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# DANDA

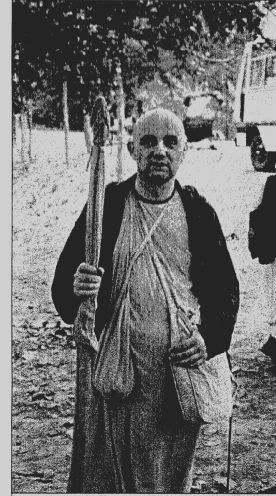
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*Questions and answers with HH Śrīla Suhotra Swami, year 1994.*

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*D*edicated to my eternal  
spiritual master, who  
opens my blind materialistic eyes  
with the torch of spiritual  
knowledge.



*Śrīla Suhotra Swami*

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## TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL

Question from Raghunātha d.  
January 3, 1994

*One of the Bhagavad-gītā students works with very ill persons who mostly die shortly. She has many questions on this subject. Please answer the persons following questions for me. I have an appointment with her on Friday:*

1. How long does the soul accompany the body after death?
2. How is the soul removed from the body?
3. What can one do if one knows that a person is going to die shortly?
4. What happens with the soul after it is removed from the body until it gets a new body.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 3, 1994

The exact answer to these questions depends upon the specific case. With persons of different *karma*, different events take place at the time of death.

1. In this age of Kali, many persons are destined for ghostly life after death. The *Garuḍa Purāṇa* declares that that person for whom the relatives do not perform the proper cremation ceremony and *śrāddhā* offering will become *pretā* (ghost) instead of *pitr* (exalted forefather). The people of Kali regularly perform sinful activities that lead to ghostly life. So if one becomes a ghost, he will linger with the dead body for a long time unless the body is burned. In the burning ceremony, the skull of the dead body is cracked to force the soul to depart. So, for many ordinary people, that is the moment the soul departs. If the body is buried rather than burned, the ghost can remain for years, even centuries. If the person was pious or spiritually inclined, the soul departs with the last breath and goes to its next destination.

2. For devotees, Kṛṣṇa leads the soul away from the body at the time of death. For pious persons, the soul is lead away by the *amanava puruṣa* or guardian angel. For sinful persons, the soul is dragged away by the *Yamadūtas*.

3. One can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa for the person who is about to depart. Also, holy pictures should be set up around the person. Incense should be offered and burnt. Sacred water (Ganges or Yamunā water, or water offered to the Deity) should be sprinkled on the body. As the person leaves the body, a *Tulasī* leaf should be placed upon the tongue.

4. Again, this depends on the person's particular *karma*. Pure devotees go to Kṛṣṇa. Devotees who did not completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa will go to the heavenly planets, take birth on earth in wealthy or aristocratic families or, if very advanced, in a family of devotees. Pious persons will go to the moon or *Pitrlōka*. Impious persons go to hell and are reborn as animals.

## LIFE AIRS

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
January 3, 1994

*Does the soul spread its influence throughout whole body or do the life airs around the soul spread its influence around the body?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 3, 1994

The spirit soul is said to float on the life air in the cave of the heart. In the allegorical story of King *Purāñjana* in the fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the life air is compared to a serpent with five heads. This is to show that the life air is one, but it has different functions. Therefore, it is sometimes said that there are five or ten kinds of life air. Actually there is only one, but it works in different ways. Primarily the movement of the *prāṇa* results in the living entity's bodily identification (see

ŚB, 4.29.71). Secondly, the lesser *prāṇas* control the senses of the body under the shelter of the main *prāṇa*, which is moved by the Supersoul according to the desire and *karma* of the living entity. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that consciousness is spread throughout the body by the blood. However, the movement of the blood in the body is also due to the influence of the *prāṇa* because all movements in the body are due to the life airs. Your question is specifically answered in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.4.25. It is the soul alone who is the knower. The soul, floating upon the *prāṇa*, "knows" the life airs which carry the consciousness, via the blood, throughout the body to the internal and external senses, and the sense objects. Thus the soul knows the whole body and the body's perceptions. The life air knows nothing because it is only matter.

## WORSHIP OF LORD KṚṢṆA AND LORD CAITANYA

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
January 3, 1994

*It is said that if one worships Kṛṣṇa but does not worship Caitanya Mahāprabhu he will go to hell. The question is; how can we say that there are authorized Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas who can bring one to Kṛṣṇa although some of them do not worship Caitanya Mahāprabhu?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 3, 1994

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has explained that the founder-*ācāryas* of the four Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas all had the *darśan* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu during their lifetimes. (They did not live at the same time as Mahāprabhu, but He granted them His *darśan* by His special mercy). Lord Caitanya gave each *ācārya* his mission. Thus each *sampradāya* is actually already under

the shelter of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Mostly the present-day adherents of the *sampradāyas* (not including, of course, the Gauḍīya branch of the Madhva-sampradāya) do not know this, but at least they are dutifully worshipping their founder-*ācāryas*, who are devotees of Lord Caitanya. However, if any adherent deliberately blasphemes Lord Caitanya while claiming to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, he offends his founder-*ācārya* and thus clears his way to hell.

