet is second." What is the strength? The strength is Vedic knowledge. We cannot accept it. So vede gaya yanhara carita. Vedic knowledge is so perfect that you can challenge so many scientists.

Srila Prabhupada's presentation of Bhagavad-gita is not one of academic scholarship. It is one of empowerment by the Veda-mata herself.

Regarding the verses you mention, the English wording for Bg 12.12 is congruent with Krsna's presentation elsewhere in the Gita. In 4.33, the sacrifice of knowledge is said to be higher than the sacrifice of material things. This is echoed in 12.11, where Krsna advises Arjuna to give up the results of work and be self-situated (which presupposes knowledge of the self). If Arjuna is unable to give up the results of work, then in 12.12 the Lord says he should cultivate

knowledge of the self, since, as was explained in 4.37, knowledge burns up the reaction to material work. Better than knowledge, however, is meditation, as confirmed in 6.46 (the yogi is better than the tapasvi, jnani and karmi). Better than yoga meditation is renunciation (sannyasa) of the fruits of action, as confirmed in 6.2 (na hy asannyasta-sankalpo yogi bhavati kascana).

As for your concern about yajna, since from the evidence of the 11th chapter you can have no doubt that the devatas are angas (limbs) of Lord Visnu's Visvarupa, then what is the use of trying to argue that yajna in 3.9 refers only to the demigods and not to Visnu? This is not logical. If you place a sweet in the hand (anga) of a child and tell her, "This is for you," is it logical to insist that the "you" that you mean is only her hand and not her mouth? In the Vedic sacrifices, the flame of homa is Visnu's tongue. All the offerings go to Visnu, even though the names of different devatas are chanted. It is exactly like giving a child a sweet. You put can put it in her hand--it will go to her mouth. You can also ask her to open wide and drop it directly into her mouth. Doesn't matter.

Thank you for writing. I hope the above answers are satisfactory.

Suhotra Swami

PS. If you are on the internet, please visit me at

<http://www.algonet.se/~krishna>

the Official Hare Krishna Homepage.

From: Internet: Karuppiah CHOCKALINGAM <kchock@ecr.mu.OZ.AU>
Date: 02-Jan-96 20:54 -1100
Refernce: Text 270134 by Suhotra Swami
To: Suhotra Swami [7306]
Subject: Re: Bg 12.12

Dear Maharaja,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Thank you very much for your detailed reply to my query on Srila Prabhupada's translations. I hope you do not mind if I ask you a few further questions.

I have no doubt that one needs special mercy and qualifications to properly understand and translate a scriptural text from Sanskrit to English (and therefore there are certain parts of Bhagavad-gita that only a pure devotee or sage can properly grasp and explain). However, surely any translation or explanation of a Sanskrit text must expand and elaborate on the Sanskrit words at hand. To give a wild example of Chat I'm trying to say (it certainly need not apply to Srila Prabhupada), in an attempt to elaborate a Sanskrit verse a devotee/sage might give a theory or explanation that is perfectly valid (and in-line with other scriptures) in its own right, but has absolutely nothing to do with the verse actually being discussed.

I have no doubt whatsoever that Prabhupada's understanding of the Essene of the vedas is impeccable. Therefore, the translations to Verses 3.9 and 12.12 of Bhagavad Gita As It Is may make perfect philosophical and devotional sense of their own accord (as philosophical assertions). But do they *accurately* represent what

Krsna is trying to say in those respective portions of the Gita? This is my question.

I understand that one needs special mercy (i.e. the favour of Veda-mata) to properly explain a Sanskrit verse. But surely any explanation must stem from the Sanskrit words of interest. In Bhagavad Gita Sloka 12.12 the first words Krsna uses (sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat) literally translate as "Knowledge is better than practice". Prabhupada's first statement seems to imply the opposite of this. True, Prabhupada's statements may be consistent with the rest of Bhagavad Gita and, for that matter, the rest of the Vedas. But is it consistent with Krsna's words in Verse 12.12 itself? This is my doubt.

As for Verse 3.9, yes, there is no doubt that by satisfying the stomach all limbs are satisfied (and thus by satisfying Lord Visnu all demigods are satisfied). Therefore, I have absolutely no trouble accepting Prabhupada's translation to Verse 3.9 of Bhagavad Gita - as a statement in its own right. But what word does Krsna use? "Yajna". Throughout the Third Chapter it is clear that Krsna points to one main thing when he uses the word "yajna" - sacrifice (for the devas). My question is: How is it that, in one solitary verse, the same word yajna represents Lord Visnu? Yes, by satisfying Visnu the demigods are automatically satisfied, but is this Krsna's main emphasis in *Chapter 3*? In this particular verse, why isn't Krsna being consistent with His statements in the rest of Chapter 3 by referring to sacrifice (for the devas) with the word "yajna"?

Even though Krsna's instructions are confidential and not easy to understand "as it is" without the help of someone qualified, I always thought Krsna, being God, would employ some degree of logic and natural flow of reason in His instructions. Inconsistencies in the flow of reasoning from one verse to the next in certain chapters of Bhagavad Gita As It Is has led me to ask you the questions that I have in this letter. I hope you will forgive me for my sometimes open way of putting forward my questions.

Hare Krsna.

Your servant,
Karuppiah

Dear Karuppiah,

Hare Krsna. Thank you for your second letter. In it, you wrote:

>>In Bhagavad Gita Sloka 12.12 the first words Krsna uses (sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat) literally translate as "Knowledge is better than practice". Prabhupada's first statement seems to imply the opposite of this.<<

I am glad you specified where you find the problem you see in Srila Prabhupada's translation. That was not clear to me in your first letter. But then again, now that you've specified it, I fail to follow why you see this as a problem.

The plaintext rendition of the first line of Bg 12.12 is: "certainly knowledge is better than *abhyasa.*" *Abhyasa* means, according to the dictionary, "repeated exercise, discipline, habit, custom, repeated reading, study, military practice, effort of the mind." What Prabhupada says in his translation is a direct consequence of this, namely, considering that knowledge is better than repeated exercise, discipline, habit, custom, repeated reading, etc., "if you cannot take to this practice, then engage yourself in the cultivation of knowledge." Prabhupada's

translation is not "exactly opposite to the literal meaning of the first line," as you propose in your first letter.

If you are wondering why, if it is admitted that knowledge is better, that Prabhupada's rendition is "if you can't practice, then take to knowledge;" why it doesn't flatly state "knowledge is superior, practice is lesser;" I indicated the answer in my last letter. I wrote that in 12.11 Krsna advises Arjuna to give up the results of work and be self-situated. That He tells Arjuna *sarva karma phala tyagam* (give up all results of your work) and *tatah kuru yatatmavan* (be self-situated) presupposes that Arjuna has already cultivated knowledge of the self, in which he can be self-situated as Lord Krsna directs. In the next verse, the point is that if Arjuna does *not* have knowledge of the self, his *abhyasa* (practice of *karma-phala-tyaga*) will be defective, because knowledge is indeed better than the mere practice of the sacrifice of material possessions. I noted in my last letter that 4.33 confirms this. What Srila Prabhupada brings out in his translation is that if Arjuna has not cultivated knowledge, he will be unsuccessful in giving up the results of work--therefore the logical consequence is, "if you cannot take to this practice" etc., because the *abhyasa* Krsna refers to presupposes knowledge. You cannot deny that, because the word *yatatmavan* is used in 12.11. One has to know *atman* to be situated in *atman.* Any number of parallel examples could be given: medical practice, for instance. The term "medical practice" presupposes that the practitioner is a qualified doctor. If he is not, his practice is illegal. By law, he's *unable* to take up such practice. The best advice for him is, "If you are unable to take up medical practice, then engage yourself in cultivating medical knowledge." Therefore in 12.12 the idea is that before attempting to renounce, Arjuna should cultivate knowledge of the self, since, as was explained in 4.37, such knowledge burns up the reaction to material work. Meaning: now, without knowledge, you will not be successful in renunciation, so there will be reaction--but if you get knowledge, that reaction will be destroyed.

You have written that you expect to see "some degree of logic and natural flow of reason" in Krsna's instructions. To my way of understanding, Srila Prabhupada's translation is quite fitting to the natural flow of reason throughout the 12th chapter and the entire Bhagavad-gita. If you are suggesting that in 12.12 Krsna is saying categorically that knowledge is better than *any* abhyasa, that breaks the flow of reason in these verses, and in the Gita as a whole. Verse 12 follows verse 11. The natural flow of reason compels us to seek the context of the *abhyasa* mentioned in 12 in the previous verse. The *abhyasa* referred to in 11 is renunciation of the fruits of work; but that is explicitly married to situation in the self. In 12, Lord Krsna states that of these two, knowledge of the self is better. So Arjuna should better get knowledge. *Then* he can practice. If your idea is that Krsna means to say practice can be curtailed completely in favor of knowledge, then what is the use of Krsna's conclusion that Arjuna must fight? That would instead mean that Arjuna's proposal in chapters 1 and 2 to give up his duty as a ksatriya and become a nonviolent sadhu is correct. The Gita is not in the category of a *jnana-kanda sastra*. Therefore the conclusion of 12.12 is not that *jnana* is supreme over all other practices, and that all other practices may be stopped when one has *jnana*. Such an interpretation of this verse would be logically incoherent, because Gita is undeniably a *bhakti-sastra*. Even in terms of *jnana-kanda*, it would be incoherent, because the practice in question is renunciation, and *jnana* is always associated with *vairagya* (nonattachment). The proof of Arjuna's *jnana* would be seen in his practice (*abhyasa*) of fighting without attachment. Anyway, *bhakti* subsumes both *jnana* and *vairagya*. As Bhagavatam says,

vasudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogah prayojitah

janayaty asu vairagyam
jnanam ca yad ahaitukam

TRANSLATION

By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. (Bhag. 1.2.7)

Knowledge and detachment are included in *bhakti-yoga*. Arjuna's devotional service to Krsna was to fight. Therein are two components: 1) selfless duty (*vairagya*, renunciation of personal attachment to results) and 2) transcendental knowledge (*jnana*). There is no question of choosing one over the other. But if one has to muster these components in order to get the determination to fight for Krsna, one should start with *jnana*, because without *jnana*, *vairagya* will be extremely difficult.

Regarding the word *yajna*, Gita 8.4 explains:

adhibhutam ksaro bhavah
purusas cadhidaivatam
adhiyajno 'ham evatra
dehe deha-bhrtam vara

"O best of the embodied beings, the physical nature, which is constantly changing, is called adhibhuta [the material manifestation]. The universal form of the Lord, which includes all the demigods, like those of the sun and moon, is called adhidaiva. And I, the Supreme Lord, represented as the Supersoul in the heart of every embodied being, am called adhiyajna [the Lord of sacrifice]."

In his Rig-Veda commentary, Madhvacharya explains that the names of the demigods have three levels of meanings, corresponding to *adhi-daivika*, *adhy-atmika*, and *adhi-bhautika*. The names Indra, Varuna etc. on one level refer to qualities of Krsna. On another level, they refer to the *angas* of the Visvarupa of the Lord, who are the osmic administrators. On yet another level, they refer to natural phenomena. Thus Monier-Williams says that *yajna* means a name of Visnu, a name of Indra, and worship, etc. In Treta-yuga *yajna* was the *yuga-dharma* of worship of the Supreme Lord. It was also the worship of the *devatas* who administer the departments of universal order. It was also the way people related to nature in order to do agriculture, figur against non-Aryas, etc., because *yajna* was the sonic technology of the Vedic age. Which definition of *yajna* a person in Treta-yuga would favor would be determined by the factors mentioned in *Bhag*. 5.11.11: *dravya-svabhavasaya-karma-kalair*--the object (*dravya*) of his attraction, his *svabhava* (conditioned nature), his *asaya* (culture), his *karma* and the *kala* (time, place, circumstances). But since this same *Bhagavatam* verses states, *ksetrajnato na mitho na svatah syuh*, these considerations are not self-manifest, but are arranged by the Supreme Knower (*ksetrajna*), then at the deeper level, *yajna* refers to Him only.

There is a timeless level of *sabda* known as *para-vak*. On this level, *yajna* refers not to "a" *dharma* as it is defined in some particular age, but to "the" *dharma*, the essence of all of the *yuga-dharmas* (the root of *dharma* is *dhri*, which means "essence"). This essence is, as Srila Prabhupada so often pointed out, service to the Supreme Lord. Thus nowadays we have our *sankirtana-yajna*. The demigods are also included even in this: *siva-suka-narada preme gadagada*: "Great personalities like Siva, Sukadeva Gosvami and Narada Muni are overwhelmed in ecstasy by the sankirtana of Lord Caitanya." However, though the demigod Siva is

mentioned in this line of *Gaura-arati*, it is not an essential conclusion that since the complete understanding of the term *sankirtana-yajna* includes Siva, therefore the complete performance of *sankirtana-yajna* requires worship of Siva as per the Saiva-agamas.

We are not in Treta-yuga any longer nor is the Rig-Veda the main *sastra* of our present age. We are certainly not restricted, in our reading of Gita chapter 3, to only one level of Rig-Vedic meaning of *yajna* as the names of the cosmic administrators. After all, Bhagavad-gita was spoken at Kuruksetra 5,000 years ago, which was not the Treta or Rig-Vedic age. In the Gita verse cited above, the Lord specifically says *adhiyajno 'ham*, "I am Yajna." Krsna is not a demigod. He is the Paramapurusa. So when He says in Gita "I am Yajna," that is the primary meaning in the context not only of the Gita but of all Vedic *sastras*, because *vedais ca sarvair aham eva vedyah.*

If you see compelling reasons why *yajna* must only mean demigods in the 3rd chapter, then again I question your understanding of the flow of reason throughout Bhagavad-gita as a whole. We are not simply discussing the meanings of words in some abstract academic context. The *sabda* has consequences in life. So the consequence of your interpretation (if I have understood it correctly) is that worship of demigods is intrinsic to the complete meaning of *yajna* given by Krsna in Bhagavad-gita. In other words, complete *bhakti-yoga* should include demigod worship. Then what about the words *avidhi-purvakam* Krsna uses in 9.23? Here demigod worship is rejected as being incorrect *yajna* (the words *yajante* is used in this very verse). You can't suck sugarcane and whistle at the same time. In Gita, *yajna* means Visnu. It *can* mean demigod worship, on a *laukika* (conventional) level. Krsna does use *yajna* in that way in ch 3, in reference to the means given by Prajapati by which the material desires of humanity might be satisfied. But nonetheless, Yajna *does* mean Visnu at the deepest level. In *every* case.

If you still have a problem in accepting the above explanations, then you should be prepared to argue the full consequences of your philosophical position. You speak of the natural flow of reason. I do not see any natural reason in either of your positions--on knowledge vs. *abhyasa*, and on *yajna*. It is not reasonable to quibble over the translation of these terms outside the context of the meaning and practice of *Bhagavad-gita* as a whole. Such a proposal is similar to the modern trend of literaty criticism known as deconstructionism, in which words are extracted from a text and analyzed with no reference whatsoever to the intent of the autor himself, but simply according to all manner of concocted meanings imposed by the critic. Jacques Derrida, a famous French deconstructionist, wrote at length on a margin note made by Nietzsche in one of his manuscripts. The margin note said, "I've forgotten my umbrella." Derrida tried to prove that remark to be the key to the understanding of the whole of Nietzsche's manuscript. This is unreasonable. One has to show by reason, not unreason, that the main text deals with forgotten umbrellas. Similarly, if you wish to reasonably put forward your interpretation, you have to argue with reason that it is supported by Krsna throughout the whole text of the Gita. Indeed, in this respect you have undermined your own position with these words from your second letter: >>True, Prabhupada's statements may be consistent with the rest of Bhagavad Gita and, for that matter, the rest of the Vedas. But is it consistent with Krsna's words in Verse 12.12 itself? This is my doubt.<< Your doubt, so expressed, is not a reasonable one.

Hare Krsna,

Suhotra Swami

KRISHNA SHADOW

*Question from Amaraprabhu das
January 4, 1996*

I saw on many Paintings Krishna appear with a shadow, and Lord Vishnu with a Brahman string. How it can be that Krishna is less bright than the sun (when he is in this material world) and Lord Vishnu chants Gayatri ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 4, 1996

Where do you get the idea that Krsna's shadow must be a creation of the sunshine? What Krsna's shadow really is, you can learn in the Brahma samhita verse srsthi-sthiti-pralaya. . .

Gayatri is Goddess Vac, the Lord's sabda-brahman potency. You ask, why does Visnu wear a gayatri thread. Why does Krsna wear a peacock feather? What does Narayana carry four symbols? Why does Laksmidevi hold a lotus? Why does Balarama have a plow?

Because they like to.

BABAJI

*Question from Amaraprabhu das
January 4, 1996*

Shiva and Babaji worship is quite prominent, and even their have simular standards and regulations (no Meat eating, purity...). Their proof through the Vedas (Shiva Purana, Satarudra Samhita etc.) that Babaji is a incarnation of Lord Shiva. Some Devotees bewildered by this matter, attracted and took up some of his teachings. If he is (was) a incarnation of Lord Shiva should we respect him? And whats about Sripada Sankaracarya ? Is he worshipable ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 4, 1996

There are no devotees who become attracted to Babaji and Shiva worship. There are only dull living entities who are fond of the mode of ignorance who bećime attracted to that.

Babaji? Which babaji? Srila Prabhupada said there "there are so many bogus babajis." Shiva Purana is a tamasic purana. And not only that, the modern Shiva Purana is not accepted by scholars as being the original version. So what can be proved from it? Nothing!

RUDRA SAMPRADAYA

*Question from Amaraprabhu das
January 4, 1996*

Where I can get informations about the Rudra Sampradaya (great Teacher, philosophy, source of scriptures, in which part of India is this Sampradaya prominent) and their are still exist ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 4, 1996

Rudra sampradaya is represented nowadays by the Vallabhacarya sampradaya. The Vallabha-sampradaya overtook the older Rudra-sampradaya tradition, which is almost unknown nowadays. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has given the history of Visnuswami, the founder of that sampradaya. Actually, there were three Visnusvamis. But apart from what he has revealed, there is little else to be known.

REINCARNATION

Question from Tamoha Krsna das

January 6, 1996

Polish TV propped us to take part in "Talk Show" about reincarnation. So I would like to ask you a few question in this regard.

1. Why we do not remember our previous forms?
2. Why taking a new birth is punishment if we do not remember a cause of punishment from previous lifes?
3. How to prove that reincarnation is not dogma?
4. Do we have any exemples that people remember their previous bodies? i.e. during hypnosis. Some confirmed cases.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 6, 1996

1. Why we do not remember our previous forms?

Well, first thing is of course, there are so many things we do not remember even in this present life. For instance, we don't remember our form as an embryo within the womb of our mother. But we don't doubt that we were there. The next thing is, the new life is a new chance. The memory is cleared off by the loss of our last body, because we identified completely with that body. In the next life we can start fresh satisfying fresh desires. Otherwise, if we had to remember that in my last life I died of a horrible disease, in the life before that I was a monkey that was eaten by a leopard, and in my life before that I was a dog that was smashed by a truck, and so on, it would be pretty horrible. It is the nature of the mind to quickly forget terrible experiences, even in this lifetime. Two terrible experiences happened right next to each other just before our birth--our last death, and 9 months in the womb. And birth itself is yet another horrible experience. Loss of memory life after life is the natural result of being in the bodily concept. To remember a previous life, one has to have special knowledge. Just like, if you keep all your telephone numbers in a book and do not try to especially memorize any of them, then if you lose that book, you have lost you memory of all your telephone numbers. Similarly, if you keep your mind in bodily consciousness and then lose that body, you will lose your memory of that body too.

2. Why taking a new birth is punishment if we do not remember a

cause of punishment from previous lifes?

It is not that Krsna intends us to remember throughout this life all the past sins that led us to particular sufferings. We remember our sins at the time of death of the human body, as we leave the body and especially if we are taken to Yamaraja. But then it is too late to change anything, just as when you are arrested by the police for a crime it is too late to say, "Oh, I feel very bad I did that, please let me correct my mistake and I promise I won't do it again." During the human life, before the time of death, you are supposed to cultivate Vedic knowledge. Then you can see by sastra the cause of your suffering. And then you can stop future suffering by avoiding sinful activities. The knowledge that "I am being punished" can only come with the knowledge that "I am not my body." Otherwise one is just like an animal. If you punish a dumb animal by beating it, it cannot understand why you are hurting it. A human being is not meant to remain like a dumb animal. But without cultivating Vedic knowledge, that is what we are, and therefore we cannot understand why we are suffering.

3. How to prove that reincarnation is not dogma?

Argue from Bhagavad-gita 2.13. Reincarnation is a fact that happens during even this one lifetime.

4. Do we have any examples that people remember their previous bodies? i.e. during hypnosis. Some confirmed cases.

Hypnosis reincarnation therapy is out to lunch. Doesn't prove anything. It is like dreaming. Some serious and believable research has been done by Dr. Ian Stevenson. He works with children who spontaneously remember their previous births. Probably his books are available in Polish.

MAHESA DHAMA

*Question from Govinda Madhava das
January 6, 1996*

In Light of the Bhagavata Srila Prabhupada explains: "The impersonalists who want to merge into the existence of the Transcendence are placed within Mahesa-dhama... The system of jnana-yoga makes one eligible to enter Mahesa-dhama." He also says that Mahesa-dhama is in between Devi-dhama and Hari-dhama. Is Mahesa-dhama another expression for the brahmajyoti, then?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 8, 1996

This is where the name Mahesa-dhama comes from:

goloka-namni nija-dhamni tale ca tasya
devi-mahesa-hari-dhamasu tesu tesu
te te prabhava-nicaya vihitas ca yena
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami

TRANSLATION

"Below the planet named Goloka Vrndavana are the planets known as Devi-dhama, Mahesa-dhama and Hari-dhama. These are opulent in different ways. They are managed

by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda, the original Lord. I offer my obeisances unto Him.'

Mahesa-dhama is described in the Brhad-bhagavatamrta by Sri Sanatana Gosvami. It is predominated by a form of the Supreme Lord in whose existence the jiva has a strong tendency to merge. This form appears simultaneously as personal and impersonal. Lord Siva, who worships this form of the Lord, told Gopa Kumara (the devotee who passed through Mahesa-dhama on his way back to Godhead, that this place is for the jnanis and yogis, not for a bhakta like you. I have not gone back to check the Bb before writing this, so it is only my recollection that no name is given there for this form of the Lord. But elsewhere in Srila Prabhupada's books we learn that Siva worships Sankarsana.

MIND IS NOT FACTUAL

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
January 6, 1996

In the translation to sb 5.11.17 it mentions that the mind is not factual, could you expand on this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 8, 1996

Well, to keep it simple, I'll just say this. The word that Srila Prabhupada translates as false in 5.11.17 is vyalika. I checked several other verses that have this word, or forms of it (vyalikaih, for instance), and the theme of those translations is "cheating." So the mind is a cheater. Therefore it is false.

MIND AS THE SOUL'S DESIGNATION

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
January 12, 1996

If you look in the preceding verse Srila Prabhupada seems to describe the mind as the soul's designation. Any more comments to clarify this point.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 13, 1996

The mind is *atma-lingam,* which Srila Prabhupada says means "existing as the false designation of the soul." (word-for-word *Bhag.* 5.11.16) Atma means soul, obviously. Lingam means symbol. The subtle body is called the linga-sarira. The mind symbolizes the soul, in other words, like a silhouette symbolizes a man. Maybe you remember the old Alfred Hitchcock TV serial. It began with a shot of a simple pencil-sketch of Alfred's profile against a white background. Then Alfred himself moved in from the side and fit his profile together with the sketch. Then he turned to the camera and said, "Good evening, I'm Alfred Hitchcock." So that sketch was a lingam of old Alfie. Similarly, the mind is a sketch of the soul done in the subtle material energy. But it is illusion to accept a symbol as the original object. In that sense, the mind is unreal.

KANDAS

Question from Rajavidya das
January 9, 1996

Is the following analysis of the different astika scriptures according to the three kandas and the six darsanas correct:

Karma-kanda	Jnana-kanda	Upasana-kanda
- Vedas - Brahmanas - Vedangas - Upa-vedas - Dharma-satras - Artha-sastras - Shaiva-Agamas - Sakti-Tantras	- Aranyakas - Upanisads	- Puranas - Itihasas - Vaisnava-Samhitas - Vedanta-sutra
Mimamsa	Nyaya, Vaisesika Sankhya, Yoga	Vedanta

Did I forget any important astika scripture in the above list?

By the way, what are the main scriptural references concerning the three kandas?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 9, 1996

Your classification system is quite novel. I've never seen anything like this before. The classifications I've seen are the three Prasthanas: Sruti, Smrti and Nyaya. Also the 3 modes of nature classifications for the Puranas.

I see questionable things in what you've done. For instance, there are bhakti-upanisads (as confirmed in the Prayers by the Personified Vedas section in SB 10th Canto). Gopal-tapani Upanisad for instance. Somewhere Srila Prabhupada classifies Vedanta-sutra as Nyaya-prasthanana. Saiva-agamas are Tantric and a lot of them are considered by Vaisnavas and Vaidika brahmanas to be complete fabrications. Schools like Sankhya and Yoga follow smrti-sastras, not upanisads. Upanisads belong to the Vedanta school only. The Sankhya smrti etc. are not accepted by Vaisnava Vedantists as being genuine. I don't feel like listing all the questionable things I see, because overall I think your attempt is a complete speculation. My suggestion is that you contact Gopa Vrndapal das in the Mayapura Gurukula (through the COM account of Bhaktividya Purna Swami). He can give you a better answer as to whether what you've attempted has any correspondence in any bona fide system of classification of Vedic sastra.

Comment by Rajavidya das
January 10, 1996

Thank you for clearing this. I knew that it was a speculation, and therefore I asked you first. Your answer has made it obvious that I can forget about the classification of the scriptures according to the three kandas. Still, the other question remains:

1. What are the main scriptural references concerning the three kandas?
2. And: Is it possible to classify the darsanas according to kandas?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

January 10, 1996

All bona fide Vedic literature coming from Vyasadeva through Guruparampara is sambandha-tattva, knowledge that links to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So-called authorities may interpret it as karma or jnana, but the Vaisnavas know the real purport and great acaryas like Madhva and Ramanujacarya explained the Vedic literature, even texts like Rg Veda, as Vaisnava sastra. The darsanas apart from Vedanta are considered Vedic only in the sense that they present various speculations about tattvas presented in the Vedic literature. All these speculations turn out to be completely anti-Vedic. Therefore Vedanta-sutra defeats these darsanas as being deviant philosophies. Because Srila Vyasadeva has ruled in the Vedanta-sutra and Srimad Bhagavatam that these darsanas are anti-Vedic, I do not see the point in trying to tie them to any part of the Vedic literature. These schools have their own smrti-sastras anyway, the Nyaya-sutra, Vaishesika-sutra etc.

Comment by Mahakirti das

January 11, 1996

>The darsanas apart from Vedanta are considered Vedic only
>in the sense that they present various speculations about tattvas presented
>in the Vedic literature. All these speculations turn out to be completely
>anti-Vedic. Therefore Vedanta-sutra defeats these darsanas as being deviant
>philosophies

Thank you Maharaja for clarifying the position of five darsanas. I have been always wondering why they are considered astik = Vedic, since Vyasadeva defeat their philosophical position in Vedanta-sutra. But still small misunderstanding remains on my part. How the six darsanas were part of the whole Vedic system of education? (Like first learning the rules of logical discussion = Nyaya etc.

Is it that one would have to go through all kind of different angels of vision and finally coming to the END of knowledge - Vedanta? Why can't just accept directly Vedanta?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 11, 1996

In Srimad Bhagavatam we find the Bhagavat-tattva concerning Nyaya, Vaishesika and so on. The perfect explanation of the tattvas is all there. The darsanas are deviant explanations of these tattvas by sages who do not appear in the pages of the Bhagavatam (Gautama, Kanada, the atheistic Kapila, Patanjali and Jaimini). So in genuine Vedic education, the version of Srila Vyasadeva was propounded. In the deviant schools, the versions of these other sages were propounded.

YAKSAS

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
January 15, 1996

Yaksas are described usually in a negative way - as demons, in quality of ignorance (SB 3.20.20,22p., 4.10.28, 8.1.26 etc.), but also as punya-janan (SB 4.11.33p. etc.), upadevanam (SB 4.11.8); "the best of all servants (of the Lord)" (SB 7.8.52,p.) and even as "Himalayan tribes" (SB 4.10.5p.).
How to reconcile all these different information? Could you please elaborate on this topic?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
January 16, 1996

Yaksas are classified as upadevas, or semi-demigods. That means they are alongside Apsaras, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, and also Raksasas in the same category. The yaksas descend in different genealogical lines, according to Mahabharata and Agni Purana. Some appeared at the same time as Brahma, from out of the shell of the universe. Some descended from the family of Kasyapa. Some descended from Pulastya. Kuvera is the king of the Yaksas and the treasurer of the demigods. He is a very respectable personality. It appears that other yaksas are not respectable, for instance the ones who killed Uttama, the brother of Dhruva. For that, Dhruva Maharaja wanted to destroy the whole Yaksa race; this disturbed the mind of Kuvera. So Svayambhuva Manu instructed Dhruva to stop because the yaksas who had done the killing were now killed, and Dhruva's continued killing was uncalled for. The rest of the yaksas were innocent. Dhruva ceased his military campaign against the Yaksas, and when he did, Kuvera was pleased with him and blessed him, as per Dhruva's request, with unflinching faith in and remembrance of Krsna. The conclusion is that there are different family lines of Yaksas. They are not all same. Some Yaksas are pious and respectable. How much faith the demigods must have in Kuvera to make him their treasurer. He could even bless Dhruva with pure devotion. But other Yaksas seem to be mischievous.

EMPIRIC PHILOSOPHERS

Question from Maha-mani dd
January 15, 1996

Srila Prabhupada often calls impersonalists or jnanis empiric philosophers. He also uses such terms as empiric philosophy, empiric philosophical speculation, empiric speculation, etc.

According to the dictionaries empiric philosophers are those who consider the sense perception the only source of knowledge and deny the role of abstract thinking or reasoning in the process of acquiring knowledge.

When we translate empiric speculation as it is, as empiric deliberation, it sounds strange, as if we combine two approaches which exclude each other.

In what sense did Srila Prabhupada use the word empiric?

Can we translate 'empiric philosopher' in such a way that it wouldn't sound as the follower of empirism?

For e.g. in the 4th Canto we translated 'culturing empiric knowledge' as 'engaging in jnana-yoga' and empiric speculation as 'abstract philosophical speculation'.

If we have to leave the word empiric anyway, can we at least make a note of what we mean by that?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

January 16, 1996

The word empiric comes from the Greek *empeiros*, which means "experience." The dictionary definition you cite seems to be speaking of empiricism as the philosophical opponent of rationalism. Yes, there were certain European philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke who opposed the rationalists, coming down in the tradition of Rene Descartes. Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley and Hume are referred to as The British Empiricists. Locke's mantra was *Nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius fuerit in sense*, "nothing is in the intellect which was not first in the senses." Rationalists countered that with their concept of *a priori* knowledge, which exists in reason or intuition prior to the information of the senses.

Anyway, the definition of empiricism as opposite to rationalism is specific to a period in the history of European philosophy. The more general or up-to-date notion is that empiricists take sense data as the final proof of their ideas. Modern scientists are examples. The scientists also employ *a priori* assumptions. They certainly utilize abstract thinking. But in order for their theories to really be accepted, they have to at last show empirical proof.

Immanuel Kant, who lived in the second half of the 1700's, "officially" unified empiricism and rationalism. I mention this to show that since his time there has not been a significant empiricist/rationalist debate going on in Western philosophy. So the definition you've given is rather dated.

Another thing is, that from the point of view of our Krsna conscious logic--which is the real deductive or *avaroha* logic--there is no difference between empiricism and rationalism anyway. Because both are inductive (i.e. they do not begin with authoritative knowledge, but with assumptions, and try to jump from their assumptions to complete knowledge by research and speculation). In Western philosophy books, rationalism is defined as deductive, and empiricism as inductive, but in truth (Vedic truth, that is, the *real* truth) rationalism is just as inductive as empiricism. The only difference is that empiricism places more value on the evidence of *pratyaksa*.

Comment by Gopiparanadhana das

January 19, 1996

Srila Prabhupada used "empirical philosophers" in a special sense of his own choosing. Even Mayavadis who supposedly respect sabda-pramana he put in this class. It seems that SP meant that anyone who isn't Krsna consciousness is still perceiving everything only with material eyes.

Why don't we allow Srila Prabhupada to use this word the way he wants? Do we think he didn't know what he was doing? Do we think we know more than Srila Prabhupada?

Comment by Suhotra Swami

January 20, 1996

While I agree that Srila Prabhupada's use of empirical was special, and that Srila Prabhupada is empowered to do whatever he likes with language, I also believe that Srila Prabhupada's use of the word empirical makes perfect sense from the point of view of what the word actually means. The Mayavadis also base their understanding of the sastra on experience. That is why their process consists of negation.

Comment by Maha-mani dd

January 20, 1996

I would never dare to think I know more than Srila Prabhupada. I simply wanted to know in what meaning this word is used by him to be able to translate it properly and to avoid misunderstanding, as in Russian empiric philisopher is a follower of empirism as opposite to rationalism.

Comment by Vaidyanatha das

January 23, 1996

I guess that is a case when the word will be properly defined by the context being consistently used in many places. Redefinition of some commonly used words and a new usage of them is not uncommon in all philosophical systems, so there is no reason to worry about a slightly different usage of the term in other books.

PURE IN CONSCIOUSNESS

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

January 31, 1996

"Because one who works in Krsna consciousness is servant of all, he is very dear to everyone. And because everyone is satisfied by his work, he is pure in consciousness."

What is meant by "because everyone is satisfied by his work, he is pure in consciousness" ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 18, 1996

General message to all COM correspondents to Suhotra Swami, Have Danda Will Travel, etc.: I've been elected chairman of the GBC. Therefore I will be very busy this year. Questions sent to me will be answered only very briefly. I will be staying in India until May 26.

What is the work we do in pure consciousness? SP: "We have to preach. So we cannot hate, even he's not a good man. But this is a fact. One who is not a Krsna conscious person, he's not a good man. But our duty is preach. Because the world is full of no good men, therefore we have to preach. Otherwise what is the use of preaching? Therefore we should not be envious, although a man is not good man. That is the time. Samadrsah. Just like Gosvamis. Krsna-kirtana-gana-nartana-parau premamrtambho-nidhi dhiradhira-jana-priyau. Dhira. Dhira means sober, and adhira means rascals. So dhiradhira-jana-priyau. They are priya, dear, both the rascals

and good men because they were distributing Krsna consciousness. Just like Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Caitanya Mahaprabhu, just you saw in Benares. Not that all the men who joined the procession, they were all good men. From materialist's point of view. But this Caitanya Mahaprabhu is so kind, thousand of men joined Caitanya and they danced. Dhiradhira. Not that in the crowd only selected devotees were there. No. Most of them, 99% all nondevotees."

SNAKE BED VASUKI

*Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
January 31, 1996*

"Arjuna sees everything in the universe; therefore he sees Brahma, who is the first creature in the universe, and the celestial serpent upon which the Garbhodakasayi Visnu lies in the lower regions of the universe. This snake bed is called Vasuki. There are also other snakes known as Vasuki."

What is meant by "This snake bed is called Vasuki" ? Otherwise everywhere is said "Ananta Sesa".

Answer by Suhotra Swami

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In Gita, Krsna says "of serpents I am Vasuki, the chief. Of the celestial Naga snakes I am Ananta." Vasuki and Ananta are both names for Krsna. If two things are nondifferent from a third thing, they are nondifferent from each other. Therefore Ananta is also called Vasuki.

BRAHMA BHUTA & ATMARAMA STAGES

*Question from Bhakta Brian & Varadaraja das
February 2, 1996*

I have one question from Bhakta Brian. He wants to know what is the difference, between the "Brahma buta" stage, and the "Atmarama" stage. If you could kindly explain this for us.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

February 18, 1996

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Atmarama means self-satisfied. It is a name of Krsna. Brahma-bhuta means the stage of knowing I am not the body. A person on the Brahma-bhuta platform is also atmarama, but still there is a difference between the meaning of the two words.

MOOD OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER

*Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
March 7, 1996*

I hear often devotees say: " One has to understand the mood of the spiritual master." I tried to find it out in SP Folio with no success. Is this a bona fide Quote? Thank you very much.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
March 11, 1996

I have heard from Godbrothers that Srila Prabhupada said this. However I do not have further information.

HONORING PRASADAM

*Question from Varadaraja das
April 17, 1996*

In the Srimad Bhagavatam class this morning, we were discussing the right mood of accepting prasadam. In the Ramanuja book, there is a story where Ramanuja once was washing his hands in a well. And suddenly his disciples saw that some fish who had eaten the left over of Ramanuja, rise out of the well with four handed Narayana forms, and went back, back home to Godhead.

Seeing this they were maturely very perplexed, and asked Ramanuja that "We are also taking your Maha Prasadam everyday. But why is it that we haven't left for Vaikuntha yet ?." Then Ramanuja answered " When the fish took the Prasadam, they did so without committing any offence, where as you do not!"

Dear Gurumaharaja, I know that you are very busy. But if you have a little time, could you then kindly clarify this for us, and say a few words about the right mood a Vaisnava should adopt in honoring Prasadam ?.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
April 19, 1996

Srila Prabhupada writes in his Upadesamrta that one can become entangled in sense gratification even while indulging the tongue in prasadam. So prasadam is to be respected brahminically, not devoured animalistically. Honoring prasadam is as sacred an activity as chanting the holy name or worshiping the Deity.

KRISHNA'S APPEARANCE

*Question from Divyambara dd
April 18, 1996*

We hear different opinions on whether Krsna first appeared to Devaki and Vasudeva in His Narayana form as a large, full-grown person, or He was the size of a small baby with four arms. For the devotees Krsna remains the Supreme Personality of Godhead in whatever form He likes to appear. However, for the sake of ceasing our speculations, as well as for the benefit of the artists, I beg you to kindly clarify this point. Thank you very much.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 20, 1996

Prabhupada has already ceased all speculations. Just read the account of Krsna's appearance in Krsna Book. I cannot understand why after reading this anybody would say there is confusion about the form the Lord first revealed before Vasudeva and Devaki. Is this confusion happening because some devotees are reading books from outside of ISKCON? If so, that is why devotees should not read such books.

Comment by Govinda Madhava das

April 20, 1996

It could also be that the confusion comes from the famous ISKCON painting depicting Lord Krsna's birth. There, the four-armed form of the Lord is shown as a "grown-up" person, and Lord Krsna with two hands as a baby, although in the text (chapter 3) itself it says, "Vasudeva saw that wonderful child born as a baby with four hands, holding conchshell, club, ..."

QUESTIONS

Question from Vrajendra Kumara das

April 22, 1996

Your Holiness, can you please answer the following questions:

1. *S.B.4.20.4 states "If a personality like you who are so much advanced because of executing the instructions of the previous acaryas, is carried away by the influence of My material energy then all your advancement may be considered simply a waste of time" In this passage Lord Visnu is addressing Maharaj Prithu seemingly contradicting the verse from B.G. which states that there is no loss on the way of bhakti (2.40). Can you clear it?*

2. *S.B.9.7.20-21 states about sacrificing a man and pleasing all the demigods by this activity. What was the need to sacrifice a human being and how could the demigods be happy with this?*

3. *What was the meaning of aswamedha yajna and when they put the horse in the fire who was coming out of the fire, new horse or human being?*

4. *S.B.9.9.13 states "Simply by having water from the Ganges come in contact with the ashes of their burnt bodies, the sons of Sagara Maharaja were elevated to the heavenly planets..." What is the relation between the remnants of the body (ashes) and the soul after death? If the soul is separated from the body at death what is the benefit to sprinkle the dead body with sacred water if the soul is already gone? Similarly why there is a ritual to throw the ashes of departed souls in the Ganges? What is the benefit for the soul if connection with the body is already broken?*

5. *Are the demigods like Indra, Candra, Varuna, Agni, Surya, Vayu etc all on the same level or is there any hierarchy amongst them?*

6. *S.B.7.4.16 states that the earth was flourishing at the time of Hiranyakasipu in all respects. We know that artha depends on dharma but that demon was against dharma, so what is the reason for all that manifestation of opulence? On the*

contrary at the time of king Vena the earth has hidden all its wealth. Was Vena more demoniac than Hiranyakasipu?

7. Why at the time of agni-hotra the participants are not allowed to wear cloths with stitches?

8. What is the best answer to such a famous question as "What was the first: chicken or egg?"

9. Is there any vedic tradition to celebrate New Year if so then when? In spring or in the middle of the winter as we do now? Can we say that for vaisnavas Gaura Purnima is some kind of New Year celebration because for us Mahaprabhu's appearance is the beginning of new age?