## PREACHING TO, AND TAKING CHARITY FROM SINFUL PEOPLE

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
January 3, 1994

*In Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi 12.50) it is mentioned that one should not accept charity from sinful persons, and in the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda emphasizes this point. How can we understand this, concerning the principle of yukta-vairāgya?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 3, 1994

This is similar to the injunction against preaching the glories of the holy name to the faithless. It is an offense, and yet we must preach. For who in the age of Kali has faith? Therefore, faith must be generated by *sādhusāṅga*. Only advanced devotees may go forth amongst the materialistic people to give their *saṅga* and generate faith. Even an advanced devotee must be careful about associating indiscriminately with the fallen souls. Regarding preaching to the faithless, the "cut-off point" is initiating faithless persons into the chanting of the holy name. It does not apply to *harer-nāma saṅkīrtana* or public preaching programs. The injunction you have inquired about is to be understood similarly. In fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda makes a specific reference to "professional spiritual masters who accept disciples regardless

of their condition" in the purport you have mentioned. A spiritual master should not accept cheap, unqualified disciples and live off their charity. That is how this injunction is to be understood.

## MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL MIND

Question from Emiliiji  
January 4, 1994

*In one lecture, you said that in the spiritual world we have a mind that is running mad after Kṛṣṇa. As long as we are in the material world, we have our material mind. Is this mind being transformed, as we become Kṛṣṇa conscious or what?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 5, 1994

Just as we have a spiritual body, we have a spiritual mind, although presently they are unmanifest. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared the soul to a seed. When we engage in hearing and chanting, the seedlike soul is planted in the womb of the internal potency, and grows. Thus the spiritual mind and body develop. The material mind, like the material body, is a covering of the soul. There are five *kośas*, or coverings of the soul (ŚB, 6.15.12-15, purport), including the *ānandamaya* covering which is experienced in the *Brahmaloka* of this material world. *Manomaya*, the third covering, is the material mind. When these coverings are transcended and the soul attains the true *ānandamaya* of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the spiritual mind and body are manifest. It is a completely different level of consciousness. There is no direct connection between the material and spiritual minds – that is to say, you cannot understand your spiritual identity by speculating on the condition of your material mind. It is not that if the material mind is very lusty, for instance, that this means that our spiritual

mind must be in *mādhurya-rasa*. The spiritual mind is asleep as long as we are in material consciousness: *bhūtān bhavad bhaviṣyac ca sūptān sarva-raho-rahah*: "All that happens in time – past, present and future – is a dream. This is the secret understanding of all Vedic literatures." (ŚB.4.29.2b) In your dreams at night you may imagine so many crazy things which have no direct connection to your waking existence. The relationship between our gross material consciousness and the dormant spiritual consciousness is similar.

## PRASĀDAM DISTRIBUTION OR BOOK DISTRIBUTION

Question from Emiliiji  
January 4, 1994

*Regarding prasādam distribution and book distribution: which purifies more? How can we advance more?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 5, 1994

There is no difference in the purificatory power of the two, because they are absolute. Bharata, the brother of Lord Rāmacandra, liberated the *brāhmaṇa* *Satvika* from his accursed *rākṣasa* form by reciting to him the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu liberated the *brāhmaṇa* *Sārvabhauma* *Bhaṭṭācārya* from the curse of the *Māyāvādī* and *smārta* conceptions by feeding him *Jagannātha prasādam* early in the morning, before *Sārvabhauma* had even taken his bath. In this way we find in the scriptures evidence which demonstrates that receiving Vedic knowledge and accepting *prasādam* are both wonderfully purifying for the conditioned souls. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that book distribution is our most important preaching; he also said that *prasādam* is our greatest weapon.

## LORD CAITANYA'S INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FOUR SAMPRADĀYAS

Question from Śuci Rāṇī d.d.  
January 5, 1994

Could you please give some details regarding the instructions given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the four sampradāya ācāryas, and explain how the teachings of each of these ācāryas are ultimately synthesized and perfected by Lord Caitanya when he comes to preach the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tatva*. I have heard you describe this, but I cannot remember the details.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 5, 1994

This question would require a very lengthy answer, especially to explain the synthesis of the *Vedānta-darśana*s of the four Vaiṣṇava-sampradāyas into *acintya-bhedābheda-tatva*.

There is a book (Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma), published at Māyāpura and written, I believe, by Ānakadundubhī Prabhū, which contains the relevant passages by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Thākura that I referred to previously. Unfortunately, I cannot remember the exact title, but your son in the Gurukula should be able to identify it easily. Therein it is explained that Lord Caitanya took two principles from each of the four sampradāyas and incorporated them into His own presentation of Vaiṣṇava-dharma: for instance, from the Madhva-sampradāya He accepted the principles of Kṛṣṇa's form as the highest truth, and implacable opposition to Māyāvādī philosophy.

I am not prepared, due to time constraints, to give detailed answers to broad philosophical questions in this conference. Subscribers to this conference should please ask specific questions that need specific answers. For those who ask for explanations covering big philosophi-

cal issues, my policy will be to refer you to books that you can research yourselves.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
January 30, 1994

Mātājī Śuci Rāṇī d.d. from Perth, Australia, kindly sends this conference the following information she found in a translation of "Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Mahātmya":

Lord Caitanya addresses Nimbārka after instructing him how to preach, "Later, when I begin the *sankīrtana* movement, I Myself will preach, using the essence of the philosophies of the four of you. From Madhva I will receive two items: his complete defeat of the Māyāvāda philosophy and his service to the *mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa, accepting it as an eternal spiritual being. From Rāmānuja I will accept two teachings: the concept of bhakti unpoluted by *karma* and *jñāna*, and service to the devotees. From Viṣṇu Swami's teachings I will accept two elements: the sentiment of exclusive dependence on Kṛṣṇa and the path of *rāga-bhakti*, and from you I will receive two great principles: the necessity of taking shelter of Rādhā and the high esteem for the *gopīs'* love for Kṛṣṇa."

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
January 5, 1994

I dug up the following paragraphs on comparative *Vedānta* philosophy off my hard disk. They are from a study I wrote some years ago on the Six Systems of Vedic Philosophy. I think this will provide a sufficient answer to Mātājī Śuci Rāṇī's question, without requiring me to spend several hours composing an answer.

### THE FIVE MAIN SCHOOLS OF VEDĀNTA (ONE IMPERSONALIST, FOUR VAIṢṆAVA)

Of the five schools or sampradāyas, one, namely Śāṅkara's, is impersonalist. This means that the Supreme Being is explained in impersonal terms as being nameless, formless and without characteristics. The schools of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka and Viṣṇu-

vāmī explain God in personal terms. These *ācāryas* and their followers have formulated a philosophy that dispels the sense of mundane limitation associated with the word "person" and establishes transcendental personalism in terms of eternity, endless knowledge, complete bliss, absolute all-attractive form and all-encompassing love. Each of the five Vedāntist sampradāyas is known for its *siddhānta* or "essential conclusion" about the relationships between God and the soul, the soul and matter, matter and matter, matter and God, and the soul and souls. Śāṅkara's *siddhānta* is *advaita*, "nondifference" (i.e. everything is one, therefore these five relationships are unreal). All the other *siddhāntas* support the reality of these relationships from various points of view. Rāmānuja's *siddhānta* is *viśiṣṭadvaita*, "qualified nondifference." Madhva's *siddhānta* is *dvaita*, "difference." Viṣṇuvāmī's *siddhānta* is *suddhādvaita*, "purified nondifference." And Nimbārka's *siddhānta* is *dvaitādvaita*, "difference-and-identity."

The Bengali branch of Madhva's sampradāya is known as the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya, or the Caitanya-sampradāya. In the 1700's this school presented Indian philosophers with a commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* written by Baladeva Vidyabhūṣana that argued yet another *siddhānta*. It is known as *acintya-bhedābheda-tatva*, which means "simultaneous inconceivable oneness and difference." In recent years this *siddhānta* has become known to people from all over the world due to the popularity of the books of Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

### RELATION OF GOD TO THE WORLD

In our study of the other systems of Vedic philosophy we have seen various explanations of the existence of the world. In Nyāya, God is the operative cause of the world, but atoms are the material cause. (Note: in philosophy there are four ways to explain causation, as in the example of the causation of a house; the construction company is the "operative cause," the bricks, cement and other building materials are the "material cause," the original type of house upon which this house is

modeled is the "formal cause," and the purpose of the house, i.e. that someone wants to live in it, is the "final cause.") In Sāṅkhya, creation is regarded as the spontaneous result of the contact between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. The Sāṅkhya philosopher says, "there is no need for God" in his system, but he fails to explain what governs the coming together of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* in the first place. Patañjali says that God is the Supreme Self distinguished from other selves, and He is the intelligent governor of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. Patañjali nonetheless accepts the Sāṅkhya view that *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* have no origin. God as creator plays no essential role in the Mīmāṃsaka system, which believes that the world as a whole is eternal, though its gross manifestations may come and go.

Discounting all these theories, *Vedānta-sūtra* defines God as He among all beings who alone is simultaneously the operative, material, formal and final causes of the cosmos. As the intelligence behind creation, He is the operative cause; as the source of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, He is the material cause; as the original transcendental form of which the world is but a shadow, He is the formal cause; as the purpose behind the world, He is the final cause.

Māyāvādī philosophy avoids the issue of causation by claiming that the world, though empirically real, is ultimately a dream, but since even dreams have a cause, the Māyāvādī "explanation" explains nothing. In the *viśiṣṭadvaita* explanation, the material world is the body of God, the Supreme Soul. However, the Dvaita school does not agree that matter is connected to God as body is to soul, because God is transcendental to matter. The world of matter is full of misery, but since *Vedānta* defines God as *ānandamaya*, how can nonblissful matter be said to be His body? The truth according to the Dvaita school is that matter is ever separate from God but yet is eternally dependent upon God; by God's will, says the Dvaita school, matter becomes the material cause of the world. The *Suddhādvaita* school cannot agree with the Dvaita school that matter is the material

cause because matter has no independent origin apart from God. Matter is actually not different from God in the same way an effect is not different from its cause, although there is an appearance of difference. The Dvaitādvaita school agrees that God is both the cause and effect, but is dissatisfied with the *Suddhādvaita* school's proposition that the difference between God and the world is only illusory. The Dvaitādvaita school says that God is neither one with nor different from the world - He is both. A snake, the Dvaitādvaita school argues, can neither be said to have a coiled form or a straight form. It has both forms. Similarly, God's "coiled form" is His transcendental non-material aspect, and His "straight form" is His mundane aspect. This explanation, however, has its problems. If God's personal nature is eternity, knowledge and bliss, how can the material world, which is temporary, full of ignorance and miserable, be said to be another form of God?