Please excuse me for so many questions at once but I was collecting them for the long period of time.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

April 27, 1996

You were collecting them for a long time. It will similarly take me a long time to answer them, as I am so busy with other things these days.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

May 17, 1996

Subject: I will reply to the unanswered Danda questions in June

June is when I will return to Europe from India. While I am in India I am limiting my e-mail correspondence to essentials. Thanks for your patience.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 1, 1996

Here are my answers to the questions of Vrajendra Kumara das.

1. Prthu Maharaja was a king; whatever a man in that position does, all the world will follow. While it is true that there is no loss in one's personal attempt to advance, even if he is not successful in this life, if he is in the position of a ruler, spiritual master, husband or parent, yet cannot deliver his dependents from birth and death due to his own spiritual shortcomings, that exalted position he holds is just a waste of time. Better to be an honest street sweeper than a showbottle authority.

2. King Hariscandra performed this sacrifice to Varuna with a desire to be cured from dropsy. The full story is in SB 9 chapter 7. Many kinds of sacrifices are prescribed in the karma-kanda section of the Vedas. The demigods are nourished by them and they in turn bless mankind with prosperity. But it is not the offering of a man that sets the distinction between material and spiritual sacrifice. Krsna wanted Arjuna to sacrifice his guru, his grandfather, his cousin-brothers and millions of other men for His satisfaction. So you might ask a similar question: what is the need for Arjuna to sacrifice human beings and how could Krsna be happy with this?

3. Srila Prabhupada says the horse is rejuvenated, i.e. given a new body by the demigods.

4. The relationship between the ashes of the body contacted by the holy Ganges, and the soul departed from that body, is looked after by the Supersoul. The relationship is not one of material factors (time and space).

5. The demigods you mention are all lokapalakas (guardians of the directions). But of them, Indra is the king. Of course, there are many other demigods than these you mention, 33 million in all. Their positions are certainly hierarchical. Brahma is the chief demigod, as the guru of them all. And Lord Visnu is the guru of Brahma.

6. Hiranyakasipu was sent to this world by Lord Narayana, to play a big role in His pastimes. So he was successful in everything material by the plan of the Lord. That plan was to show all the sceptics and atheists that even if one attains everything by material progress (which is normally impossible), still the demon will be vanquished by the power of Krsna. Vena was not nearly so powerful as Hiranyakasipu, as he was killed by the brahmanas, and, as you've noted, he could not bring even the earth planet under his full control.

7. Stitched cloth is not appropriate dress for a yajna the way blue jeans are not appropriate dress for a pujari to wear while serving the Deity. Even karmis have dress codes. You can't enter an opera wearing bermuda shorts. You can't enter a punk rock club dressed in a top hat and smoking jacket. If karmi culture has the right to set dress codes for their special functions, why can't the Vedic culture? Unstitched cloth is considered more pure, that's all.

8. Which came first, the chicken or the egg--this is your next question. The answer I shall now give is actually the philosophical response. But whether it will be understood is another thing. A London gentleman was walking home one night when one of that city's famous fogs rolled in. He couldn't see a thing in any direction. But he had his walking stick, so he tapped his way along. Suddenly there was nothing in front of him. He imagined he must have reached the end of a pier on the River Thames. So he tried to tap in other directions around him--still nothing! He was perplexed. So he just waited until morning when the fog lifted. He found himself standing in the middle of High Street with the end broken off of his walking stick. The simple explanation of this story is that one cannot know the cause of things while one is in the darkness of ignorance.

9. Gaur Purnima is our New Year. There are other Vedic-based calendar calculations of New Year, but these are not important for us.

ONE OR TWO MINDS

Question from Atmarama das

June 1, 1996

This may sound as a stupid question, but recently in our temple a strange discussion started. One party of devotees (smaller one) claims that there are objectively 2 minds existing, which would say that the material mind exist as an independent item from the spiritual mind. The other party understand that there is a material element mind, but it is only a covering or contamination of the spiritual mind, and in itself does not have the functions of the mind, thinking, feeling, weeling. That is to say, the spiritual mind is thinking, ..., and the material element is only influencing the spiritual mind, just as the red filter determines the colour of the light to appear to be red. So, there is only one mind, objectively speaking. What is correct. To make it simple, is there one or two minds. We understand that it is

all right to say that there are two minds, but are they two aspects of one thing, or two separated things.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 1, 1996

I would not agree with either position. Spiritual mind means spiritual body, because everything is absolute in the spiritual world. There is no distinction there between self, mind and body. So my problem with the first theory is if you say we have two minds now, then you must say we have two bodies now. But where is that spiritual body now? Actually the spirit soul is just a seed. The spiritual body (mind) is a potential of that seed, like the mango tree is the potential of a mango seed. You can't hold up a mango seed and say, "This is a mango tree." Similarly, you can't say the jivatma spark in the heart is the spiritual mind and body. So the two minds theory doesn't work. The one mind theory is sahajiya philosophy. Exactly, precisely sahajiya philosophy. The functions of the material mind are *not* outer manifestations of an internally functioning spiritual mind. Our spiritual mind is *not* functioning now, not until we've reached svarupa-upalabdhi (the revelation of the spiritual body).

Our consciousness in material existence is simply passive impersonal awareness. Prabhupada says that behind the manifestation of 24 elements is the glare of the brahmajyoti. The jivatma is a spark within that glare. That is the true form of our consciousness, until Krsna consciousness is awakened. The material mind is mechanically operating within that glare of impersonal consciousness. It is operating due to the modes of nature. The soul is doing nothing. Except of course, that the soul desires to be in that situation, under the influence of the modes.

GOING BACK TO GODHEAD

Question from Cit Sakti das

June 7, 1996

1.I'd like to understand how it is in the end of life; I've heard, that Srila Prabhupada said that if someone is attached in the end of life to one single sweet ball he must take birth again, then also that if one follows 4 regulative principles and chant 16 rounds daily Srila Prabhupada will come and take him back to Godhead and also that in the end of life Lord Caitanya comes to nullify last uneligibility of devotee to go back to Godhead. So we are here wondering if that's some conception when someone says that anyway just engage somehow in devotional service and in the end of life Lord saves you (He'll push Himself to your mind etc), because it looks like-take it easy you'll go back to Godhead anyway. So if you can please enlighten us.

2.What I can quote when I want to emphasize that we shouldn't strive only for material mode of goodness but for transcending modes altogether because we want go back to Godhead in this lifetime and not to wait for next births and lifes?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 2, 1996

Offer the sweetball to Krsna.

Bg 2.45.

KRISHNA'S BODY VISIBLE TO MUNDANE PEOPLE

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares
June 4, 1996

SB 3.4.29p. reads:

"The name and form of the Lord cannot be perceived by the material senses, but when He appears within the vision of the mundane people He assumes the form of the virat-rupa. This is an additional material exhibition of form and is supported by the logic of a subject and its adjectives. In grammar, when an adjective is taken away from the subject, the subject it modifies does not change. Similarly, when the Lord quits His virat-rupa, His eternal form does not change, although there is no material difference between Himself and any one of His innumerable forms."

Does "virat-rupa" mean that form which Krsna left after Him when He quit this planet? Prabhupada's words - "an additional material exhibition of form" - indicate that this form was a kind of matter, although most probably different from ours. Do we have any further information about the nature of that form? Could You please provide some quotes from acaryas regarding this uneasy point?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 5, 1996

In answer to your first question, Prabhupada classifies the virat-rupa to the Deity (arca-murti) form of the Lord (that's in TLC, I think). So it is "that kind" of material form--still worshipable by us.

Second question: I have no quotes from previous acaryas on this "uneasy point." Try Gopiparanadhana Prabhu, BBT Sanskritist.

FEW QUESTIONS

Question from Kamalavati dd
June 11, 1996

Could you please kindly answer the following few questions (they aren't connected to each other):

1. When does the worship of a devotee become mundane? If there is such a thing as "mundane worship" of a devotee, what are the consequences of it?

2. In the CC ML 19.187 in the purport the translation of one of the quoted verses is: "When one's attachment for Krsna develops in an abominable way, and the devotee enjoys it, that is called bibhastha-bhakti-rasa." Guru Maharaja, could you please elaborate on this?

3. In the CC ML 19.157 p. it is said: "If one thinks that there are many pseudo devotees or nondevotees in the Krsna Consciousness Society, one can keep direct company with the spiritual master, and if there is any doubt, one should consult the spiritual master." Guru Maharaja, can you please explain further?

4. My understanding is that everybody should offer obeisances to Srimati Tulsi devi when she is being removed from the temple room before GP regardless of who is carrying her. Is this correct?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 11, 1996

You will find the answer to the first question in SB 3.25.24-27 and the accompanying Bhaktivedanta purports. Here Srila Prabhupada exactly explains what pure association with devotees means. Impure association obviously means anything that fails to reach the standard described in these verses and purports.

Your second question is answered by Srila Prabhupada thusly:

"Similarly He enjoys with bibhatsa-rasa, vira-rasa, killing. Killing is also vira-rasa. Because He is the reservoir of all rasas. So janmady asya yatah. So do not think that this violence or fighting is bad. No. Nothing is bad when it is utilized for Krsna. Nothing is good when it is utilized for your sense gratification."

As for your third question, sometimes Srila Prabhupada compared ISKCON to a mental hospital. In such an institution, there are doctors and there are patients. Of course the idea is that the patients are to be cured. But that may take a while. If we find it troubling to associate with the patients, that means we ourselves are not doctors, but patients also. So we should get the association of a doctor (spiritual master) to be cured of our mental disease (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy).

Fourth question: yes, you are right.

108 UPANISADS

Question from Jahnu das

June 22, 1996

In the CC, Adi-lila, Srila Prabhupada lists in one purport the 108 Upanishads that are generally accepted.

I was dissapointed to not find the Kali-santarana Upanishad in this list, since we often quote from there when people come up with the argument that the Hare Krishna Mantra is not found in the Shruti.

Is Kali-santarana Upanishad not generally accepted, I mean, obviously it is not since Srila Prabhupada does not list it, but is there some explanation for this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 22, 1996

There are different lists of Upanisads. And when it is said there are 108, that is not a limit. That means only the 108 most important, according to whoever compiled that list.

I do not know much about the Kali-santarana Upanisad outside of Prabhupada's books, except that it was researched by a French indologist named (I hope I'm spelling this right) Jeanne Varenne, who published a book on it. As far as I know, not having read the book myself (I don't think it is in English translation) but having been told about it by a French-speaking Godbrother, this indologist accepted the KsU as a bonafide sastra.

ADAM, EVE & THE SERPENT

Question from Dharmasetu das
June 24, 1996

I have one question. What was the serpent which causes that Eva took the forbidden fruit and latter on she and Adam must leave the heaven. According to the Vedas, what was that serpent. Is it personified nessience or lust, or something completely different?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 25, 1996

Atma-tattva Prabhu (Indian Prabhupada disciple) told me there's an account in the Bhavisya Purana that is remarkably like the Genesis story of Adam and Eve. In this, the role of the serpent who misleads Eve is assumed by the personality of Kali. I don't remember if he did that in the form of a snake, though. I don't remember much at all about it.

And I don't think it is important either. So if you want more information than this, better ask elsewhere.

MARGINAL POSITION

Question from Bhagadatta das
June 25, 1996

In the purport to text 117, Twentieth chapter of C.C.Madhya lila, SP writes, "...He(refering to the living entity) is sometimes attracted by the external illusory energy when he stays in the marginal position..." What actually Prabhupada means by "...when he stays in the marginal position." Is not the living entity always situated in the position of marginal energy?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
June 25, 1996

The jiva is constitutionally marginal. But he comes under the influence of either the internal or external potencies. The transition between the two is the marginal position, that is, choice.

DEMONS WORSHIPPING THE LORD

Question from Bhagadatta das
June 25, 1996

C.C.Madhya lila 20.270 states:

"In the spiritual world, there is neither the mode of passion, the mode of ignorance nor a mixture of both, nor is there adulterated goodness, nor the influence of time or maya itself. Only the pure devotees of the Lord, who are worshiped both by demigods and by demons, reside in the spiritual world as the Lord's associates."

We find the same verse originally in the SB.2.9.10 with slightly different translation. I want to focus on the last sentence:

'...Without discrimination, both the demigods and the demons worship the Lord as devotees.'

As we see in the first(C.C.)translation, the worshipable object are the devotees of the Lord. And yet in the second translation the worshiped one is the Lord. The most puzzling thing for me is the fact that the demons take part in that worship. Could you explain what did Prabhupada mean by this slight difference in the translation, and how the demons are involved in the worship of the Lord and His devotees?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 25, 1996

Something like two years ago, Narakriti asked, and I answered, the second part of your question here in the Danda conference.

So, a very short answer, and no more: 1) The Lord is never separate from His devotees, so to **actually** worship one means to worship the other. 2) Vrtasura was a demon; so was Prahlada; both are worshipers of Narada, the resident of Vaikuntha.

TRI KALA JNA

Question from Varadaraja das

July 1, 1996

Today at the sundayfeast one Krishna's friend, asked me a question about an experience that he had (When he had taken LSD). He had experienced that he suddenly would know what was going to take place. He would know what the next person would say, and so on... He wanted to know if all, was already predestined ? And if so.. Is it possible to change, what is going to happen ? After his story, then I was really thinking... Was this LSD experience, some perverted reflection of the mystic power Tri Kala jana.?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 1, 1996

Give me a break. Even old gypsy ladies reading tealeaves sometimes predict the future correctly. Does this mean they are tri-kala-jnana? Sometimes an astrologer predicts a future event correctly. Sometimes karmi stock market analysts accurately predict business trends. Sometimes people who have no special power or ability or knowledge have a dream of some event that comes true. There are well-known incidents of ordinary people who saw plane crashes and other catastrophes in the future. This is all just karma. Tri-kala-jnana is transcendental.

Hippies never give up the idea that there is something about LSD that is spiritual
. . . .

BRAHMAN REALIZATION

Question from Bhaktin Kasia

July 14, 1996

In brahman liberation there is no existence of the individual soul, but this is not eternal liberation (because of the desires of the person who is liberated). Where does the desires come from? How does the brahman liberation look like? Is brahman

realisation a destruction of the soul (because it's merging into the absolute)? But at the same time the soul is said to be sat?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 14, 1996

>>In brahman liberation there is no existence of the individual soul<<.

If by this statement you mean that the Brahman-realized soul does not exist as an individual, you have the wrong idea. The soul's individual existence is never lost, not even in Brahman. In the Brahmajyoti, the soul loses its *sense* of individuality, the same way you lose your sense of vision when an intensely bright light suddenly shines out of the darkness directly into your eyes. That's what the Brahman realization looks like--an endless, brilliant, and all-consuming light, into which the soul loses itself.

Desires come from the soul, because the soul is part and parcel of Krsna, who is the origin of all desire.

Brahman realization does not destroy the soul. The soul cannot be created nor destroyed. It is eternal, that is why it is called sat. But the soul's consciousness is affected differently in different situations. When in maya, the soul thinks "I am a material individual." When in Brahman, the soul only thinks "I am." What is lost is the material conception of being. But in Brahman the positive spiritual conception of being is not fully gained. Thus the soul is bewildered by impersonalism.

SITUATED WITHIN THE HEART

Question from Bhagadatta das

July 20, 1996

In the second sentence of the purport to text 276 Chapter 20 of C.C.Madhya-lila it is stated,"The mahat-tattva is situated within the heart..." Can you explain in whose heart is the mahat-tattva situated?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 21, 1996

The mahat-tattva is situated in the Lord's heart, and in the heart of every living being.

Your question gives me this opportunity to make the first advertisement of my book, *Substance and Shadow*, due for release in September. Chapter Three gives a complete answer to your question. SAS will cost 15 USD, or DM 22. It is published by Govinda Verlag. Further inquiries should be made to the COM account of Raja Vidya (HKS), the manager of GV.

More information about SAS will follow in a future announcement here.

PASTIMES

Question from Bhagadatta das

July 20, 1996

I found the following statement: "They are false in the sense that this pastimes are not eternal, nor are they transcendental or spiritual." I always thought that all of Krsna's pastimes and anything in connection to Him is spiritual. Could you clear out, how is it that the Lord has pastimes which are not transcendental? Are these pastimes in any way tinged with material contamination?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 21, 1996

This quotation is from CC Madhya-lila Chapter Twenty-three, Text 117-118, purport. Srila Prabhupada makes clear in the purport the reason for this statement. He is referring only to certain narrations from Mahabharata. You are wrongly understanding him to mean that the pastimes themselves are mundane, when in fact it is the narration (or the mode of presentation) in the MB which is mundane, for the purpose of bewildering the demons.

ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR „Substance & Shadow“

By Suhotra Swami

July 24, 1996

From the back cover:

"Veda means knowledge--certain knowledge. This book challenges the reader to review, in the light of Vedic knowledge, the perennial questions of life: does the world within the reach of our mind and senses really exist? Is there something beyond this world? What is truth and what is illusion? What is the meaning of meaning?"

In clear, penetrating language, Suhotra Swami takes the reader on a thoughtful and often humorous walk across the Vedic *setu*, the bridge leading from doubt to certainty, darkness to light, shadow to substance. The view from the bridge encompasses ancient India and Greece, modern science, the paradoxes of philosophy, and, finally, the answer to the question `why?'

An elaborate glossary features more than 200 entries of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and English philosophical terms. Both the scholar and the general reader will find *Substance and Shadow--The Vedic Method of Knowledge* illuminating."

Hardbound, over 300 pages long, SAS will cost \$18.00 USD. Target time for publication--end of September, 1996.

More announcements, with more details, will follow as the publication date nears.

CONTROLLING DEITIES

Question from Mukhya dd

July 24, 1996

Who are the deities that offer prayers to the Lord in the Third Canto, Chapter 5? In verse 38 they are called empowered expansions of Lord Visnu and verse 48 suggests that they are created by the Lord Himself. Are they among the 33 million demigods who are managing the universe or do they belong to another category?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 24, 1996

The expansions of the Lord referred to are the prototype demigods. They assist the Lord in His pastimes of creation by empowering jivas within the creation to be demigods. For instance, Hiranyagarbha is the prototype Brahma. Caturmukha (4-headed) Brahma is a jiva empowered by that Brahma, who is a feature of Mahavisnu.

THE SEVEN TALAS

Question from Mukhya dd

July 24, 1996

I wonder what are the seven talas that constitute the bila-svarga. In Chapter 24 of the Fift Canto they are described as both planets and planetary systems and in "Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy" they are compared to discs lying under bhu-mandala and parallel to it.

Is it that each tala consists of a couple of planets in the same way as the earthly region consists of many earthly planets? Or are they seven separate planets?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 24, 1996

My, my, what a question. Jules Verne wrote of a passage to the underworld through the crater of the Snaefelsness volcano in Iceland. If you find that passage, you could see the seven talas for yourself. But if that is too much, then be satisfied that the form of this universe is something most wonderful indeed.

SVAYAMBHUVA'S PARENT

Question from Kasya das

July 27, 1996

SB.12.12.11

"...the appearance of Svayambhuva Manu from the half-man, half-women Isvara."

Please, clear up the description of the parent of Svayambhuva Manu. As far I know, Brahma is his father.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 28, 1996

I don't know the answer to this one. "Half-man, half-woman Isvara" would appear to be a reference to a form Lord Siva sometimes displays. Siva is known as Isvara. But I don't know of any sastric reference to Svayambhuva Manu's appearance from Siva. Creation reoccurs with every new day of Brahma, so this might happen on occasion--however, to my knowledge it is not confirmed in sastra. But this could be a reference to a description in the Matsya Purana, where it is said that Satarupa (a daughter of Brahma) appeared from half of Brahma's body. She was extremely beautiful, and so Brahma felt an inappropriate attraction to her. He stood tranfixied by her lovely form. She was embarrassed, so she moved to one side, but on that side another head appeared on Brahma's shoulders. She moved again to get out of the gaze of that head, but a third and then a fourth head appeared.

Finally Brahma could control his desires. At that moment a son appeared from his body, named Svayambhuva Manu.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

July 28, 1996

You answered:

>"Half-man, half-woman Isvara" would appear to be a reference to a form Lord
>Siva sometimes displays. Siva is known as Isvara.

Is the form you speak of known as Ardha-nari or is it a different form?

And one more question about the sequence of creation:

SB 2.5.22 reads:

"After the incarnation of the first purusa [Karanarnavasayi Visnu], the mahat-tattva, or the principles of material creation, take place, and then time is manifested, and in course of time the three qualities appear. Nature means the three qualitative appearances. They transform into activities."