The Caitanya school reconciles these seemingly disparate views of God's relationship to the world by arguing that the Vedic scriptures testify to God's *acintya-śakti*, "inconceivable powers." God is simultaneously the cause of the world in every sense and yet distinct from and transcendental to the world. The example given is of a spider and its web. The material of the web comes from the spider's body, so in a sense the spider may be taken as the material cause of the web. Yet again, the spider and the web are always separate and distinct entities. While the spider never "is" the web, at the same time because the spider's body is the source of the web, the web is not different from the spider. In terms of *Vedānta*, the substance of the web is God's Māyā-śakti (power of illusion), which is manifest from the Real but is not real itself. "Not real" simply means that the features of *māyā* (the *tri-guṇa*, or three modes of material nature - goodness, passion and ignorance) are temporary. Reality is that which is eternal: God and God's Svartūpa-śakti (spiritual energy). The temporary features of the material world are manifestations of the Māyā-śakti, not of God Himself. These features bewil-

der the souls of this world just as flies are caught in the spider's web. They cannot, on the other hand, bewilder God.

### KRSNA IN THE HEART

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
January 6, 1994

I want to ask you something regarding the Supersoul. We know that when the soul is embodied then he has Kṛṣṇa within his heart. I think that I have read in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books that after one gets liberation and goes back to the spiritual world then he still has Kṛṣṇa within his heart, but in His original two-handed form. Do I remember correctly?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 7, 1994

That question is answered in *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.38:

*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena  
santah sadaiva hrdayeṣu vilokayanti  
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svaripam  
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love."

The "heart of hearts" referred to here is not the heart of the material body, in which the *yogī* finds the Supersoul. It is the heart of the soul himself. In the spiritual heart, the pure devotee sees Lord Govinda.



### COUNTERACTING THE INFLUENCE OF KALI-YUGA

Question from Emilia  
January 7, 1994

What influence has Kali-yuga on the devotees as long as we are neophytes? How can we counteract that? Can we overcome it by the guidance of the spiritual master?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 8, 1994

Kali-yuga is all-pervading. The way to not be affected by that influence is a) to break the pillars of sinful life by following the four regulative principles, b) to engage oneself in the *yuga-dharma* (*sankīrtana*), and c) to practice *yukta-vairāgya* (engaging Kali-yuga material facilities in Kṛṣṇa's service wherever possible, otherwise avoiding unnecessary contact with it). All this is to be done under the direction of the spiritual master.

### UNDERSTANDING THE PAS- TIMES OF RĀDHĀ AND KṚṢṆA

Question from Emilia  
January 7, 1994

I'm not on the platform to understand the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but I'm reading Kṛṣṇa book. Will I come to that platform of understanding in this life?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 8, 1994

Yes, it is certainly possible to come to that platform if you understand Kṛṣṇa book correctly, which is not difficult because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's thorough explanation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the light of *Bhāgavata* philosophy. Misunderstanding arises when the Lord's *līlā* is taken as material.

### PRADHĀNA, MAHAT-TATTVA AND PRAKṚTI

Question from Mukhya d.d.  
January 10, 1994

In the translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.4) it is said that the Lord accepted the subtle material energy, which is invested with the three modes of nature and which is related with Viṣṇu. Then in the purport it is said that when the material energy of the Supreme Lord appears, this *guṇamayīṅ* energy acts as a manifestation of the energies of the three modes and it acts as a covering of the Lord's face. Is this subtle material energy an aspect or division of the material energy, or is this just a description of its manifestation? The translation and purport to this verse are a little ambiguous for me.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 10, 1994

The material energy is exhibited by the Lord in two features: *pradhāna* and *prakṛti*. *Pradhāna* is subtle. *Prakṛti* is gross. In Vedāntic terminology, the words *avyakta* or *asad* (unmanifest) are used to identify matter in its subtle state, which is known as the eternal *pradhāna*. When matter is identified with the words *vyakta* or *sat*, then *prakṛti* is being referred to. *Prakṛti* appears out of *pradhāna*, and returns to *pradhāna*. *Pradhāna* is the eternal energy of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. In *pradhāna*, the modes of nature are equibalanced and inert. When Mahā-Viṣṇu glances at *pradhāna*, the three modes are set into motion. The cosmic manifestation arises out of His stimulation of the modes. Matter in the stimulated state, in which the modes compete with one another for supremacy, is called *prakṛti*. Note the following verse (*Bhāg.* 3.26.10):

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*yat tat tri-guṇam avyaktam*  
*nīyaṁ sad-asad-ātmakam*

*pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur*  
*aviśeṣaṁ viśeṣavat*

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The unmanifest eternal combination of the three modes is the cause of the manifest state and is called *pradhāna*. It is called *prakṛti* when in the manifested stage of existence."