This seems to be a different sequence of creation than generally known (pradhana turns into mahat-tattva by the influence of time in the form of Lord's glance). How to understand it? Does "mahat-tattva" means "pradhana" here, or?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

July 28, 1996

Yes.

Perhaps.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

July 1, 1996

Perhaps means, in one place Srila Prabhupada states that Brahman, pradhana and mahat-tattva are different, and in another he says they are the same. In these days I have no time for philosophical hair-splitting.

BHEDA OR ABHEDA?

Question from Madana Mohana das

August 1, 1996

In CC Madhya-lila 6.163 Lord Caitanya says to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya:

"Yet you [Sarvabhauma] say that the living entity is completely different from the Lord."

Though the impersonal Bhattacarya's rendering of Vedanta-sutra is not given in Caitanya Caritamrta, it seems that he should have stated, advocating Sariraka-

bhasya, just the opposite - that jiva and Bhagavan are one and the same rather than completely different. Why did the Lord say so?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 1, 1996

In verse 162, Lord Caitanya tells Sarvabhauma, **kaha ta abheda**, "you say the living entities are one and the same with the Lord."

And as you point out, in 163 He tells Sarvabhauma **jiva bheda kara isvara sane**, "you make the living entity different from **isvara.**"

Mayavadi philosophy says the only truth is God. Hence, the essence of our individual self is God: "all is One." The conception of my self as a individual distinct from God and all other living beings is not real.

Verse 162 refers to the supposed essential self of each living entity--that self in which all selves are One. Verse 163 refers to the supposed distinct, separated self by which I think I am different from you. That self is illusion, **maya.** Therefore it is different from God.

There is no point in trying to understand this, because it is incomprehensible. Lord Caitanya is pointing out to Sarvabhauma that he is whistling and sucking sugar cane at the same time; or, to use another colorful phrase, he is talking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time.

DEVOTEES AND DEVATAS

Question from Madana Mohana das

August 1, 1996

Would you mind clarifying what is the root and origins of the word "devotee"? It seems suspiciously alike "devata" or "deva". Do they really have any linkage from linguistic point of view, besides the philosophical one?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 1, 1996

Words like devotee, devotion, devote belong to the "votal" family (e.g. votary, votive, vote, vow). All these words are cognates of the Latin **vovere**, "to make a vow." This family of English words is therefore to be traced not to the Sanskrit **deva** but to **vrata** (vow).

SPIRITUAL WORLD CREATED

Question from Bhagadatta das

August 1, 1996

The C.C.Madhya lila 20.255 states:

"Lord Sankarsana is Lord Balarama. Being the predominator of the creative energy, He creates both the material and the spiritual worlds."

How is it that the spiritual world is being created?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 2, 1996

"We have marked in the previous verse that He creates and again winds up the creation. This action is applicable only in the material world because the other, greater part of His creation, namely the Vaikuntha world, is neither created nor annihilated; otherwise the Vaikuntha-dhama would not have been called eternal. The Lord exists with dhama; His eternal name, quality, pastimes, entourage and personality are all a display of His different energies and expansions. The Lord is called anadi, or having no creator, and adi, or the origin of all. We think in our own imperfect way that the Lord is also created, but the Vedanta informs us that He is not created. Rather, everything else is created by Him (narayanah paro 'vyaktat). Therefore, for the common man these are all very wonderful matters for consideration."

(SB 2.4.8, purport)

Krsna is the source of everything. Because the spiritual world emanates from him, it is also termed here a creation. But it is not created, as Prabhupada clearly states. It is eternal, yet dependent upon the Lord, who is the source of everything.

Comment by Bhakta Dragan Juric

August 8, 1996

*>Krsna is the source of everything. Because the spiritual world
>emanates from him, it is also termed here a creation. But it is not
>created, as Prabhupada clearly states. It is eternal, yet dependent
>upon the Lord, who is the source of everything.*

Can you please explain the meaning of the word "emanates" as it is used here? I saw and heard several explanation from several persons, regarding creation/emanation of jivas & spiritual world, and they all say that although jivas/s.w. are not created (there are innumerable proofs in the sastra for this), they are emanated from Krishna. But it is not clear to me what does it mean, if it is not creation?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 8, 1996

Krsna is eternal. The jiva begins in Krsna. Therefore the jiva is eternal. Material nature is also eternal. It begins in Krsna, who is eternal.

MENTAL TRANSFORMATION

Question from Bhaktin Lisa

August 2, 1996

I was reading in SB 11.11.9. The purport contains a statement from Srila Visvanatha Cakravati Thakura "One who claims to be transc. to the bodily concept of life, but at the same time remains under the influence of mat.desire & mental transformation, is understood to be a cheater & the lowest type of conditioned soul." What exactly is meant by "mental transformation" ?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 2, 1996

Without going to that purport and checking it and the verse, mental transformation is what is meant by the term **mano-vrtti**, which is found in several places. **Mano-vrtti** refers to the egoistic functions of a mind focused upon sense objects: thinking, feeling, willing.

AQUARIAN GOSPEL

Question from Mahendra das

August 2, 1996

I read in "Siksamrita", p. 1759 : "At least there is recorded history 2000 years old, because we see in Aquarian gospel that Lord Jesus Christ was attending the Ratha-yatra festival at Puri.." (SPL to Jadurani, 4th January, 1973). Do you have more information about that and what is that gospel?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 2, 1996

With the appearance of the hippie movement in the United States during the 1960's, esoteric books like the Aquarian Gospel became popular. The Aquarian Gospel is a book that was "channeled" by a "sensitive" during the heyday of the Spiritualist movement, which began in the States during the mid-1800's and faded out in the early 1900's. It is one among many such books of that period; another was The Gospel of the Holy Twelve.

Prabhupada did not really impute authority to the Aquarian Gospel. He cited it for convenience's sake, since his audience in America accepted it. The AG does in part correspond to the account of Isa, a sage of the west who came to India, which is given in the Bhavisya Purana. I cited the Bhavisya Purana in this regard in a text sent to Danda quite some time ago. Isa seems to be the same Iseous, or Jesus.

FOLLOWING CATURMASYA

Question from Kamalavati dd

August 3, 1996

The devotees in A'dam are not quite sure if we have to follow the Caturmasya fast from shak and green leafly vegetables. Guru Maharaja, could you please instruct us on this point?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 3, 1996

Following Caturmasya does not have a mandatory responsibility attached to it, as does following Ekadasi. It is auspicious to do it.

BRAHMA SAMHITA

Question from Madana Mohana das

August 5, 1996

In CC Madhya 8.137 Srila Ramananda Raya quoted Brahma Samhita 5.1 seemingly before it was discovered by Lord Caitanya Himself during His tour around holy places. Had his quotation been taken from some other source?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 5, 1996

Caitanya-caritamrta was written by Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami after the disappearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In his composition of the text, he included quotations from scriptures that were known or even written (like Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu) later than the time of the pastimes of the Lord that he described. He did this because he wrote CC not only as a lila-katha but also as an exposition of Gaudiya Vaisnava philosophy.

QUESTIONS

Questions from Bhaktin Lisa

August 7, 1996

1. In SB 11.11.17 the txt describes how a lib. sage is detached in all material circumstances,takes pleasure in self realisation and should wander about engaged in this liberated life-style, appearing like a retarded person to outsiders.

The purp describes how this sort of discipline is recommended for the jnana-yogis. When I was reading this, I was thinking of the story of Jad Bharata who also appeared to others like a retarded person (jada- vat). I didn't get the impression that he was a jnana-yogi but he followed this (or a similar) type of discipline. What was his position then?

2. How is it that one can become liberated without taking shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

3. As Srila Prabhupada has left his disciples & grand disciples with his many books, lectures & letters etc, we cannot really be bereft of his association, even though he is no longer within our material vision. He is with us in that form and as such, one can have his darshan daily. What then of those of us who have Spiritual Masters who will leave their bodies in the future? Sure we may have an instruction, but unless they are like Satsvarupa Maharaja, how will we be able to have *their* association? How will we be able to deal/cope otherwise with such separation?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 9, 1996

1. Jada-bharata was a pure devotee who adopted the method of jada-yoga. Kardama Muni was a pure devotee who adopted the method of mystic yoga. Any system of yoga can be used in devotional service. That is confirmed in Bhagavad-gita.

2. Brahman is the impersonal feature of the SPOG. Getting merged into Brahman is only possible by His grace.

3. This question is unintelligible.

QUESTIONS #2

Questions from Bhaktin Lisa
August 7, 1996

1. We recently discussed in an ista gosthi about the fact that some devotees are offering during SP guru puja flowers to him & then taking those flowers from SP's lotus feet & offering them to a picture of the SM, after which they pay their obeisances. Most of us thought that this seemed improper since worship of the Guru should be done outside the temple room (not in front of deities etc). What is the accepted standard?

2. Catur masya has come around once more & so has the controversial issue of what exactly is considered sak (green leafy vegetables)? In my short time in the movement & being in different temples, the standard (& mass confusion) differs. I remember being first told that sak was spinach/ silverbeet (or a vegetable very similar which is found in India). This meant that lettuce was acceptable to eat. Most of the authorities I knew accepted this but still amongst the cooks & other devotees in the temple it seems unclear.

As cooking is part of my service, it would be nice hear a clear & firm statement on this matter that all the devotees will accept & which is standard all over ISKCON.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 9, 1996

1. Sounds like Prabhupada guru-puja plus Vaisnava-seva to me. There is no rule against serving a Vaisnava in the temple room.

2. If you want to follow Caturmasya strictly, then eat only havisyanna (see Krsna Book ch. 22). Once a day, in a dark room, place a plate of havisyanna on the floor behind your back. Reaching around your back, take one handful after another of havisyanna in your hand and eat. If you are interrupted--for instance if someone asks you a question and you stop eating to hear them and answer--then you may not continue eating after that moment for the rest of the day. In any case, you may eat only one plate a day.

This business of arguing over which type of leaf is really a spinach, while at the same time eating nice yummy-yummies during Caturmasya (renouncing only milk, yoghurt, spinach and urad dahl during the appropriate months), is goofiness that one will only see in ISKCON.

According to Bhaktividyapurna Maharaja, *sak* is a loose term that can include types of leafy vegetables that in the West would not be classified as spinach (*sak* is usually translated into English as spinach). In Bengal, leafy veggies are considered opulent. In the West, lettuce is considered pretty commonplace, but spinach is opulent because it is very nutritious. The real point in giving up spinach, yoghurt, milk and urad dahl is not that there is some occult quality in the material constitution of these things that we must avoid during a particular month. The real point is austerity. It is off track to think that you are fulfilling caturmasya-vrata by shunning even the thoughtless chewing of a blade of grass during the no *sak* month, while at the same time enjoying many other varieties of tasty things.

RADHARANI'S EYES

*Question from Kamalavati dd
August 9, 1996*

According to this verse (from CC Antya-lila 1.169) "The beauty of Srimati Radharani's eyes forcibly devours the beauty of newly grown blue lotus flowers". Does it mean that Srimati Radharani has blue eyes?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 9, 1996

The blue lotus is a poetic symbol of beauty. Something that rivals the blue lotus in beauty need not be blue. It need be more beautiful.

TWO QUESTIONS

*Question from Kamalavati dd
August 11, 1996*

1. In the purport of CC ML 1.336 SP lists the offences we have to avoid. The 26th offence is "to offer obeisances to others before the Deity". I was wondering if we can offer obeisances:

- a) to the spiritual master before the Deity?
- b) to sanyasis when we see them for the first time for the day dutiny Managala-arati?

2. "Dear Lord, let us inform you that no one is more sinful than us, nor there is any offender like us. Even if we wanted to mention our sinful activities, we would immediately become ashamed. And what to speak of giving them up", CC ML 1.190 Guru Maharaja, could you please comment on the meaning of the last sentence.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 12, 1996

1. During Srila Prabhupada gurupuja, the curtain of the Deity altar is closed. During Tulasi-puja, the curtain of the Deity altar is closed. This is what it means.

2. Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis presented themselves as being more fallen than Jagai and Madhai. The differences they saw between themselves and J&M is pointed out in verse 193. Because R&S were engaged in the service of low-class persons (the Muslim government), they saw no opportunity to renounce that sinful service. Indeed, Sanatana Gosvami later had so much difficulty getting free from the house arrest that Nawab Hussein Shah placed upon him.

TRANSCENDENTAL FORM

*Question from Bhagadatta das
August 15, 1996*

What actually means to understand the Lord's transcendental form?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 16, 1996

Worship the Deity.

THE POLESTAR

Question from Bhagadatta das

August 15, 1996

In SB.4.9.21p. Srila Prabhupada writes as follows, "Although the polestar existed before its occupation by Druva Maharaja, it had no predominating deity." Yet in the purport to text 25 of the same chapter SP states, "Therefore Druvaloka, or the polestar, is the abode of Lord Visnu within this material world." Was not the Supreme Lord Visnu Himself the predominating deity of the polestar before Druva Maharaja was promoted there?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 16, 1996

Quite a while ago I answered some questions Bhagavat dharma made about the Pole star. Your question seems very similar to the one(s) he asked.

Regarding the presiding deity, what to speak of the Pole star, Lord Krsna is the presiding Deity of every planet (sarva-loka-mahesvaram). In the upper planets, "deputy" presiding deities rule as the Lord's representatives. Like Indra in Indraloka. Dhruva was made the deputy presiding deity of Dhruvaloka.

HOW TO READ SRILA PRABHUPADA'S BOOKS

Question from Gaura Vighraha dd

August 22, 1996

In Bulgaria most of the devotees, even those who hardly know English, are reading Srila Prabhupada's books in English (I have no idea how they are doing it), not in Bulgarian. I was told that this is your instruction, that one should read the books in English.

After such reading, when they start speaking one can easily notice that due to insufficient knowledge of the language they have misunderstood some points.

Could you please explain why it is better for the devotees to read SP books in English and not in their native language? Do you mean all devotees or some devotees, all languages or some languages?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 23, 1996

It seems everything that goes on in Bulgaria is justified by the devotees as being "my instruction." I never said everyone should read the English books, especially if they don't know English.

I do know that devotees who are bilingual, proficient in their native tongue plus English, often prefer to read the books in English. They tell me that they feel closer to Prabhupada that way.

But that is what *they* say, not what Suhotra Swami says.

About this subject, I've never had much to say at all.

Comment by Mahendra das

August 27, 1996

In this connection I'd like to ask you if it is not more correct, when there is a quote from devotees, to be mentioned also who are these devotees? Otherwise "devotees say" is like "they say". And this may lead to the wrong conclusion that the quoted subject is a common view. Now in the case about your "instruction" for reading I've never heard such a thing from you neither I've heard any devotee quoting you in that way. And in general I don't remember a case in which the whole temple has concocted and accepted false statements. Whenever there were speculations or misunderstanding only one or a few were the producers. So instead of creating bad name for an yatra by saying: "devotees there(here) say...", is n't it better to just quote: "Such and such dasa (dasi) told me that you've instructed..?"

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 27, 1996

Please keep these discussions out of this conference.

THE METHODOS OF VEDIC KNOWLEDGE BY SUHOTRA SWAMI

From Prof. Milo Minderbinder

August 23, 1996

Dear Prof. Swami Suhotra,

*Urgent subscription order for title: MVK = 1486 books
addrsd: >libraries, individual members SATIA, friends
prps: >academical, educational
cpr: >no resell intention, copyright respected,*

I've never encounter through my academical and social experience such a deep and impatient longing for a new coming title MVK. The atmosphere here is being already long ago permeated on any levels of interest.

Researchers, academics, students and individuals are awaiting and welcoming and are ready to recognise the unaloyed message of entrusted channell of descending nonfragmented knowledge.

I am sure Absolute Truth own means of deliverence.

*yours sincerely
Milo Minderbinder*

Announcement by Suhotra Swami for Substance & Shadow

August 24, 1996

In a few days, the filmed manuscript for *Substance and *Shadow* will be with the printer. As announced previously, the book will be delivered by the printer at the end of September.

Hardbound, over 300 pages, this is what the book contains:

PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

- Substance and category
- Living knowledge
- Five truths and three means
- Humble obeisances
- Notes

INTRODUCTION

- Doubt and certainty in Vedic philosophy
- Lucy in the land of Narnia
- The modern method of thought
- Self-evident authority
- Problems of self-referential logic
- I am not the mind
- Can we be certain about *sabda*?
- Notes

CHAPTER ONE: PERCEPTION (*Pratyaksa*)

- The false ego
- Real perception
- Illusory perception
- Presence and absence
- The uncertain foundation of empirical knowledge
- Phenomenalism
- The problem of reflexivity
- The correspondence theory of truth
- Tacit and explicit knowledge
- Corresponding to what?
- Perception and the mind
- Making Vedic sense of sense perception

CHAPTER TWO: REASON (*Anumana*)

- Logic
- Objective versus subjective logic
- Forms of reason
- Circular reasoning
- Reason, truth and speculation
- The use and limits of formal reason
- Logic and probability
- The deceptive universe
- Why?
- The logic of ignorance
- *Buddhi*, the faculty of discernment
- Reason is not infallible
- Rationalism as hypothetico-deduction
- Rationalism and scepticism
- The Vedic logic of design

Reason and scripture
The monistic tendency of rationalism
The rational false ego
The deduction of real happiness
Notes

CHAPTER THREE: VERBAL TESTIMONY (*Sabda*)

The *yoga* of spiritual sound
The sky in the lotus of the heart
Mythologies of "why"
Sabda as objective knowledge
Parampara: the link of hearts
Mystical is not the word
Beyond the duality of matter and spirit
The five stages of Vedic knowledge
The transmission of knowledge through sound
Where is the meaning of words?
The original sense of language
Notes

CHAPTER FOUR: A DISCUSSION ON THE MEANS TO KNOWLEDGE

In the order of their appearance, Dr. Visva Paraagdrishti (a scientist), Vedasaara daasa (a Bhakti-Vedantist), Khagaaksha (a religious rationalist), Vidyaaviruddha (an impersonal monist), and Svapnaraatri (a subjective idealist), will discuss some of the topics raised in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ETHICS OF SACRIFICE

Sacrificial ethics
The intention of creation
Ethical tension in the *Bhagavad-gita*
Lord Yajna's bridge
Questions and answers
From shadow to substance

GLOSSARY

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The cost will be 18 US Dollars (or 24 German Marks).

For information on wholesale or retail orders of *Substance and Shadow—The Vedic Method of Knowledge* by Suhotra Swami, kindly contact Rajavidya HKS through his COM account.

Comment by Rajavidya das

August 25, 1996

Dear philosophers,

The forthcoming philosophy book **Substance and Shadow--The Vedic Method of Knowledge** by Suhotra Swami costs 18 US Dollars or 26 German Marks (not 24; that was a mistake, sorry). It is hardbound and has 352 pages.

The book contains invaluable, revealing information on the Vedic and Western philosophy plus probably the largest glossary of philosophical terms that has ever been published in ISKCON (more than 300 entries, 90 pages).

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Your servant,
Raja Vidya Dasa

MAHABHARATA AND SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Question from Bhakta Ivar
August 25, 1996

During the class this morning one devotee was mentioning some events from the Mahabharata, and some details of one of the events differed from the Bhagavatam version. Does this mean that the version of the Mahabharata, which was written 'for women, laborers and friends of the twice-born' didn't really happen like it has been written in there, while the version of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, which is 'spotless' and 'most dear to the vaisnavas', is how the things really happened 5000 years ago?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
August 25, 1996

Yes. It is a question of angle of vision. Just like Srila Prabhupada writes that the Pandavas entered the spiritual world after their trek north (Prabhupada often said Arjuna went back to Godhead in his self-same body). Yet MB says the Pandavas went to svarga. If one is a sudra, then going to svarga in the self-same body is fascinating--as we know from the history of Trisanku, who got the same benediction from Visvamrta Muni (though it was foiled by Indra). Actually, that the Pandavas went to Svarga and Vaikuntha at the same time is not a contradiction. Svarga is the shadow of Vaikuntha. The shadow is automatically included along with the substance.

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

*Question from Bhagadatta das
August 30, 1996*

I met one purport in my reading of Bhagavatam, which I don't understand. I asked about it's meaning few devotees, and they also couldn't anderstand it. The text is as follows SB.4.12.19:

TRANSLATION

As soon as the symptoms of his liberation were manifest, he saw a very beautiful airplane coming down from the sky, as if the brilliant full moon were coming down, illuminating all the ten directions.

PURPORT

There are different levels of acquired knowledge—direct knowledge, knowledge received from authorities, transcendental knowledge, knowledge beyond the senses, and finally spiritual knowledge. When one surpasses the stage of acquiring knowledge by the descending process, he is immediately situated on the transcendental platform. Dhruva Maharaja, being liberated from the material concept of life, was situated in transcendental knowledge and could perceive the presence of a transcendental airplane which was as brilliant as the full moonlight. This is not possible in the stages of direct or indirect perception of knowledge. Such knowledge is a special favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One can, however, rise to this platform of knowledge by the gradual process of advancing in devotional service, or Krsna consciousness.

As far as my knowledge goes, there is that classification of acquired kowledge, namely - pratyaksa, anumana, and sabda. But this doesn't seem to be coresponding to the different levels discribed by Srila Prabhupada in the above purpopt.

So, my question is, what is this clasificated that Prabhupada is mentioning? And also is there any difference between spiritual knowledge, transcendental knowledge and knowledge beyond the senses?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
August 31, 1996

Chapter 3 of my forthcoming book, *Substance and Shadow*, is all about this. Read it when it comes out.

POSITION OF RADHARANI

*Question from Varadaraja das
September 15, 1996*

Here the other day, I was asked by one Bhakta. " What is the position of Radharani. Does she also know all, like Krsna does?." I felt unqualified to answer this question... So I would like to ask you, if you could kindly answer it for us.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
September 16, 1996

Srila Prabhupada said She is the feminine feature of God. Her knowledge is all-pervading, just like Krsna's.

ONE OR TWO YAMARAJAS

*Question from Madana Mohana das
October 2, 1996*

There is a famous story of the Pandavas who, being thirsty, desired to drink from a lake without a permission of its proprietor. After four of them evidently died, Maharaja Yudhishthira spoke to the unembodied voice who later turned out to be his father, Yamaraja.

But how was it possible for Yamaraja to speak to his son if he had been long before taken birth as Vidura? One may object that Yamaraja, being incredibly powerful, practically omnipresent, could be simultaneously in the body of Vidura and above the lake, but it was specifically mentioned in the Bhagavatam that he had left Aryama as his deputy to take over his office while playing a role of Vidura. So who in this case was the actual father of Yudhishthira - Yamaraja or Aryama? Or Vidura?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 2, 1996

Simple answer is that Yamaraja himself is a deputy of Paramatma. All the big demigods are empowered by Visnu to do His work. So Yamaraja "das" may leave his post to act as Vidura, but Yamaraja "Himself" is always noting the sins of the living entities and passing judgement.

QUESTIONS

*Question from Vrajendra Kumara das
October 3, 1996*

Your Holiness, can you please answer the following questions:

- 1. Is there any sastraic reference saying that the sign of vaisnava tilak is a symbolic representation of Krsna's footprint and Tulsi leaf or is it a speculative statement?*
- 2. Some devotees insist that they heard in someone's lecture a statement that matter is actually compressed unconscious jivas. Are there any sastraic references in this regard also?*
- 3. Is the effulgence of impersonal brahman also jivas or just light mixed with some jivas who got impersonal liberation?*
- 4. Why Krsna came in the end of Dwapara yuga instead of in the beginning and did he actually function as Yuga avatara at all? Did he introduce the process of Deity Worship as Yuga Dharma or someone else did it?*
- 5. Is there any CLEAR explanation why Treta and Dwapara yugas changed their order in our Divya Yuga?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 6, 1996

1. Amaraprabhu das in Berlin has a book all about Vaisnava tilak in the different sampradayas. You can consult with him about this.
2. Technically that statement may be misunderstood. In a lecture Srila Prabhupada said that *jiva-bhuta* means the living entity in the bodily concept of life. But the souls referred to in that lecture are technically not in any bodily concept; they are *suksma*, or unmanifested--totally covered by the mode of ignorance, neither classified as moving nor even nonmoving living beings. See Cc Antya 3.78-79 and 80p.
3. Material light is made up of tiny particles which the scientists call photons. Similarly the brahmajyoti--which means light of Brahman, Brahman meaning God--is made up of tiny particles called jivas.
4. The dharma of the previous age, Treta, is yajna. On two occasions--during the yajna of the ritualistic brahmanas and the yajna to Indra of the residents of Vrndavana--Krsna specifically directed the offerings to be made to Him (in the latter case, it was to His form as Govardhana Hill, which is a Deity incarnation of the Lord).
5. It happened because of a benediction given by Gautama Rsi to his wife Ahalya. In the Satya-yuga he cursed her to become a stone until she would be delivered by Lord Ramacandra. This was because she unwittingly allowed herself to be seduced by Indra. She pleaded with her husband that the curse was too long in duration, since Indra tricked her by assuming the form of Gautama. Had she known it was Indra and not her husband, she would have never submitted to his advances. To show her consideration, Gautama Rsi reversed the order of Dvapara Yuga and Treta Yuga. Thus Lord Rama appeared much sooner than normal (He appears in the Treta Yuga which normally follows the Dvapara Yuga). And so Ahalya was returned to her normal form after much less duration as a stone.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

October 6, 1996

Clarification on point 4: "The dharma of the previous age, Treta" refers to the age previous to Lord Krsna's appearance in the Dvapara-yuga. In His role as the yuga-avatara of Dvapara, the Lord brought dharma up to date by establishing direct worship of His own form as the Deity. The two instances I mentioned are examples of how He did this.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION

Question from Vrajendra Kumara das
October 9, 1996

*Thank you for clear answers but still I'd like you if possible to further clarify that question about *suksma* (unmanifested jivas). When we preach basically we say that there are conscious spirit and unconscious matter on the basis of B.G.7.4-5.*

But in some places Srila Prabhupada states that matter is simply spirit which is not engaged in Krsna's service. Naturally such statements give rise to the questions I've asked you in previous letter i.e. "Does matter consist of compressed unconscious jivas that are just being used as a building material for the bodies of other jivas with developed consciousness?" On one hand we vividly divide matter and spirit and on the other hand we say that because Krsna is the Supreme Spirit, everything that comes from Him is also spiritual by nature. Does that mean that matter is originally spirit i.e. conscious being and when his consciousness is completely covered over by tamo-guna it turns into matter i.e. unconscious substance? Once I heard one analogy in this regard but I'm not sure if it is fully applicable here. It goes: The steam can be condensed into water and water further can turn into ice which is quite different from the original steam although it is the same thing in gas, liquid and solid state. And then by the heating process the ice can be gradually turned again into steam. In a similar way spirit can be turned into matter and be used by other jivas. And then again original state of consciousness can be revived from matter by the spiritual process. Is it a speculative understanding and analogy or correct?

2. When we list 9 processes of devotional service one of them sounds like to serve Krsna as a friend (sakhyam). Does it refer to developing sakhya-rasa and if so why only this rasa is stressed? Or may be it means to develop friendly disposition, attitude, approach to Krsna. Arjuna is given as an example of person who became perfect by this process. Please explain.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 9, 1996

The steam-water-ice analogy seems OK to me.

Sakhyam and Atma-nivedanam are classified by acaryas (including Srila Prabhupada, in at least one place I recall) as being processes in the advanced (raga-bhakti) stage of devotional service. Sakhyam as a devotional process is not, however, precisely equivalent to the sakhya-rasa of the Lord's cowherd boy friends in the spiritual world.

PRSNĪ OR PRSNĪGARBHĀ

Question from Madana Mohana das

October 4, 1996

1) In SB 10.8.50 purp. Srila Prabhupada compares the respective positions of Nanda Maharaja nad Yasoda to that of Sutapa and Prsna. But Prsni in this particular case is somehow called Prsnagarbha that used to be the name of her son, Lord Krsna in Hir former incarnations ("born from Prsni's womb"). Is Prsnigarbha also a name for Mother Prsni?

2) Why did Lord Krsna obediently stand by the mortar and waited when His mother would bring another rope to bind Him. Why did not He just flee and why mother Yasoda was so sure He would not run away while she was looping for ropes, letting her mischievous son just stand free? [I beg your pardon if I poke my nose in where I should not have done]

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 6, 1996

1) As we can see from SB 1.12.7 and other places, garbha means womb. But in 3.7.27 it means embryonic. Thus Prsnigarbha may mean the womb of Prsni, or it may mean the embryo within the womb of Prsni. In the first sense, it would refer to the mother. In the second, to the son.

2) This is a question you should ask Krsna.

PROMOTED FROM THE BRAHMAJYOTI

*Question from Bhagadatta das
October 10, 1996*

Could you comment on the following statement from the the purport to SB.4.23.15?

There is, however, a small chance of being promoted to a spiritual planet from the Brahman effulgence, or the brahmajyoti.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
October 10, 1996

Sometimes it happens, as in the case of Aghasura.

KALIYA: TEN HOODS PER HEAD

*Question from Madana Mohana das
October 10, 1996*

*In Srimad Bhagavatam 10.16.28 describing Lord Krsna's pastime of chastising the serpent Kaliya it is said that Kaliya had *sata-eka-sirsnah* - 101 [prominent] heads (though a word "prominent" is used as an adjective, the verse does not say that the serpent had any less prominent heads besides the 101). But just two verses later, in 10.16.30 it is stated that "...Lord Krsna's wonderful, powerful dancing trampled and broke all of Kaliya's one thousand hoods" (*phana-sahasrah*).*

Could you please clarify this point.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
October 10, 1996

I haven't understood what your problem is. Are you insisting that 101 "prominent" heads means exactly 101 heads in toto, and therefore the later enumeration of 1000 heads is a contradiction? But why must you insist like that (if that is indeed your point). Einstein said, "As far as the laws of methematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality." I've given that quote just to show that even according to one of the most famous scientists of the 20th century, our attempts to understand things numerically do not provide us a solid basis for determining the reality of a thing. Mathematics is anumana, and anumana is subordinate to sabda. Sabda says 101 prominent heads, and 1000 heads in all. Again, why do you have a problem with this?

Comment by Madana Mohana das

October 11, 1996

Yes, being not a native English speaker, I could not grasp the exact meaning of the expression "101 prominent head". Does it unambiguously mean that Kaliya had 101 prominent heads and 899 less prominent to sum up for 1000, or it means that he had just 101 heads and they all were prominent? The question arises because in SB 10.16.28 it does not say that he had any additional heads, nor that the 101 heads mentioned were somewhat special: "sata-eka-sirsnah" .

Sorry for getting so much into this pointless counting. I am not confused with this apparent contradiction and do not want to apply mathematics were it becomes not only vague, but completely useless. Rather I thought that maybe there was a sort of explanation by acaryas or some other devotees, as it is the case in such seemingly intricate places in Bhagavatam.

There is another question, maybe similarly shallow, but interesting nevertheless. In SB 10.13.7 it is stated that the cowherd boys "arudhya" - tied their calves to the trees, allowing them to eat grass. But then the calves themselves went and got lost in the forest - "vatsas tv antar-vane duram" - thus somehow having got loose all at once (there were millions of them - asankhyataih). Does it mean that Lord Brahma not only stole the calves, but also dared to untie them from the trees by his mystic power in everybody's eyesight?

Hoping I do not disturb you with my questions too much.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 11, 1996

I will pass over commenting on the first part of your text. I still cannot see what problem you have with these figures.

The second point, about how the cows wandered away even though they were tied up, shouldn't invite unfounded speculation. We don't know if Lord Brahma arranged for the untying of the ropes, or if Lord Krsna did it, or if something else happened. Ultimately, it *is* Krsna's arrangement—though whether directly or indirectly is not stated. We can only accept what is presented in sastra. Speculative scenarios of what Brahma might have done are not required.

PREMADHVANI PRAYERS

Question from Vrajendra Kumara das

October 12, 1996

Can you please explain what is the meaning of **astottara sata** 108 in the title of great acaryas? And what the very word **Prema-dhvani** means?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1996

108 is traditionally an auspicious number in Vedic culture: 108 leading gopis, 108 beads on the japa-mala, 108 Upanisads, and so on.

Prema-dhvani literally means "the sound of ecstatic love." (Prema=ecstatic love i.e. love beyond the bodily platform, and dhvani=sound, vibration.)

PARAMATMA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
October 12, 1996*

It is described that the mystic yogis if they sufficiently purify themselves may approach the Paramatma. It is also described that those one the platform of Brahman realisation are followers of the Jnana kanda section of the vedas. So what about those who are one the level of Paramatma realisation, is this also Jnana Kanda? And what about when they are actually practicing the process of mystic yoga prior to their realisation of Paramatma, is this Karma kanda?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1996

In Bhagavad-gita, Lord Krsna speaks of the beginning of mystic yoga to be work (karma), and the end to be cessation of work.

*In my own opinion, the realization of mystic yoga has more in common with the karma-kanda realization of the universe as the form of the Lord than the impersonal Brahman realization. This is borne out in the Bhagavatam 2nd canto chapter, *The Lord in the Heart.* Karma-kandiyas aspire to engage the material energies of the Lord that are managed by His parts and parcels, the demigods, in their own service. They share with the mystic yogis a conception of the universal form; they worship that form through ritualistic karma-kanda sacrifices. Actually, we find in Bhagavatam and in the Govinda-bhasya commentary of Vedanta-sutra that there are two paths of sacrifice, the pitriyana and the devayana. The first only goes as far as the Pitri-loka; it is followed by the very materialistic karmis. The second goes up to Brahmaloaka; Prabhupada writes that this "brahma-pantha" (path to Brahma) is taken by mystic yogis. These yogis then follow Brahma to Maha-Vishnu (the first of the purusa or paramatma expansions) at the time of cosmic devastation. So again, here we have a path whose beginning is work, and whose end is the cessation of work.*

Jnana-kanda is philosophical. It focuses on the self as different from matter. It negates all that is non-self. Thus its goal is the impersonal self, the spark of consciousness within the rays of Brahman.

SARASVATI

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
October 12, 1996*

What is the position of Sarasvati?

In the Srimad Bhagavatam Srila Prabhupada describes her as the goddess of learning, wife of lord Brahma and as having taken birth from the mouth of lord Brahma. But in the Brahma Samhita we see Srila Bhaktisiddhanta is presenting her as the consort of the Supreme Lord and practically in the position of the spiritual master of Brahma (verse 24).

This Supreme Lord that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta referring to is it Lord Brahma or are these the same Sarasvatis or are there two, one spiritual and one material? If the latter is the case does this apply to all the demigods or just the principal demigods, that there are spiritual and material forms of that personality.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 12, 1996

There is a spiritual Sarasvati who presides over transcendental knowledge. This is the Bhakti-devi, the consort of the Supreme Lord. The original form of Bhakti-devi is Srimati Radharani. The Sarasvati who is the consort of Brahma is the material reflection of the transcendental Sarasvati.

Sometimes it is asked how Draupadi can be Laxmi, yet be the husband of the Pandavas, who are not Visnu. The answer is that Draupadi is the Svarga-laxmi, the Laxmi of the material heaven; i.e. Saci-devi, the wife of Indra. The Pandavas are said to be 5 Indras in the Mahabharata. So anyway, this Svarga-laxmi is the material reflection of the spiritual Laxmi.

And similarly, so it is with Sarasvati.

SUPPORT UGRA KARMA FARMERS?

Question from Varadaraja das

October 13, 1996

We were discussing the other day about Vegans... They argue that, we can see in nature, that milk is only taken by the infant, and not when you're fully grown up etc... And there's also a class of them, who say that you should not take the milk from the farmer, because the farmer doesn't treat the cows good, and they'll kill them, when the cows doesn't give any more milk.

So I must admit for myself that, that I'm very attached to milk. And wouldn't like to give up drinking milk... But is it enough to say that we just Orfee the milk to Krishna... And then we will be freed from the bad karma.? Can we expect that Krishna will be pleased, with such an offering.? Or should we just completely stop drinking the milk, until we can take care of our own cows ?.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 13, 1996

Prabhupada said we should do the needful. To be in the mode of goodness, you must drink milk and take sugar. Back in the '60's and '70's, instead of vegans there were macrobiotics. They used to argue with devotees--not only about cow's milk (they said we should drink soya milk)--but also about white sugar. They said it was poison. Now it seems you don't hear this too much anymore, but back then it was a really big controversy with these people. Anyway, it may be true that the milk and sugar we get in the West is not pure, and that we should have more ISKCON farms so that we can offer pure milk and sugar to Krsna, but if we think that we should not take milk and sugar from shops even if there is no ISKCON produced milk and sugar, then we will bečime dull and dry and tamasic.

SPECIES

Question from Dharmasetu das

October 13, 1996

My question is: The fishes are mentioned in the Vedas as the lower species than plants according to the evolution of the consciousness of the jivatma. If it is so,

how is that fish can move through the water and in that way have more experience than the tree who are standing at one place so many years and in that way fish is more experienced than tree or some other plant?

Second, why is worse to eat fish (since fish is lower than vegetable) than any kind of plant, in the regard of karma that one gets eating the fish. Why some get karma, eating the fish, that is much worse than karma which some get eating the vegetables for example and it is also forbidden to eat fish?

I hope it is clear what's my point. Sorry if not.
Thanks in advance for your patience!

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 13, 1996

Somebody asked me this question already in Danda a long time ago. I am never enthusiastic to repeat myself. If you want to eat fish, go ahead. Probably best you get permission from your spiritual master first.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

October 14, 1996

With just a little application of common sense, the answers to questions like Dharmasetu's become obvious.

For the first one, think of the realm beneath the ocean as a world unto itself, with its own plant and animal species. The realm on the surface of the earth is another world, a higher world. There are realms beyond this one, in heaven. Is it so difficult to understand that just as birth in heaven--even if it is as a heavenly plant--is a higher birth than birth as a beast on earth, so birth upon the surface of the earth--even as a plant--is a higher birth than birth as an animal under the ocean?

By the logic of the second question, you may also ask why we can't eat onions, garlic, unfertilized chicken eggs, nice fat insect larvae, or the nutritious part of stool--which can be scientifically separated from the smelly part, so that you can spread in on bread.

The problem I see again and again is that devotees don't know how to think logically. There are basic types of logical forms, which I explain in my book **Substance and Shadow**. These are deductive, inductive and abductive (or retroductive) logic. Inductive logic is the logic of sense perception. It is termed in Sanskrit **laukika** or ordinary logic. One should simply remember that ordinary logic does not grant you the means to either understand nor challenge the deductive logic of the scriptures. Scriptural logic is a different mode of thought. Somebody recently asked me, "How do we know that there are 8,400,000 species of life?" The point of this question is that unless one can actually go out into the world and count 8,400,000 species, then it is not "sure" that there is actually this many forms of life. This way of **laukika** thinking is lame and hopeless from the start. I try to point out the basic inconsistencies of inductive logic in my book. It is useful only in very ordinary affairs--and even then, it is never certain. But then, as I've been hearing, when presented with this explanation, devotees often shrug their shoulders and say, "This is too difficult to understand." And thus they go on asking questions like, "How do we know that

there are 8,400,000 species if we can't count them? How do we know fish are inferior to land plants, when they look more developed to our senses?"

Yes, and how do you know that the sun is not a circle in the sky the size of a coin?

MORE ON YOGA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
October 15, 1996*

Thank you for taking the time to respond to my query.

I have some further inquiries regarding the position of the mystic yogis. Your answer still does not make its way through my dull intellect.

SB 3.25.29

There are different kinds of mystic yoga systems aiming for different phases of the Absolute Truth. The jnana-yoga system aims at the impersonal Brahman effulgence, and the hatha-yoga system aims at the localized personal aspect, the Paramatma feature of the Absolute Truth,

Cc Adi 2.26

TRANSLATION

Those who walk the paths of knowledge and yoga worship only Him, for it is Him they perceive as the impersonal Brahman and localized Paramatma.

Madhya 20.158

Those who are interested in the impersonal Brahman effulgence which is not different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can attain that goal by speculative knowledge. Those who are interested in practicing mystic yoga can attain the localized aspect of Paramatma. As stated in Bhagavad-gita, isvarah sarvah bhutanam hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati: the Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated within the heart as Param„tm„. He witnesses the activities of the living entities and gives them permission to act.

It seems to indicate the point of my original question that the mystic yogis can attain to the realisation of Paramatma. So there for I still do not understand whether this in Karma or jnana.

The information on Sarasvati was clear.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 16, 1996

Mystic yoga has aspects of both karma and jnana. But it is different from these two at the same time. Therefore often it is given its own category. As the Cc states, bhukti mukti siddhi kami sakala asanta: there are three kinds of pseudo-transcendentalists--the one after bhukti (heavenly enjoyment, i.e. the karma-yogi), the one after mukti (liberation, i.e. the jnana-yogi) and the one after siddhi (perfections, i.e. the mystic yogi). All have desires, therefore none is peaceful.