Question from Jahnū d.  
April 23, 1994

I haven't really understood the difference between *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna*. Could you please explain?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 1, 1994

Let's start by looking at a verse (*Bhāg.* 3.26.10) that explains the difference between *pradhāna* and *prakṛti*.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*yat tat tri-guṇam avyaktam*  
*nīyaṁ sad-asad-ātmakam*  
*pradhānam prakṛtiṁ prāhur*  
*aviśeṣaṁ viśeṣavat*

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The unmanifest eternal combination of the three modes is the cause of the manifest state and is called *pradhāna*. It is called *prakṛti* when in the manifested stage of existence."

*Prakṛti* means "extraordinary accomplishment" (*pra* = extraordinary, *kṛti* = accomplishment). This word therefore indicates the fully accomplished material creation in which the three modes are active, manifesting the 24 elements.

*Pradhāna* means "extraordinary resource" (*dhāna* = resource). The *pradhāna* is the reservoir of all the ingredients of the material manifestation. In *pradhāna*, the 24 elements are unmanifest because the three modes are not active.

The *mahat-tatva* has something in common with both *pradhāna* and *prakṛti*. That is because it is the via

media between the two. The *mahat-tatva* provides the ingredients for the formation of the material manifestation; therefore, like *pradhāna*, it is the resource of the building blocks of the universe. As with *prakṛti*, the modes of nature are active in *mahat-tatva*, giving rise to manifestations.

In the word-for-word synonyms of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.3.26), *mahat-tatva* is said to be "original *prakṛti*," which we may understand to mean "creative *prakṛti*." That "original" means "creative" becomes very clear when we consider Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation of *mahat-tatva* as "the sum total of cosmic intelligence" in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.19). Intelligence is subtle, and it is passionate and creative. So *mahat-tatva* is the SUBTLE, PASSIONATE and CREATIVE (hence, original) phase of *prakṛti*. As such, the *mahat-tatva* is the *upādāna-kāraṇa*, the source of all ingredients for the gross cosmic manifestation. In other words, it is the total reservoir of the subtle, archetypal 24 elements of material creation (material consciousness, mind, intelligence, false ego, five *mahābhūtas*, five *jīvanendriyas*, five *karmendriyas* and five sense objects). Thus, *mahat-tatva* is "original *prakṛti*."

The *mahat-tatva* is known as Hiraṇmaya (*Bhāg.* 3.26.19), Hiraṇyaṇḍa (*Bhāg.* 5.20.44, word for word) and Hiraṇyagarbha (ŚB. 5.20. intro), names that indicate that the *mahat-tatva* is the golden (*hiranya*) form of Viṣṇu Himself who, as the Mahāpuruṣa (who is addressed in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* hymn as having "thousands of heads" – *sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḥ* – and who is the worshipable Deity of the 4-headed Brahmā) gives shape to creation by accepting the subtle archetypal 24 material elements as His own body – thus these elements of the *mahat-tatva* glow with a golden hue, by association with Him. These names (Hiraṇmaya etc.) are used in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to designate the subtle stage of

\*You may refer to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* Chapter 6 for more information on this form of the Lord, who is described as an *anga* (limb) of Mahā-Viṣṇu, and who appears as Advaita Acārya in the Pañca-Tatva.

creation after Mahā-Viṣṇu glances over Māyā, but before the gross physical universes are formed and individual Brahmās appear within them. The ingredients for the formation of the gross universes are drawn from the subtle *mahat-tatva*.

If you can understand the relationship between *mahat-tatva* and *prakṛti*, understanding the difference between *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna* becomes easier. In the paragraphs above I wrote that *prakṛti* is the fully accomplished material creation of 24 elements, which is manifest out of the activity of the three modes. I also explained that *mahat-tatva* is *prakṛti* in its original subtle creative phase wherein the mode of passion is prominent. Whereas in *pradhāna*, the modes of passion, goodness and ignorance are completely inactive. Thus, there are no manifestations in *pradhāna*, not even subtle ones like the Hiraṇmaya form of the total material elements that manifests within *mahat-tatva*.

Yet *pradhāna* is said to be the "total subtle material energy," "the sum total of the 24 elements," and the reservoir of material ingredients – and so too is *mahat-tatva*. How exactly should we distinguish between the two?

The distinguishing factor is that the *pradhāna* is the total material energy in its INERT subtle state, whereas *mahat-tatva* is the total material energy in its ACTIVE subtle state.