PLAYING CHESS

*Question from Madana Mohana das
October 19, 1996*

Is there any statement by Srila Prabhupada concerning playing chess by devotees? The question arises because some devotees I personally know consider the game to be helpful to stay in the mode of goodness or to relax or to purify one's consciousness of negative emotions etc. etc. They say this is alike swimming or wrestling Srila Prbhupada approved for vaisnavas to keep in a good physical shape, but for the mind. There is even a theory that such games are OK until we are pure devotees, as while we are impure devotees, there is no use trying to curb our nature in an artificial way instead of letting it out through proper outlets.

Could you please explain the proper attitude to this and other seemingly sattvik games and to this matter in general.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
October 20, 1996

Ksatriyas play chess. No authorization from Srila Prabhupada ever came for ISKCON devotees to play chess.

KRISHNA'S SMILE

*Question from Dharmasetu das
October 19, 1996*

In one of your lecture, you have said that Krsna's smile is actually a maya personally. So I wonder is there some confrontance betwen that statement and the well known statement that it is very auspicious to meditate on the Krsna's smiling face (and also His eyebrow) in order to overcome material lust.

Sorry if i have mistaken something!

Answer by Suhotra Swami
October 20, 1996

Don't misunderstand Krsna's smile as being maya. The right understanding is that the attractive power of maya comes from Krsna's smile. See SB 2.1.31. and Prabhupada's purport.

THE DEMIGOD OF SUNLIGHT

*Question from Dharmasetu das
October 21, 1996*

You have said in one lecture that after death soul are traveling through the one of the nadis (energy canal) and after that, at the end of the tunel, meets the demigod of Sunlight (I forgot his name). It is very interesting for me to know all the details because I never hear this before. Please forgive me if I am mistaken something!

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 21, 1996

This is correct, though there's more. The demigod of sunlight, named Arcisdeva, takes the soul to meet a higher demigod, who transfers him to an even higher demigod, on and on until the karmic destiny of the soul is fulfilled, up to Pitriloka (for karmis) or Brahmaloaka (for jnanis and yogis). This is indicated in several SB verses and explained elaborately by Baladeva Vidyabhusana in his Govinda Bhasya commentary on Vedanta-sutra. But take note--this process pertains to karmis and jnanis on the Vedic path. It does not pertain to pure devotees, who are brought to the Lord by the Visnudutas (example: Dhruva Maharaja), or by He Himself (example: Gajendra the elephant).

Comment by Labangalatika dd

October 21, 1996

Those who are outside of the vedic regulations, do they also transfer from one body to the next by this method?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 22, 1996

Obviously, sinful and faithless people go downward into lower species. This is taken care of by Yamaraja and his kinkaras, the Yamadutas.

People who sincerely follow a "non-Vedic" religion like Christianity are promoted to heaven or to liberation by the intercession of their powerful founder-acarya. In fact, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism *are* Vedic, in the sense that there really is a means of promoting the soul. A religion that is truly not Vedic has no "knowledge" (**veda**) at all. Something like the Rajneesh movement. Though his followers think he is an acarya, his teachings cannot promote anyone anywhere (to heaven, or to impersonal liberation, what to speak of Vaikuntha). That is because he teaches sinfulness and atheism in the guise of religious doctrine and practice.

Comment by Jahnu das

October 23, 1996

Some "followers" of Christ, are very averse to Krishna consciousness. Some even consider Krishna demoniac. Are they to be considered sincere followers of Christ?

Can any followers of the modern Christian churches be said to follow Christ? As I see it, these churches have completely corrupted the original teachings of Christ. Which church is in your opinion the most bona fide follower of Christ?

A pious Christian goes to heaven, you say. But how can he be pious without knowledge? I mean, they don't even know about the soul. They eat meat etc.

Will Jesus save them from this ignorance and promote them to heaven?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 23, 1996

Srila Prabhupada distinguished between Christianity and Churchianity. My previous remarks pertained to sincere followers of the founder-acaryas of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Whenever Prabhupada was directly asked whether one might become God conscious by following Jesus, Mohammed or Buddha, he said yes. But that is not the same thing as following modern church doctrine and practice.

A pious Christian goes to heaven by the grace of Jesus Christ. Bhakti Caru Maharaja tells a story of a prostitute who went to Vaikuntha because in her heart she regretted her sins even as she performed those sins.* (See note below) Every day she prayed to Krsna for forgiveness and salvation. Due to being born of a prostitute mother, she was raised as a prostitute. That was her culture. But still she had sincerity enough to regret her fallen condition and to depend upon the Lord for her deliverance. Prabhupada said the Christians eat meat because they are born into a meat-eating culture. Yet some Christians truly feel themselves sinful and fallen. They devote themselves to Jesus, depending upon him alone for their salvation. This is sincerity. Their process is not first-class. But it cannot be compared to completely nonsense "religions" like Rajneesh. No doubt, many so-called Christians *are* nonsense--especially those living in the big Western cities. They are not sincere; even in terms of their own religion, they are degraded. But there are still many sincere Christians, Moslems and Buddhists in villages in the Third World. Prabhupada even once had a dream of the heavenly planet where the Moslems go.

(Note)

*Srila Prabhupada, in remembering his boyhood in Calcutta, said it was usual for wealthy Bengali men of that time to openly keep beautiful prostitutes. The culture was such that it was a source of pride for the whole family when the man of the house maintained a well-known pretty girl "on the side." The wife would grandly tell her friends, "Oh, do you know such-and-such girl? My husband is keeping her." Hard to imagine the married women we know adopting such an attitude. On big festival days the girls would even come over to the house and dance for the family, and the family members would treat them like movie stars--important guests! Anyway, Prabhupada said these prostitutes were all devotees of Krsna, as were the gentlemen who kept them. He was reflecting on the difference between then and now. Now the Bengali gentlemen are atheists, Communists, sceptics. And who knows what the condition of the prostitutes is. Prabhupada's point was that though these men and their hired ladies were low-class devotees, it is Berger to be a low-class devotee than a nondevotee.

Comment by Jahnu das

October 23, 1996

Thank you, Maharaja, for your nice and compassionate answer. The philosophy of Krishna consciousness is truly all encompassing.

SUBSTANCE & SHADOW

Question from Adipurusa das

October 22, 1996

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada! Thank you very much for making this book, "Substance and shadow". I have just finished reading it (for the first time), and it has greatly inspired me. It makes one more appreciative of who Krishna is and who the spiritual master is, by showing what

transcendence is and how to approach it. It also gives a good categorization for the Western philosophies.

I will definitely try to study it more scrutinizingly. Thank you very much for this wonderful gift.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 26, 1996

Thank you, Adipurusa Prabhu, for your kind remarks about Substance and Shadow.

Anyone interested in translating SAS into Russian or another language is welcome provided you get permission from Raja Vidya das, the publisher. He is on COM.

I am preparing a second edition correction of SAS now. So all translators should contact me about these corrections, so that you may include them into your translation. It is not much of a change overall, but most are significant improvements to the text.

The second edition is to be published along with the sequel to SAS, entitled THE SECRET OF ALL SECRETS--WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PERSON? This will not be ready for at least one year.

QUESTIONS

Question from Kasya das

October 22, 1996

What is independend devotional service?

What is unauthorized devotional service?

What is reffered here as transcendental rituals?

"The living entity, while executing devotional service or transcendental rituals after many, many births, may actually become situated in transcendental pure knowledge that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate goal of spiritual realization." Bg.7.18 Purport

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 23, 1996

The term "independent devotional service" needs a context definition. Prabhupada uses the word independent both favorably and unfavorably. Favorably, it means the devotee is independent of everything material. Unfavorably, it means the so-called devotee is acting independently of the desire of guru and Krsna. The second case is unauthorized devotional service.

Transcendental rituals are the kind of sacrifices Lord Krsna speaks about in Bg 4.24.

CANAKYA PANDITA

*Question from Pavitravani das
October 24, 1996*

1. *If you can write something about Canakya Pandita or from where can you know him, because Prabhupada often quotes him?*
2. *What is ksatriya sanyasa?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 25, 1996

1. *Canakya, Prabhupada said, was a politician, not a devotee. So there is nothing of interest to write about him as a person. Prabhupada quoted CP because his aphorisms are drawn from Vedic knowledge.*
2. *You must be referring to ksetra-sannyasa, not ksatriya-sannyasa. Ksetra-sannyasa is when a devotee vows to remain in a holy place, renouncing forever any other place except this.*

TEN PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL LIFE

*Question from Malya-hari-kunda dd
October 27, 1996*

Dear Srila Suhotra Maharaja, today I asked this question in the evening-lecture to Manidhara Prabhu, and he thought that I should ask you. So I would be very thankful if you could. In the Bhagavad-gita chapter sixteen verse 1-3, just in the beginning of the purport it is stated: "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". So I just wonder which these ten principles are.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

October 27, 1996

I do not know exactly what the ten are, but they are pious karma-kanda duties. Srila Prabhupada mentions the ten duties in his purport to Bg 7.15; the ten are also mentioned in the purport to Brahma-samhita 5.44 as being associated with goddess Durga-devi.

But I haven't found a list of them. If you know a pious Hindu, ask him or her.

BAHUNAM JANMANAM ANTE

*Question from Punya Palaka das
October 30, 1996*

I would also like to express my appreciation of your book Substance & Shadow, although I've finished just the first two chapters - I'm amazed how expertly you present Krishna Consciousness in a way so close (in my humble opinion) to modern intellectual understanding! Thank you. It makes easier for me to accept for instance the descriptions of the universe in the 5th canto, and part myself with the "modern scientific" prejudices.

My question regards Bg. 7.19 purp. where Srila Prabhupada wrote:

"This verse is very nicely explained in the Third Chapter (verses 14 and 15) of the Svetasvatara Upanisad:

*sahasra-sirsa purusah sahasraksah sahasra-pat
sa bhumim visvato vrtva-tyatisthad dasangulam*

*purusa evedam sarvam yad bhutam yac ca bhavyam
utamrtatvasyesano yad annenatirohati"*

Would you agree to disclose what is hidden in these verses?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 1, 1996

Thanks for the appreciation of SAS.

I am starting to write a second book. Also I want to re-issue SAS later on, as this first printing was rushed. There are mistakes in it, unfortunately. I think that most people won't notice them, though.

Re those verses, these are hymns to the Purusa (Lord Garbhodakasayi Visnu and His universal form).

INTELLIGENCE

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

October 21, 1996

In the SB 4.7.5 Srila Prabhupada says;

"It appears from the exchange of Dakṣa's head that the modern scientific theory that the brain substance is the cause of all intelligent work is not valid. The brain substance of Dakṣa and that of a goat are different, but Dakṣa still acted like himself, even though his head was replaced by that of a goat. The conclusion is that it is the particular consciousness of an individual soul which acts. The brain substance is only an instrument which has nothing to do with real intelligence. The real intelligence, mind and consciousness are part of the particular individual soul."

but in many other places we see Srila Prabhupada mention that Krsna prasada, (especially milk) is required to develop the finer tissues of the brain so that one will have the intelligence to understand Krsna Consciousness. IN particular there is a public address that Srila Prabhupada had his disciples give when he was recuperating in New York after the first heart attack.

What is this finer brain tissue? Is it part of the gross brain? And is this intelligence that Srila Prabhupada talking about in the above Bhagavatam verse a function of the spirit soul, or is it a feature of the subtle body, (Bg 7.4)

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 1, 1996

Intelligence is originally spiritual, as Kapiladeva states in the 3rd Canto. But when the soul comes into contact with material nature, then the buddhi is conditioned. Conditioning means that the intelligence is attached to and depends upon material nature. Conditioning is relative to species. Daksa was a demigod, not a human being like you and me. That his head could be changed, yet his intelligence remained the same, does not logically lead to the conclusion that a human being's intelligence should be as unconditioned as a demigod's. Besides, in his case the head change was done by Lord Siva, who is the most powerful mystic among the demigods. He is known for this trick (that's how his son Ganesh ended up with an elephant head—naturally without loss of intelligence).

MOTIVES ETC.

*Question from Madana Mohana das
November 2, 1996*

In CC Madhya-lila 24.94 purp. Srila Prabhupada gives examples of one's possible motives to come to devotional service, referring to the verse 'catur-vidha bhajante mam'. There he say that the great sages the Kumaras were inquisitive and came to the service of the Lord, and Dhruva Maharaja approached Him in want of money.

But somewhere it was stated that Jiva Goswami used to determine one's varna by the motive he has had to come to devotional service, and ksatriyas were recognized by their inquisitiveness and vaisyas - by their desire to solve financial problems by serving the Lord. So it appears that according to such a judgement Kumaras were ksatriyas and Druva was vaisya. How could you explain it?

I also want to join Adipurusa prabhu and other devotees in their admiration of your SAS book. It is most enlightening and helpful to understand the depth and relevance of timeless Vaisnava philosophy that remains supreme whatever philosophical mire humanity may sink in. The book really makes one think, coming to its conclusion not by force, but following the explicit logic persuasively shown in it. I've not finished reading it yet, but am anticipating your new books to come out soon.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
November 3, 1996

Thank you for your comments about SAS.

Re varna categorizing, I think the difficulty is just with sémantice (for example, what a word like "inquisitiveness" can mean in different circumstances).

In regards to the Kumaras, I take it to mean they were desirous of transcendental knowledge (desirous to inquire from a spiritual master). But the same word can apply to a ksatriya, who, while not prepared to wholly dedicate himself to brahmanana, is at least jijnasu, curious to know what it is.

A ksatriya, like a vaisya, is very interested in wealth. The difference is the ksatriya takes it by force, the vaisya takes it by business. So Dhruva entered the forest to practice austerities so that he could, by God's grace, be able to take his father's kingdom by force if necessary. Remember, he was very angry and determined that he should get his rights of inheritance. He certainly had no desire to win the kingdom by business!

KILLING MOSQUITOS

Question from Varadaraja das
November 5, 1996

Sometimes the argument is brought up by some devotees, that we can kill mosquitos, because they are attacking us, and are administering poison!.

Prabhupada's Lectures Srimad-Bhagavatam 1976 110229/173814

So aggressor can be killed immediately. If somebody is aggressor, there is no sin in killing aggressor. Enemy who sets fire to the house, administers poison attacks all of a sudden with deadly weapon, plunder wealth, or usurps agricultural field, or entices one's wife is called an aggressor.

But I also read in Srimad Bhagavatam, that there is great punishment awaiting, if one is killing them...

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 5: Chapter Twenty-six, Text 17 25031/173814

TRANSLATION

By the arrangement of the Supreme Lord, low-grade living beings like bugs and mosquitoes suck the blood of human beings and other animals. Such insignificant creatures are unaware that their bites are painful to the human being. However, first-class human beings--brahmanas, ksatriyas and vaisyas--are developed in consciousness, and therefore they know how painful it is to be killed. A human being endowed with knowledge certainly commits sin if he kolos or torments insignificant creatures, who have no discrimination. The Supreme Lord punishes such a man by putting him into the hell known as Andhakupa, where he is attacked by all the birds and beasts, reptiles, mosquitoes, lice, worms, flies, and any other creatures he tormented during his life. They attack him from all sides, robbing him of the pleasure of sleep. Unable to rest, he constantly wanders about in the darkness. Thus in Andhakupa his suffering is just like that of a creature in the lower species.

Would you kindly like to comment on this ? Are they classified as aggressors ? Can we kill them, if they kee us up all night ?.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 5, 1996

When asked, Prabhupada said mosquitos are aggressors, but also said it is better to use a mosquito net than kill them.

Comment by Dravida das

November 5, 1996

Check Srila Prabhupada Uvaca Number 57 for input from Prabhupada on this.

STHANAM

Question from Narakara das
November 5, 1996

After listing the 10 subject matters of Srimad-Bhagavatam in 2.10.1, Sukadeva Gosvami gives short, sutra-like definitions of each of them. Most are not so difficult to grasp, yet the one that I find difficult to understand is "sthitir vaikuntha vijaya": sthanam or sthiti is the glory of the Lord of Vaikuntha. Srila Prabhupada writes in the WbW translation that sthanam is "the planetary systems" and in CC "the maintenance of the creation." How are "the glory of the Lord of Vaikuntha" and "the planetary systems" connected? What story depicts sthanam the best?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 6, 1996

An answer to this is elaborated in Ch. 3 of Substance and Shadow. The Lord of Vaikuntha was realized by Brahma within his heart. Brahma understood that Lord and His personal associates to be simultaneously the maintainer of the cosmic manifestation, and His personal associates to be the energies of creation.

LEAVING BODY ON DVADASI

Question from Dharmasetu das

November 6, 1996

The father of one devotee gives up the body at Dvadasi (23.10.1996.) and he is asking is there some auspiciousness in that and what is the reason if yes? Thank you!

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 7, 1996

This is a philosophical conference. As Schopenhaur said, "Everybody deserves a glance, but not everybody deserves an answer."

SANDHYA

Question from Dadhibhaksa das

November 17, 1996

It is stated in SB 6.1.42. that evening is witness, and in word for word we find sanskrit word sandhya.

Previously, I've heard from devotees that all three sandhyas are witnesses, but I would like to be sure if this is true. What is your opinion?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 18, 1996

Yes.

MAYA

Question from Bhagavat Dharma das

November 26, 1996

In the glossary of your book SAS-under the term "Maya", you write: "The material bewilderment of the living entity begins with his attraction to the glare of the brahmajyoti. That attraction leads to his entanglement in the modes of material nature."

Can you please explain this a bit further?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 26, 1996

In Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.3.2-7 the hierarchy of material desires is presented. The first line of verse 2 is brahma-varcasa-kamas tu, which means "One who desires to be absorbed in the impersonal brahmajyoti effulgence." This is where material desire (kama) begins. This is the point that distinguishes the kami (the soul who desires things other than Krsna) from the devotee. Explaining this line in a 1972 lecture, Srila Prabhupada said:

Therefore it is said, brahma-varcasa kamas tu. Brahma-varcasa means effulgence. But it is kama. That is not akama. But a devotee is akama, there is no kama. He has no personal desires. His desire is only to remain eternal servant of God. That's all. That is his position. That is not desire. That is his actual position.

Somebody is wanting wealth, somebody is wanting beauty, somebody is wanting strength, somebody something else. All these are beginning from brahma varcasa-kamas tu. And ultimately, they want to merge into the brahmajyoti. So up to that point, everything that we want, that is material, and that is lust. Therefore it is said kama.

The second line of verse 2 says, yajeta brahmanah patim: "one should worship Lord Brahma" (in order to attain the Brahmajyoti effulgence). This is also significant. Srila Prabhupada writes in SB 9.24.58p:

Anandamayo 'bhyasat (Vedanta-sutra 1.1.12). Both the Lord and the living entity, being qualitatively spirit soul, have the tendency for peaceful enjoyment, but when the part of the Supreme Personality of Godhead unfortunately wants to enjoy independently, without Krsna, he is put into the material world, where he begins his life as Brahma and is gradually degraded to the status of an ant or a worm in stool.

All the objects of our material desires have their origin in the brahma-varcasa. In another lecture, Prabhupada explained:

The Brahman effulgence is the bodily glowing of Krsna. Yasya prabha. When Krsna expands His bodily effulgence, then everything generates. This material world has also come out of the brahmajyoti or from the rays of the body of Krsna.

In his purport to SB 4.23.15, Srila Prabhupada how the spirit soul attracted by the rays of the brahmajyoti falls into material entanglement:

When a living entity gives up the material coverings, he remains a spirit soul. This spirit soul must enter into the spiritual sky to merge into the Brahman effulgence. Unfortunately, unless the living entity has information of the spiritual world and the Vaikunthas, there is a 99.9 percent chance of his falling down again into material existence. There is, however, a small chance of being promoted to a spiritual planet from the Brahman effulgence, or the brahmajyoti. This brahmajyoti is considered by impersonalists to be without variety, and the Buddhists consider it to be void. In either case, whether one accepts the spiritual sky as being without variety or void, there is none of the spiritual bliss which is enjoyed in the spiritual planets, the Vaikunthas or Krsnaloka. In the absence of varieties of enjoyment, the spirit soul gradually feels an attraction to enjoy a life of bliss, and not having any information of Krsnaloka or Vaikunthaloka, he naturally falls down to material activities in order to enjoy material varieties.

Comment by Bhakta Jan Mares

November 27, 1996

At the end of your text you quoted SP:

> *When a living entity gives up the material coverings, he*
> *remains a spirit soul. This spirit soul must enter into the*
> *spiritual sky to merge into the Brahman effulgence.*
> *Unfortunately, unless the living entity has information*
> *of the spiritual world and the Vaikunthas, there is a*
> *99.9 percent chance of his falling down again into*
> *material existence. There is, however, a small chance of being*
> *promoted to a spiritual planet from the Brahman effulgence,*
> *or the brahmajyoti.*

I remember once we were discussing this number, 99.9% - almost sure falldown but not totally sure. What did Srila Prabhupada actually mean by this, or, in other words, how does it happen that one can still be promoted to a spiritual planet from brahmajyoti?

(Only case I could think of was a story of Gopa Kumara who could proceed to Vaikuntha. Does it explain this 0.01% ?)

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 29, 1996

There is a saying--"You can only get to heaven by bringing it with you."

Gopa Kumar was not an impersonalist. He was a devotee. A devotee's goal is never the brahmajyoti, though he passes through it. A devotee goes back to Godhead by chanting Krsna's name, which is Godhead Himself--in other words, the devotee goes to Godhead by bringing Godhead with him. So your introducing Gopa Kumara in connection with the slight opportunity for promotion to Vaikuntha from the brahmajyoti is a logical fallacy. Gopa Kumara was a devotee. The slight opportunity is for jnanis and yogis. They may become bhaktas if they get

interested to know what is beyond the light. The example is of the 4 kumaras, as recounted in the 3rd canto of Srimad Bhagavatam.

FOUR KUMARAS

*Question from Bhagavat Dharma das
November 26, 1996*

I have two questions in this regard:

1)In the SB 3.8.3-7 there is the description of their travel to Lord Sankarsana and how the Lord spoke SB to them. Is Lord Sankarsan accepted as the supreme deity of the Kumara-sampradaya?

2)In Chapter 3 of SAS(Page 155) you explain that they are presiding over the Vedic path of Jnana-kanda. And that Karma/Jnana-kanda make up the apara-vidya of Vedas.

My question is: Is this the way we percieve the 4 Kumaras as Sampradaya-acaryas? If yes, are their teachings as Vaisnava-acaryas tainted by Jnana-kanada & stall be considered "apara-vidya"?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

November 26, 1996

Lord Sankarsana (Who is nondifferent from Balarama and Nityananda) is the original spiritual master. And so the 4 Kumaras, who are most interested in spiritual knowledge, approached Him to hear Bhagavata-tattva. But that does not mean that Sankarsana is the supreme Deity for the Kumara-sampradaya. That sampradaya, for which Nimbarkacarya is the founder acarya in this age, worships Sri-Sri Radha-Krsna as supreme.

The Kumaras are born from Brahma as jnanis, and as jnanis they taught jnana-kanda. But later they became devotees. SB 4.22.16p:

The Kumaras, however, were both yogis and jnanis and finally bhaktas later on. In the beginning they were impersonalists, but later they developed devotional activities; therefore they are the best of the transcendentalists.

About the Kumara-sampradaya, Srila Prabhupada writes in SB 3.12.4p:

Brahma created the four great sages Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Sanat to entrust them with these four principles of spiritual advancement [sankhya, yoga, vairagya and tapas], and they inaugurated their own spiritual party, or sampradaya, known as the Kumara-sampradaya, or later on as the Nimbarka-sampradaya, for the advancement of bhakti. All of these great sages became great devotees, for without devotional service to the Personality of Godhead one cannot achieve success in any activity of spiritual value.

OFFERING DANDAVATS

*Question from Kamalavati dd
November 27, 1996*

*I am reading SP and His Disciples in Germany and there Hrimati Dasi says:
"Along with Hamsaduta, Avinascandra, Vedavyasa, and Krsna-premi, I formel part of a group onstage. When Prabhupada arrived, all of us prostrated ourselves to offer dandavats, and somehow or other I was lying in front of the vyasasana. Srila Prabhupada unintentionally stepped on my hands, but it was as if they were touched by rose petals - his feet were so soft."*

Later on in the same book Nikunjavasini Dasi says: "Later that afternoon, Prabhupada gave initiations on the lawn behind the Schloss...The devotees were called forword by country, and Prabhupada was very strict about the procedure. He explained: First, you offer dandavats (even the women)..."

So I was wondering if matajis can offer dandavats. I have heard that it is actually offensive but on the other side it seems that it was SP's standard. Or we do not do it anymore in ISKCON because it makes a bad impression on the public? Can we do it then when nobody is watching?

Answer by Suhotra Swami
November 29, 1996

*I can't give you an in-depth answer. All I know is that I learned way way back in Prabhupada's time that men offer obeisances fully prostrated and women do not. As a brahmacari at the time, I never bothered to inquire further because it seemed like an embarrassing subject to go into. And now as a sannyasi, if anything I am *less* inclined to go into it.*

EXTERNAL ENERGY

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
December 8, 1996*

There is a passage in the Krsna book that has always puzzled me, I wonder if you could explain this.

"Krsna is the assurance of safety to everyone. But when He saw that His friends were already out of His hands and were lying within the belly of a great serpent, He became momentarily aggrieved. He was also struck with wonder at how the external energy works so wonderfully. "

What exactly does it mean when it says that "He was also struck with wonder at how the external energy works so wonderfully".

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 9, 1996

The ME is His devotee. Krsna appreciates the wonderful qualities and influence of His devotees, including hers.

Comment by Nrsimha Kavaca das

December 15, 1996

Thank you for your answer. Do to my dullness this answer does not really satisfy me. Why did Krsna choose this moment, just after his friends had willingly walked into the mouth of the Aghasura demon, to wonder at the workings of His illusory energy. Another point to shed light, or throw confusion is that in the SB it says internal energy and in the Krsna book it says external energy.

I am still at a loss as to what is the actual feature of this pastime that made the Lord "struck with wonder at how the external energy works so wonderfully."

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 15, 1996

>>Why did Krsna choose this moment, just after his friends had willingly walked into the mouth of the Aghasura demon, to wonder at the workings of His illusory energy.<<

Well, they walked in Agasura's mouth knowing it was a big demon's mouth, didn't they? That's pretty amazing to me.

>>in the SB it says internal energy and in the Krsna book it says external energy.<<

For Krsna there is no difference. Like in gita, He says *naham prakasa sarvasya yogamaya samavrata mudho yam nabhijanati*: my yoga keeps the foolish from knowing me. But from our point of view, it is *yogamaya* that connects the devotees to Krsna, and *mahamaya* keeps the foolish away. Sometimes *sastra* presents things that way, for our understanding. But sometimes *sastra* presents things from Krsna's point of view, which is that there is no difference between His internal and external energy.

>>I am still at a loss as to what is the actual feature of this pastime that made the Lord "struck with wonder at how the external energy works so wonderfully."<<

Again, His friends willingly walked into the mouth of an eight-mile-long demon ... which I personally find pretty far out; I find it charming that Krsna thought so also. I guess your problem is about how Krsna took all this to be due to the influence of the external or illusory energy. These are Krsna's friends. Why were they baffled by the external energy? So, again, that energy is one, *yogamaya*. For us, it is material. For Krsna and His associates, it is spiritual. It is "external" in this pastime because of Aghasura's entrance into the presence of the Lord and His devotees. Because he is a demon, how could he be there except by the arrangement of *maya*? Also by *maya* (mystic power), he is in the form of a huge serpent. And the cowherd boys, knowing well that this huge gaping entrance before them is a demon's mouth, chose to walk into it, having full faith that if there is any danger, Krsna will protect them. Krsna was amazed at all this. He thought it was wonderful how His energy empowered this demon with such a form, and also that it was wonderful how his friends could take this dangerous form lightly, the way kids today play carelessly on big inflatable "Jurassic Park" dinosaurs at the beach. That is their "illusion" of love of God.

BEWILDERING VEDAS

*Question from Aprameya dd
December 10, 1996*

a) In SB 4.20.30 Prthu Maharaja says:

"The allurements You offer in the Vedas are certainly not suitable for pure devotees. People in general, bound by the sweet words of the Vedas, engage themselves again and again in fruitive activities, enamored by the results of their actions."

In the purp we read: "The statements of the Vedas which offer elevation to heavenly planets in exchange for great sacrifices are simply bewildering."

And in BG 15.15 Krsna says, that, "By all the Vedas I am to be known," "I am the compiler of Vedanta."

So I was wondering why the Lord from one side is bewildering the readers of the Vedas, and from the other side, says "By all the Vedas I am to be known."

b) Why Srila Prabhupada says in the first part of the purp that: "Cultivation of knowledge to understand one's spiritual position is also, to a certain extent, a waste of time." Isn't it that without such knowledge one cannot be steady in dev. service?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 11, 1996

There is a story of a beggar who came to the house of a king. The king was looking from his window, and he heard this knock on the door, so he sent his servant. "Go and see who it is," so the servant went down there, and he opened the door. "Who is it?" the king asked. "It's just some beggar," the servant replied. "He wants some food or something." So the king said, "All right, let's have a laugh. Call him up here." The beggar came up, and he came and sat in the court of the king. The king said, "All right, beggar, what do you want?" The man very meekly asked, "Some prasad, a little food or something?" The king said to his servant, "Pretend to bring him some food." So the servant brought out an invisible plate and put it down. The king said, "Nice rasgulla, samosa, kichori. Fill yourself up, be happy." So just to humour the king, because he didn't want to offend him, he made like he was eating. "Is it good?" the king asked. "Yes it's good. I like the samosas." "What else would you like?" asked the king. "A nice wife," the man said. "All right," the king said, "bring on the dancing girls!" So the servant ushered them in, the invisible dancing girls. "Aren't they dancing nicely?" the king asked. The beggar said, "Yes, they are." "Which one do you want for you wife?" "The sixth one," the man replied. "There's only five," the king laughed. "Take the fifth one. I'll give you a palace with her. You just go out the door, down the road there's so many palaces, just take one of those and have a good time." And he gave him a good slap on the back. So the man was very humble and submissive, "Yes your honour, yes sir, my lord, thank you very much." He went out to the gate, and suddenly the heart of the king was touched by his submissive nature. Although the king was playing a joke on him the man was cooperating and wasn't becoming offensive, so the king had a change of heart. "All right," he said, "call him back." When the man returned he said, "I'm very pleased with your attitude. You've gone along with the joke. So, bring out the real prasad." They brought out much prasad. "Now take yourself a real queen, and have a real palace."

PURPORT: By following the Vedic injunctions out of humility, not considering the material benefits that are promised, a person can get the mercy of the Lord. That poor man continued to respect the "rituals" the rich man engaged him in even after he got no sense gratification from those rituals. Thus the rich man took a personal liking to him. So even devotees are directed to respect the demigods and Vedic culture. This respect is appreciated by Krsna. Because the demigods and Vedas represent Him. But materialists are puffed-up. When they don't get what they want, they become demanding and disrespectful to God, His representatives and religion. Thus for them the Vedic karma-kanda path is simply a provocation for Vaisnava aparadha, as Krsna tells Uddhava.

Cultivation of dry knowledge (suska-jnana) is not the same thing as the cultivation of knowledge in Krsna consciousness. Suska jnana and suska vairagya is the attempt to negate material attachment. Knowledge in KC engages material attachment in devotional service.

Comment by Aprameya dd
December 21, 1996

*Dear Guru Maharaja, thank you very much for your answers.
I connection with my first question: is the following analogy correct?*

In one of your lectures you talked a story how Indra and Viracana (the King of demons) approached Lord Brahma for brahma-jnana, transcendental knowledge. And Brahma taught them to fill a dish with water and look at the reflection and there they will see the self. Viracana, of course, was deluded and later Brahma talked to Indra that he actually wanted to get rid of Viracana. Then he explained to Indra what is brahma-jnana.

Similarly Lord Krsna is bewildering the hard-cored materialists by offering them different allurements. For example, elevation to the heavenly planets. However, the more sincere people can see that betone these allurements the goal of studying Vedanta is to be known Krsna.

Answer by Suhotra Swami
December 22, 1996

No, Krsna personally does not delude anyone. Krsna is the Absolute Truth. Krsna's expansions may delude. Krsna's material energy (maya-sakti) deludes. But Krsna exists beyond all such delusive influences.

LOGIC AND REASON

Question from Aprameya dd
December 10, 1996

From your lecture: "It can ber easily established it, has been established in the history of European philosophy by philosophers as far a the Greeks, the middle age Christian scholastic philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and so on -- many, many philosophers up to the modern time -- has established BY LOGIC AND REASON there must be a supreme controller, there must be an intelligent source to everything. They have established that we are dependent, we are under control."

a) *What kind of logic and reason is this?*

aa) If this is laukika, then how they have established this conclusion if "The prove or disprove of the commonplace logic depends on sense perception." (SAS, pg 93.)

ab) If it is sastramulaka -- this means they have got some information from the Vedic scriptures?

ac) Or this is some another kind of logic?

b) If the rationalism "holds REASON to be the primary cause of knowledge," then why the rationalists didn't accept the logic and reason of the scholastics that God created everything and how did they actually disprove this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 11, 1996

Their logic was not truly up to Vedic standard. It is mostly deductive logic, but it descends from premises that are not always so perfect. They rely basically on three kinds of arguments in their attempt to prove the existence of God: the ontological, the teleological and the cosmological. Don't ask me to explain these three; anyone can find what they mean for themselves by consulting a philosophical dictionary.

As to why the rationalists did not accept the scholastics ... this is what philosophy is all about. As Prabhupada writes in Madhya 17.184p:

Unless one comes to the Absolute Truth, there is no possibility of agreement. Nasav rsir yasya matam na bhinnam: it is said that a great learned scholar or sage cannot be exalted unless he disagrees. On the material platform, there is no possibility of agreement; therefore there are different kinds of religious systems.

That "nasav rsir" quotation is from Mahabharata. From this quotation we can see that since the beginning, disagreement has been a founding principle of mundane philosophy, because without disagreeing with other philosophers, a scholar cannot distinguish himself.

(ALL KINDS OF) IRRELIGION

Question from Bhakta Jan Mares

December 13, 1996

SB 7.15.12,13 states:

There are five branches of irreligion, appropriately known as irreligion [vidharma], religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma], pretentious religion [abhasa], analogical religion [upadharma] and cheating religion [chala-dharma]. One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious.

Religious principles that obstruct one from following his own religion are called vidharma. Religious principles introduced by others are called para-dharma. A new type of religion created by one who is falsely proud and who opposes the principles of the Vedas is called upadharma. And interpretation by one's jugglery of words is called chala-dharma.

It is not very clear to me what are these particular kinds of irreligion all about (especially para-dharma). Could you please elaborate on this and provide practical examples of these adharmas?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 13, 1996

There is no sastric reference that I know of that gives specific examples for each of these.

However, my favorite comic is GURU, by P. Hollins, which appears in a British paranormal magazine that I subscribe to. So, after looking through my collection of these comics, I think I've found a suitable example of each branch of irreligion.

Now, so that you can better enter the mood, I should explain that the characters in the GURU comic are skillfully done in the style of newspaper drawings from 1890 or so, before newspapers printed photographs. And the main character, the guru, is a goruh. He is depicted either with the head of a cow or a buffalo. All right, now the examples.

1. irreligion [vidharma]: A bearded gentleman is sitting with the guru at a small restaurant round table. Drinks have been served, and they are discussing the menu. The bearded man says:

"...but surely, your peace and love ideas clash with the practical food chain reality of kill to survive?"

Guru-- "Yes, but roast lamb tastes great with mint jelly and two veg."

A lamb is looking on this conversation. He says "Nah! Not me, chief... why not try a nice juicy insect?"

In the corner a rhinoceros beetle is scooting away, saying "I'm getting out of here ..."

2. religious principles for which one is unfit [para-dharma]: The guru is walking in, taking off his top hat. He says to a young man with a worried look--

"Why the long face, bro?"

The young man replies--

"I went to India to find myself ... but I wasn't there!"

Guru-- "Listen man. If you didn't want to find yourself, you wouldn't be lost."

Young man-- "What does that mean?"

Guru-- "I don't know ... but if everyone knew the secret of the universe, it wouldn't be much of a secret."

3. pretentious religion [abhasa]: The guru is reading a book, looks up and says--

"Whoa there, man ... why the blindfold?"

There is a young man with a moustache wearing a blindfold, feeling his way across the room with his hands. He replies--

"Sorry guru, but shutting out the material world helps me to conquer the temptations of lust and greed."

Guru-- "Nice one bro ... but remember, always spare a thought for the temptation of stupidity."

4. analogical religion [upadharma]: (This is a great one!) A man with big side whiskers and a flipped-out staring look on his face says--

"Help me, guru. My life seems so fragile and ethereal ..."

Guru-- "Try applying yourself to something, man."

Mr. Whiskers-- "But I'm so spiritual, I can't attune myself to earthly things ... what can I do?"

Guru (holding ready his fist)-- "Well bro. A punch in the nose would sure get the ball rolling."

5. cheating religion [chala-dharma]: A young lady in a Victorian gown and a big old-fashioned hat says to the guru--

"I'm worried about the purpose of life on earth, the power of will over destiny, and the esoteric meaning of existence ... and all you want to do is play frisbee."

Guru-- "Relax ... I'm a guru."

ULLANGHITA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
December 15, 1996*

In the cc adi 3.89

His position is accordingly described by the word ullanghita. He is transcendental to space, time and thought; although He appears within them, He exists transcendentially.

The living entity being part and parcel of Krsna and possessing all of the qualities but not the quantity must also fit into this category of being transcendental to space, time and thought; although he appears within them?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 15, 1996

The point of this question seems vague to me. You write:

>>The living entity being part and parcel of Krsna and possessing all of the qualities but not the quantity must also fit into this category of being transcendental to space, time and thought; although he appears within them?<<

Huh?

Comment by Nrsimha Kavaca das

December 15, 1996

Due to my inherent dullness I don't know if I can make it clearer, but I will try.

In the cc adi 3.89 purport it talks about the Lord as being;

"His position is accordingly described by the word ullanghita. He is transcendental to space, time and thought; although He appears within them, He exists transcendently. "

My question is;

The living entity being part and parcel of Krsna and possessing all of the qualities but not the quantity must also fit into this category of being transcendental to space, time and thought; although he appears within them?

I am wondering if this is a proper understanding of the position of the living entity or am I reading something into Srila Prabhupada's purport that is not there?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 18, 1996

Sounds right.

GOATS

Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das

December 16, 1996

I came across an interesting statement in the Krsna Book (Chapter 14) last night, I wonder if you could shed some light on it;

"Persons who are engaged in performing great sacrifices and offering many valuable goats in sacrifice cannot attain the perfection of understanding You"

This seems to be indicating the worship of goddess Kali. But the same passage in the Bhagavatam;

"All the Vedic sacrifices performed from time immemorial up to the present day have not given You as much satisfaction." as the milk drunk from the cows and the gopis.

But here it seems that lord Brahma is talking about people performing Vedic sacrifices to please Visnu or Krsna.

So I wonder what is the point that Srila Prabhupada is making, I mean why the apparent difference between the Bhagavatam statement and Krsna Book.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 16, 1996

>>So I wonder what is the point that Srila Prabhupada is making, I mean why the apparent difference between the Bhagavatam statement and Krsna Book. <<

Huh?

I can't follow the point of these questions you're sending in.

MERRY CHRISTMAS - Q&A FROM ANOTHER ONFERENCE

Question from Yamini dd

December 17, 1996

Where can one say "heaven" is, when we have heard about heavenly material planets, yet Jesus spoke about "eternal life" which implies the spiritual, permanent residences? My devotee-born daughter became Christian thru marriage, but doesn't practice much of anything. Still when the subject arises, I'd like to show how the common goal of love of God is manifested in varying destinations, without sounding confused or contradictory. Thank you

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 17, 1996

I do not claim to be an authority on the Semitic religious tradition. Semitic religion means the family of beliefs that traces its origins to the prophet Abraham. The Semitic religions include Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Judaism is the oldest Semitic faith; Islam is the youngest; Christianity is in-between.

In giving you an answer about the conception of the afterlife found in the Semitic religious tradition, I'll be referring to what I've read in scholarly books. Among others, these are *Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions,* *The Resurrection of the Body* by Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christianity and Classical Culture* by Jaroslav Pelikan, and *The Gnostics* by Jacques Lacarriere.