The *pradhāna* is the material nature that is dissolved and wound up within the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu. After the *mahā-pralaya* (destruction of the universe), all material things merge with this *pradhāna*. In the Prayers by the Personified Vedas (ŚB. 10th Canto, Chapter 88), *pradhāna* is compared to honey. Honey consists of many different flower flavors that have been merged together in the beehive. Similarly, *pradhāna* consists of the total material energy merged together in the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu. Subtly, the 24 elements are there within *pradhāna*, but they are inert and inactive, held suspended in the state of *śuṣupti* (total unconsciousness). Thus in the

12th Canto of *Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī compares the *pradhāna* to a void.

But *mahat-tatva* is never compared to a void. *Mahat-tatva* is subtle yet passionate – thus there is creative activity within it. (To better understand the difference between the "active" *mahat-tatva* and the "inert" *pradhāna* with the help of the honey example, think of the *mahat-tatva* as honey dripping out of the beehive, which invites the beekeeper to harvest it for so many purposes).

In terms of total cosmic consciousness, the *mahat-tatva* is equivalent to the *svapna* state of the *jīva*. *Svapna* means "dream." There are three states of consciousness associated with the three modes: *śuṣupti* (unconsciousness) in ignorance, *svapna* (dream) in passion, and *jāgrata* (wakefulness) in goodness. In terms of total cosmic consciousness, *jāgrata* is the manifest stage of material existence in which the universe is fully formed and the living entities are fully active. *Svapna* is the subtle stage of creation (*mahat-tatva*), and *śuṣupti* is the unmanifest state of material existence (*pradhāna*).

So, in conclusion: 1) *prakṛti* is the material nature in full manifestation, when the action of the three modes is fully apparent; 2) *mahat-tatva* is *prakṛti* in its original, subtle, passionate and creative stage, wherein manifestation begins; 3) *pradhāna* is material nature in its unmanifest stage, wherein the modes of nature are inactive and the effects of creation, maintenance and destruction are nonapparent.

The *pradhāna* may also be compared to the unripe womb of a woman in the first days of her menstrual cycle, when impregnation is not possible. The *mahat-tatva* is the ripe womb, which is fertilized by the glance of Viṣṇu who then enters the womb of material energy as the Mahāpuruṣa. The fertilized womb of the *mahat-tatva*, energized by the mode of passion, acts as the *upādāna-kāraṇa* (source of ingredients), and these ingredients take shape as the Hiraṇyaṇḍa (literally, "the Golden Egg") or Hiraṇyagarbha ("Golden Embryo"). This example is especially helpful in understanding why

the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse quoted in the beginning of this explanation states that *pradhāna* is "the cause" of *prakṛti*. It also helps us to see the difficulty of distinguishing between *pradhāna* and *mahat-tatva*. In the initial phase of a woman's pregnancy, it is not easy to tell the difference between the creative state of her womb and the inert state of the womb of a woman who is not pregnant. The difference is very subtle, as is the difference between dream and deep sleep.

The above explanation of *prakṛti*, *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna* focuses on fine technical distinctions that may not always be strictly maintained in the *śāstras*. That's why it is sometimes confusing to differentiate between them when reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-carīāmṛta*. That is just something you have to get used to. It is like this: in ISKCON, we address all women except our own wife as "mother." However, in a strict technical sense, is every woman in ISKCON really a mother? No. Furthermore, is every woman in ISKCON really MY mother, in the strict technical sense of my having taken birth from her womb? Of course not. Therefore, a person who maintains a rigidly technical understanding of the word "mother" may very well get a bit confused hearing a 40 year old *sannyāsī* address a 16 year old *brahmacārīnī* as "mother." Similarly, if we maintain rigidly technical definitions in our minds for *prakṛti*, *pradhāna* and *mahat-tatva*, we may get confused if we find that the *Bhāgavatam* sometimes seems to mix the applications of these words together. Therefore, beyond the fine technical definitions, we should keep in mind the ultimate sense of these terms.

In the ultimate sense, *prakṛti*, *pradhāna* and *mahat-tatva* all co-exist together as features of the Lord's eternal *acit-śakti*, Mahāmāyā. *Acit-śakti* means "unconscious potency," i.e. matter. *Mahat-tatva*, *prakṛti* and *pradhāna* are *acit-śakti*'s simultaneously-existing creative, manifested and inert features. Think of it this way. While the last universes from the previous inhalation of Mahā-Viṣṇu are dissolving from *prakṛti* into *pradhāna*, the first universes of the next exhalation appear out of

*pradhāna* as the golden seeds of *mahat-tatva*. When the Lord inhales again, some older universes begin to dissolve into *pradhāna* while other younger ones are still maturing from the *mahat-tatva* stage into the *prakṛti* stage. Thus the *acit-śakti* continually displays three phases of creation, maintenance and destruction which overlap one another in the time marked out by Mahā-Viṣṇu's breathing. Because the phases overlap and thus co-exist with one another, it is not always that important to maintain a rigid separation of terminology from one phase to the next.