According to one of the greatest authorities within Judaism, Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1204), the Jewish faith has 13 root beliefs. One of them is the belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Christian doctrine developed this Semitic notion of the resurrection of the dead by comparing the body placed in the ground after death to a seed. That seed will sprout a new body made of the same material elements as the old. Christians believe a "person" is a soul *and* a material body. A soul without a body is not a person, and thus not the whole self. The resurrected *person* will be judged by God to suffer eternally in hell or enjoy eternal happiness in heaven. Ms Bynum's book gives innumerable quotations from old Christian authorities to prove that this is the mainstream Christian explanation of the afterlife.

Obviously, such a conception of heaven must refer to what we know as "the heavenly planets"--svarga-loka. Not Vaikuntha-loka.

Islam retained the same Semitic theme of the resurrection of the material body. Once resurrected, a person is judged and destined either to "sensual enticements in heaven" or "the sufferings of the damned in hell."

You asked about the significance of Jesus's use of the term "eternal life." Well, Jesus may have intended something different from how he is interpreted by his followers. But maybe not. I think Prthu Prabhu is writing a book in which he tries to show that Jesus taught a purely spiritual doctrine. I don't claim to know myself what Christ really meant his followers to understand about the afterlife of the soul. I do know that the traditional doctrine of mainstream Christianity is Semitic, and therefore doesn't favor a "Hare Krsna version" of his teachings on eternal life. But I also know that devotees who were previously Christians often prefer to think of Jesus as someone who taught a more Vedic conception of the soul and liberation after death.

Now, to be sure, mainstream Christian doctrine accepts the eternal life of the soul. But Christian doctrinal authorities think the soul was *created* at the time of the conception of the human body within the womb. (Animals do not have souls.) Once created, the soul is *then* eternal (i.e. undying). After its body dies, the soul remains in a state of suspended animation, a kind of hibernation, I guess, until the judgement day. The original scenario of the judgement day had Christ returning 100 years after his crucifixion. Upon his return, graves were to open, bodies were to rise up and be made whole, people were to be judged and if found good, sent to heaven, and if found bad, sent to hell. When this did not happen on schedule, the church moved the date of Christ's return to 1000 AD. But again he did not return. Nowadays many Christians say that our times are "the Last Days"--Christ is coming soon. But they've been saying that pretty regularly since 1000 AD. So my point is, you have to factor in these ideas when trying to understand what Christians mean by the eternal life of the soul.

Bynum says that in Christian history there were several periods when the mainstream doctrine of resurrection was challenged by minority Christians who believed that the saved soul would live on eternally *without* a material body. Important among these periods was when Origenism was debated in the early 5th century, and when, in the 12th and 13th century, Catharism and Erigenism was debated. Bynum says that in each of these controversies, "materialist conceptions of bodily resurrection were significant elements of the positions that triumphed as mainstream Christianity."

Christians who believed that the saved (or liberated) soul exists eternally in a transcendental state without any contact with matter were in constant danger of being categorized by Church authorities as Gnostics. The word Gnostic comes from the Greek *gnosis*, and is related to the Sanskrit *jnana.* The Gnostics were a number of sects that flourished 18 centuries ago (just after the start of Christianity). They believed that matter was evil, and that for a soul to identify with matter is ignorance. Therefore the soul must be freed from matter by *gnosis* (spiritual knowledge). Many Gnostics believed in reincarnation, vegetarianism, celibacy, and in a primordial Godhead Who is a divine male-female couple dwelling in an eternal, non-material kingdom of transcendental, effulgent purity. And they believed that these principles were taught by Jesus himself. But many Gnostics were also what we would now call sahajiyas. It seems the early Church lumped all Gnostics together and condemned them as heretics.

ANANTA

*Question from Nrsimha Kavaca das
December 21, 1996*

I hope this question makes sense.

In the Teachings of Lord Caitanya Chapter 7 it says

"As far as the saktyavesa-avatars are concerned, they include Kapila and Rsabha, Ananta, Brahma"

But generally we understand that Ananta sesa is actually Lord Balarama directly.

SB 1.14.35-36

The Ksirodakasayi Visnu has His own planet on the northern top of the universe, and there is a great ocean of milk where the Lord resides on the bed of the Ananta incarnation of Baladeva.

SB 10.2.4-5

Ananta, Sankarsana, belongs to the second catur-vyuha, or quadruple expansion. This is the opinion of experienced commentators.

and Adi 5.10

According to expert opinion, Balarama, as the chief of the original quadruple forms, is also the original Sankarsana. Balarama, the first expansion of Krsna, expands Himself in five forms: (1) Maha-sankarsana, (2) Karanabdhisayi, (3) Garbhodakasayi, (4) Ksirodakasayi, and (5) Sesa.

Now I accept that both presentations are correct, but how do we understand that Ananta Sesa is a saktyavesa incarnation as well as the first expansion of Lord Balarama?

Your servant,
Nrsimha Kavaca dasa

ps Please bless me that my inquiries may be fruitful and not just a waste of your valuable time.

2nd ps thankyou for your answer to the question about the external energy. It made everything quite clear.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 22, 1996

Relax. I'm a guru.

This question about Ananta can be asked about Lord Krsna Himself just as well. For the answer, read Cc Adi 5.111-115.

Ananta is non-different from Lord Balarama, who is both the Supreme Personality of Godhead and a Vaisnava (devotee of Lord Krsna). So when He is acting as Krsna's devotee in His expanded form Ananta, He may be taken as an empowered devotee and the Lord at the same time.

UNCONQUERED SENSES

Question from Aprameya dd

December 22, 1996

SB 11.14.18 translation:

"My dear Uddhava, if My devotee has not fully conquered his senses, he may be harassed by material desires, but because of his unflinching devotion for Me, he will not be defeated by sense gratification."

I cannot understand how the material desires and unconquered senses can go together with unflinching devotion to Krsna?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 22, 1996

This is illustrated in the narration of Junior Haridas, for example.

DEVIATING BRAHMANAS

Question from Aprameya dd

December 22, 1996

In case that the brahmanas were deviating from the rules and regulations of the sastras, did the ksatriyas have the right to correct or punish them?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 22, 1996

Yes. But even in doing this, the ksatriyas were always guided by the brahmanas, or in the case of Arjuna's punishment of Asvatthama, by the Supreme Brahman, Lord Krsna Himself.

GENETICS

Question from Aprameya dd

December 23, 1996

SB 4.14.42 translation:

"...for in this family the semen was very powerful and the children were prone to become devotees of the Lord."

I wonder whether this has something to do with the conception of nowadays genetics about the heredity?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 24, 1996

Genetics is a strictly materialistic system of calculation that gives no account to the influence of consciousness on conception.

PLANETS OF BIRDS

Question from Aprameya dd

December 23, 1996

SB 4.20.35-36, translation:

"King Prthu worshiped the demigods, the great sages, the inhabitants of Pitrloka, the inhabitants of Gandharvaloka and those of Siddhaloka, Caranaloka, Pannagaloka, Kinnaraloka, Apsaroloka, the earthly planets and the planets of the birds."

What are these planets of birds?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 24, 1996

There are celestial birds. Garuda is an example. Khaga-loka is where they reside.

CAPACITY FOR SANKIRTAN

Question from Aprameya dd

December 23, 1996

It is said that the different sankirtana devotees have different capacity and their results on skt are according to this capacity.

But what actually determines the capacity - Krsna, karma, austerities from previous life or what? And is this capacity unchangeable or one can increase it? How?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 24, 1996

Sankirtana is virtuous activity ... the virtue of the soul itself. To perform sankirtana depends completely upon spiritual empowerment. But the individual helps or hinders that empowerment by his own attitude (whether offensive attitude or service attitude).

VRTRASURA

Question from Aprameya dd

December 24, 1996

Why Indra had to suffer sinful reaction after killing Vrtrasura as for killing the son of a brahmana, if Vrtrasura formally was a demon? Why Vrtrasura is considered simultaneously a member of the brahmana community and a demon?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 25, 1996

Indra was self-interested. Action done out of self-interest always brings downfall. See gita 9.24. Indra was thinking himself to be the enjoyer and the master of sacrifice. Therefore he had to fall.

As for Vrtrasura, he was more than a brahmana, he was a bhakti-yogi, as per this verse (gita 2.48):

"Perform your duty equipoised, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga."

ENTERING SUNGLOBE

*Question from Aprameya dd
December 24, 1996*

"It is said that two kinds of men, namely the ksatriya who dies directly in front of the battlefield under Krsna's personal orders and the person in the renounced order of life who is absolutely devoted to spiritual culture, are eligible to enter into the sun globe..."

Why in the sun globe, aren't such personalities eligible to go to the Vaikuntha planets in the spiritual world?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 25, 1996

Prabhupada said, "So the upper planetary system, beginning from Surya, they are called devaloka. They are all devotees of the Lord; therefore they are called devata. They are not pure devotees, but they are not disobedient to the orders of the Supreme Lord."

The ksatriya who dies in battle on the order of the Lord, and the rigid sannyasi, are eligible for the sun planet on account of never disobeying Krsna's orders. But they may not be pure devotees (they may not have pure love of God, in other words).

WHO IS WHO IN THE COSMOS

*Question from Rajavidya das
December 25, 1996*

Lately, I have been trying to understand the different superhuman species in their cosmic hierarchy. In this connection, I would like to humbly ask the following questions:

1. Do you know of any complete sastric list of all different superhuman beings, especially the divine ones (but if possible also the demoniac ones)?

I don't mean just the often unsystematic and incomplete listing of names as given for example in SB. 4.20.35-36; 5.5.21-22; 6.7.2-8; 8.2.5; 10.4.10-11 etc.

Rather, what I am looking for is some kind of "Who's who in the cosmos", with detailed information on the exact hierarchy of beings beginning with the simple ghosts and ending up with Lord Brahma.

2. What I am also looking for is of course any specific information on the respective bodily appearances, qualities and activities of these different beings.

3. How can the celestial beings mentioned in the Puranas (like the Apsaras, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Caranas, Kinnaras, Kimpurusas etc.) be related to the superhuman beings mentioned in other religious traditions (like the Christian angels or archangels, but also like fairies, nymphs or gnomes) or in many new age groups (like the Pleiadiens or Santiniens or however they are called)?

4. Is there any way to identify the cosmic origin of personalities like Jesus Christ or Muhammad on the basis of the Vedic knowledge? I know that in one lecture,

Srila Prabhupada briefly mentioned that Jesus came from Brahmaloaka (Boston, Dec. 23, 1969). Can this statement be supported by other quotations or sastric references?

Sorry for asking all of this. I know this is a big subject matter about which a lot could be said--or not said. If you don't feel like having the time and inspiration to go into it, I can understand that. But if you can give me any related information, I'd be very grateful. Otherwise, I'll be forced to either speculate or ignorantly keep silent whenever people ask me about these things.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 25, 1996

These are interesting questions, but I cannot answer them in the detail you are looking for. This requires research ... in India especially. There are reference books, like **The Puranic Encyclopedia** by Vettam Mani (published by Munshiram Manoharlal) which you would definitely find helpful. A visit to the philosophical bookshops of Calcutta and Delhi would yield other useful books. I've seen some books in the West that would be helpful also, but I don't have any titles in mind. And you should enter into a discussion with Atma-tattva Prabhu (SP disciple) or Gopa Vrindapal (BCS disciple) who are very well-versed in precisely this area of knowledge. It is an ocean.

FOUR KUMARAS

Question from Bhagadatta das

December 26, 1996

Few days ago, here in Viernheim during the class a devotee asked a question regarding the four Kumaras. The verse is SB.3.12.5:

Brahma spoke to his sons after generating them. "My dear sons," he said, "now generate progeny." But due to their being attached to Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they aimed at liberation, and therefore they expressed their unwillingness.

The question is - How is it that the four Kumaras were attached to Vasudeva - which is a characteristic of a devotee - if, as we know, they were impersonalists since birth?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 27, 1996

From SB 4.3.23p:

The word vasudeva may be utilised for different purposes, but whatever purpose we adopt, Vasudeva means the all-pervading or localised Supreme Personality of Godhead. ... When one is situated in pure, transcendental knowledge, one is situated in kaivalya. Therefore vasudeva also means kaivalya, a word which is generally used by impersonalists. Impersonal kaivalya is not the last stage of realization, but in Krsna consciousness kaivalya, when one understands the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then one is successful.

From SB 4.24.28p:

The impersonalists may say that Vasudeva is the impersonal Brahman, but actually the impersonal Brahman is subordinate to Krsna, as also confirmed in Bhagavad-gita (14.27): brahmano hi pratisthaham.

From TQK Ch. 4:

The word vasudeva is sometimes understood to mean "the all-pervading." The impersonalists have this conception of Vasudeva, and therefore Kuntidevi points out, "That Vasudeva, the all-pervading, is Krsna."

From a 1973 SB lecture:

So this Vasudeva realization is possible by the impersonalists after many, many births. Not very easily.

QUESTION

*Question from bhakta Goran (Jnani)
December 29, 1996*

If we want to describe living entities in full details than it is necessary to account four main parts:

- 1. Eternal substance by who living being is consisted.*
- 2. Inside of that substance we found transcendental mind who support processes of thinking, feeling and willing.*
- 3. Transcendental intelligence or energy of consciousness by who living being perceive and distinguish things from its environment.*
- 4. All together is assembled in one undivided unit who posses identity of I.*

On the other side we have quadrupule expansion of Krsna: Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Vasudeva and Aniruda. Can we say that for the existence of a living entity it is necessary that:

- 1. Sankarsana gives the substance.*
- 2. Pradyumna, in substance, enlivening the mind.*
- 3. Vasudeva is manifested like intelligence or consciousness of living being, and*
- 4. Aniruda formed the self or identity of I?*

Is it that in this way the existence of living beings depends from causeless mercy of Krsna?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 30, 1996

That formulation of the influences of the catur-vyuha does not look correct.

LOGIC

*Question from Priyavrata das
December 31, 1996*

Although logic is not the ultimate proof of things I can see that Srila Prabhupada uses logic quite frequently in his preaching, so I got a bit interested in understanding a bit more about it.

Now let's for example take the famous "life comes from life" argument by Srila Prabhupada:

"We never see living entities appearing from dead matter but we do see living entities appearing from other living entities, therefore life originally came from a living entity."

I find this argument strong, in my normal use of it, since when I preach I do not use logic as a foundation but rather as a complement to sastric evidence. But I think that some strict followers of logic would not accept the above argument as valid. Maybe they would say it is a hasty generalization or something like that, since the fact that we did or didn't see something happen does not prove that it couldn't have happened.

Now, I understand there are different kinds of logic except for the plain boolean one. There is fuzzy logic (if that is even used in philosophy) and all kinds of things. So my question is how the "life comes from life" argument would stand from the strict viewpoint of logic, all different aspects of logic taken into consideration. Would it be considered to have a fallacy or would it be considered valid.

I did not read your book fully, so please excuse me if I ask something which is already answered there.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 31, 1996

My book concerns itself with three kinds of logic: deductive, abductive, and inductive. ISKCON devotees use each of these with obvious frequency. Most devotees may not know these technical names, but they do know the three logical processes. So I just concerned myself with these three. There are other forms of logic (deontonic, dialectical, many-valued, and so on) which pertain to sheer mental speculation. I don't think there is any profit for a devotee to try to understand them.

Using deductive logic, we draw a straightforward conclusion from authoritative evidence (guru, sastra, sadhu). In ISKCON, deductive logic means the direct acceptance of the authority of spiritual knowledge, especially in regards to truths we cannot test at all. For example, we hear that Paramatma dwells in our heart, and from Him comes knowledge, remembrance and forgetfulness. You cannot test this. You can only accept it. Where logic comes in is this: whenever an item of knowledge appears in the heart, or when you remember something, or when you forget something, you logically conclude, on the basis of what you've heard from authority: "Ah. This is happening due to the Paramatma."

Abductive logic is the acceptance of a philosophical principle on the strength of its power of explanation. Karmi blabla specialists attempt to explain the source of knowledge, remembrance and forgetfulness, but their explanations are full of holes because the subject matter of consciousness is, for them, very mysterious. It always slips out of their grasp. Being materialists, every karmi is a greenhorn when it comes to the science of consciousness. So when a devotee compares karmi explanations with the Vedic, he is satisfied that the Vedic account surpasses the

karmi account. This is the not quite the same thing as just accepting authority. You might say it is a half-step from deduction to induction (empirical logic), because it allows for testing. We should always deepen our appreciation of the explanatory power of sastra. Prabhupada stressed this. And this happens automatically when you preach.

By inductive logic, a theory is constructed from empirical evidence. You have a problem with your computer. You gather evidence about the problem and speculate what the cause could be. You form a few hypotheses--"it could be a virus;" "the operating system could be corrupted," or whatever. You test your hypotheses, and at the point your computer works all right again as a result of your tests, one of your hypotheses becomes "perfect," because it is validated by direct experience. Such logic is applicable only to problems that fall within our direct experience. And since our direct experience (pratyaksa) is inherently defective, you can never be completely sure that even perfect induction is *really* true. Indeed, since it pertains to something material, you can be sure that ultimately it is *not* true, as there is no ultimate truth within the realm of mundane perception... the truth (KRSNA) is avanmanas-gocara, beyond the power of the senses and mind. Ironically, karmis accept a lot of theories that are not supported by perfect induction. (A theory is a hypothesis that is not proven by observation, but is also not disproven--Nietzsche called theories "irrefutable errors.") For example, Darwin's theory: there is no direct observation of evolution in action. So it is an imperfect induction. Yet still it is taught in the schools.

The example you give falls within yet another kind of logic, which is called *non-inductive reasoning by analogy*. The conclusion-- "therefore life originally came from a living entity"--is not empirical. It is not a hypothesis subject to confirmation or refutation by evidence drawn from sense experience. Yet it is also non-deductive: its validity is not determined by applying established formal principles or definitions. The conclusion analogically "comes to life" out of a valid judgement about *something else* that is quite similar: "we see that life is generated by living things; we do not see that life is generated by dead things."

The strength or weakness of a non-inductive reasoning by analogy is seen in whether the analogy is strained or not.

For example:

"We see that stopping the construction of a house after the foundation is laid is not the same as tearing down that house to its foundations. So stopping a pregnancy at the embryo stage is not the same as destroying a human being."

The formal similarity of this to Srila Prabhupada's analogy is pretty clear. There is a valid judgement made about something observed: stopping the construction of a house. From this an analogical conclusion is drawn: the metaphysical proposition that "stopping a pregnancy does not destroy human life" is similar to our experience that "stopping the construction of a house does not destroy the house." Prabhupada's conclusion is drawn the same way: the metaphysical proposition that "life originally comes from a first living entity" is similar to our experience of "life is generated from living forms around us."

But the difference between Prabhupada's non-deductive reasoning by analogy and the abortionist one is that the similarity in the latter is *strained*. In that one, the conclusion and the observation to which it is compared are significantly different. A construction can be stopped now and resumed later; whereas pregnancy is a natural process which, once stopped, cannot be restarted. In Srila

Prabhupada's analogy, there is no such strain. The two items of comparison are very, very similar. Such perfect logic! All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

Comment by Suhotra Swami

December 31, 1996

Logic fans: the kind of logic that applies to the example sent in by Priyavrata Pr from *Life Comes from Life* is--once more--non-INDUCTIVE-reasoning by analogy. I just noticed that I used that term once in my text, and then another time used non-deductive reasoning by analogy. The correct word is inductive, not deductive.

MEANING OF THE WORD „DEMON“

Question from Dharmasetu das

December 31, 1996

I've heard that the word "demon" got the negative connotation with the coming of Christianity. Actually, it was the word "da e mon" that was used for this kind of species that have the meaning - "one who is the agent between the demigods and humans".

If I am correct, can you please say something more in this regard?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

December 31, 1996

In the works of Homer (*Illiad* and *Odyssey*), the Greek gods are depicted as intervening in the fate of men. The god might be a known figure from the Olympian pantheon--Zeus, or an immediate agent of Zeus, or goddess Athena, for example--or else it may be some supernatural being whom one does not know. In this case the intervention is spoken of as being caused by a *daimon*, an anonymous god of some kind.

In Plato's works, intervention by *daimons* was associated with madness. There are two kinds of *daimon*-madness:

- 1) the destructive madness of the goddess Ate (the Greek version of the goddess Kali), or the madness of another god who wishes to bring us down;
- 2) the helpful madness, of which there are four kinds--
 - a) prophetic
 - b) ritual
 - c) poetic
 - d) erotic.

In Christianity, there is only one Holy Spirit, that which is consubstantial with the Father and the Son. So all these various *daimons* of the polytheistic Greek and Roman culture were rejected ... as "demons."

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!