One sense of distinction, however, is important to maintain. That is the sense given by the verse quoted at the beginning, in which *pradhāna* is said to be eternal. The *pradhāna* is eternal because it is inexhaustible. There is an unlimited "stock" of *pradhāna*. The *prakṛti* or manifest creation does not diminish that stock. *Prakṛti* comes and goes, but *pradhāna* is always existing behind it. Therefore, there is no penultimate reality in the FORMS of material nature, only in the SUBSTANCE. That substance, *pradhāna*, is *nirviśeṣa* (without qualities). *Pradhāna* is eternal *nirviśeṣa*. *Prakṛti* is temporary *viśeṣa*. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the example of a clay pot. A clay pot may be admired for its nice shape, but that shape is only temporary. After the shape dissolves, all that will remain of the pot is the element earth. There is always unlimited earth from which clay pots are manifest from and dissolved into.

Therefore, in their PENULTIMATE sense, all terms for material nature, whether *prakṛti*, *mahat-tatva*, *acit-śakti*, *aparā-prakṛti*, all mean only *pradhāna*.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
June 10, 1994

In my answer to Jahnū's question about the relationship between *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna*, I included a paragraph that depicted the appearance of the universes, their maintenance and their destruction by the breath of Mahā-Viṣṇu as happening in gradual phases. This depiction follows an example that compares the universes

to bubbles. My idea was that bubbles generated by breathing will gradually increase in number (not abruptly appear all at once) as long as the exhalation endures. Similarly, when the same bubbles are inhaled, their number will gradually decrease (not abruptly disappear all at once) as long as the inhalation endures. Thus, creation (*mahat-tatva*), maintenance (*prakṛti*) and dissolution (*pradhāna*) should be understood to overlap, and thus co-exist with one another. It is not that the *mahat-tatva* exists when the *pradhāna* doesn't, and the *pradhāna* exists when the *mahat-tatva* doesn't.

It seemed like a nice picturesque example. However, it seems to be contradicted by two verses in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Laṅghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, one by Rūpa Gosvāmī himself, the other from the *Viṣṇu-dharma Purāṇa*. These appear as *Laṅghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 5.328 and 5.329. These state that the universes are destroyed all at once, not gradually (*yugaṇṭha*, or "at the same moment" in 5.328, and *sama-kalam*, or "at the same time" in 5.329).

Let's leave the bubbles in the 7-Up, but keep the philosophical point that the *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna* exist as simultaneous features of the one *acit-śakti* (material energy). Thus, we should not be confused if it seems that these two terms are used interchangeably in the scriptures.

The firmest proof I can offer is this quote from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.26.20:

"Thus, after manifesting variegatedness, the effulgent *mahat-tatva*, which contains all the universes within itself, which is the root of all cosmic manifestations and WHICH IS NOT DESTROYED AT THE TIME OF ANNIHILATION, swallows the darkness that covered the effulgence at the time of dissolution."

That's the point.

Now, if someone asks, "Well, what about *prakṛti*? Does that exist when the universes are destroyed?" We get an answer from the same *Laṅghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (5.329): *prakṛtau tiṣṭhati tadā sa rātris* – "(the universes) are situated in their unmanifest state within the *prakṛti* during Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's night."

These things are inconceivable, but you may remember the quotes provided in the original Danda text on this subject that showed *mahat-tatva* to be the subtle or original *prakṛti*. The universes continue to exist in an unmanifest state within the original *prakṛti* of *mahat-tatva*. Thus *prakṛti*, *pradhāna* and *mahat-tatva* do co-exist as features of the *acit-śakti*.

## VARNĀŚRAMA-DHARMA IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Question from Pracarananda d.  
January 9, 1994

I would like to ask you about the existence of *varṇāśrama-dharma* in the spiritual world. This question appeared recently after a class.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 10, 1994

In Goloka Vṛndāvana, there are devotees like Gargamuni who are *brāhmaṇas*, Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu who are *kṣatriyas*, Nanda Mahārāja who are *vaiśyas*, and there are *śūdras* and even outcastes who live in the forest, but all these devotees are free of the influence of the three modes of material nature. They have assumed these roles for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure and for no other purpose. So this is *daivī-varṇāśrama* (divine or God-centered *varṇāśrama*). *Daivī-varṇāśrama* is also manifest in the material world in the form of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement (this is exactly how Śrīla Prabhupāda defined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, as *daivī-varṇāśrama dharma*). *Daivī-varṇāśrama* is the *varṇāśrama* preached by Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā*. The goal of *daivī-varṇāśrama* is the *parama-puruṣārtha*. The *parama-puruṣārtha* (supreme goal of human life) is love of Kṛṣṇa.

But because of the influence of *māyā*, the *varṇāśrama* seen in the material world is often not

Kṛṣṇa-centered. Mundane *varṇāśrama* is aimed at the *catur-varga* (four lesser *puruṣārthas* – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*).

## PAMHO. AGTSP.

Question from Suśīla d.d.  
January 12, 1994

Some devotees have the opinion that it is not correct to write in a COM message to the spiritual master the abbreviation PAMHO. AGTSP. What do you think? Is it necessary in this question and answer conference to start with PAMHO, AGTSP or should we just ask straight ahead our questions?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 13, 1994

The abbreviation is OK because the intention is to save COM costs by cutting down the number of bytes sent to COM.

But PAMHO is not OK in letters sent through the post or fax, because in these mediums we pay for the weight of the letter mailed or the size of the page faxed. Adding a few more words makes no difference in either case.

## LIBERATION OF ALL LIVING ENTITIES IN THE UNIVERSE

Question from Madhva d.  
January 16, 1994

I heard that after the disappearance of Lord Śrī Caitanya all living entities from this universe were liberated. Please, explain something more about this. Where were we at that time?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 16, 1994

Your question is answered by Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura (C.c. Antya-līlā 3.78-86). Lord Caitanya delivered all *sātvata-jāṅama jīvas* (moving and non-moving living entities), and promoted the *sāksma-jīvas* (undeveloped or unmanifested living entities) to take their place.

Unless some living entities that were liberated by Lord Caitanya have fallen back into the material world, we can understand that the moving and nonmoving living entities now populating this universe were promoted from the *sāksma* state by the Lord's mercy.

What is the *sāksma* state? Spirit souls are *sarvagataḥ* (all-pervading). Actually, everything is spirit. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed in a conversation with Harisadūta that the material world is constructed of particles of spirit, just as the spiritual world is. However, the spiritual atoms of the material world have no sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, therefore they combine to form matter.

These souls merged into the dull material elements are known as undeveloped (*sāksma*). They exhibit no *karmic* activity. They are not within the cycle of *samsāra*; they are totally ignorant. They can be promoted from that state only by the mercy of the Lord.

## KRSNA CONSCIOUSNESS IS TRANSCENDENTAL

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
February 12, 1994

In your answer to Madhva's question, you write that the living entities now populating this universe were promoted from the *sāksma* state, and in one purport Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that one who chants the holy names have already performed all the prescribed Vedic ceremonies, have visited all the holy places and so on. My question is how could we have undergone all those pi-

ous activities in only five hundred years? Perhaps we did not have to undergo them. Please explain this.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purport to *Bhavad-gītā* (4.28) about Vedic ceremonies and pilgrimages: "All these practices are called *yoga-yajña*, sacrifice for a certain type of perfection in the material world. There are others who engage themselves in the studies of different Vedic literatures, specifically the *Upaniṣads* and *Vedānta-sūtras*, or the Sāṅkhya philosophy. All of these are called *svādhyāya-yajña*, or engagement in the sacrifice of studies. All these yogis are faithfully engaged in different types of sacrifice and are seeking a higher status of life. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is, however, different from these because it is the direct service of the Supreme Lord. Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be attained by any one of the above-mentioned types of sacrifices but can be attained only by the mercy of the Lord and His bona fide devotee. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is transcendental."

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (8.28) it is explained:  
*vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaṣu caiva  
dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṁ pradīṣṭam  
atyeti tat sarvaṁ idam viditvā  
yogī paraṁ sthānam upaiti cādyaṁ*

"A person who accepts the path of devotional service is not bereft of the results derived from studying the Vedas, performing austere sacrifices, giving charity or pursuing philosophical and fruitive activities. Simply by performing devotional service, he attains all these, and at the end he reaches the supreme eternal abode."

Therefore, the conclusion is that it does not matter if a living entity has actually performed preliminary pious activities. If he becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious by the mercy of the Lord and His pure devotee, he immediately attains the results of all kinds of pious activities – furthermore he attains that which cannot be attained by them: Kṛṣṇa.

## DEMONS WORSHIP DEVOTEES

Question from Narākṛti d.  
January 16, 1994

In *Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter Eight – The Avatāras*, it is said: "On those planets (Vaikuṅṭha planets) the liberated associates of Kṛṣṇa live eternally, and they are worshiped both by the demigods and the demons." Why do the demons worship Kṛṣṇa's devotees?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 16, 1994

Nārada Muni is a resident of Vaikuṅṭhaloka. He is worshiped by demons like Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, Vṛtrāsura (*Bhāg.* 6.11.18), Mṛgāri the hunter; even a cobra snake became his disciple (snakes are considered demoniac).

## FORM OF THE LORD IN THE HEART OF A DEVOTEE

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
January 20, 1994

I would like to know if that form of the Lord which is situated within the heart of hearts is necessarily the two handed form of Śyāmasundara, or if it can be different according to the relationship of that devotee with the Lord. Let's say a devotee is attached to the Lord in His form of Nṛsiṁhadeva. Is the Lord present within the heart (the soul's heart) of that devotee as Nṛsiṁhadeva or He is there in His Śyāmasundara form?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 20, 1994

This verse (*Bhag.* 3.9.11) answers your question:

*tvam bhakti-yoga-paribhāvita-ḥṛt-saroja  
ṣṣe śrutekṣita-patho nanu nātha puṁsām*

*yad-yad-dhiyā ta urugāya vibhāvayanti  
tat-tad-vapuḥ praṇayase sad-anugrahāya*

"O my Lord, Your devotees can see You through the ears by the process of bona fide hearing, and thus their hearts become cleansed, and You take Your seat there. You are so merciful to Your devotees that You manifest Yourself in the particular eternal form of transcendence in which they always think of You."

## LORD BALARĀMA DURING BRAHMA-VIMOHANA LĪLĀ

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
January 20, 1994

In the story about the Brahṁā's stealing the cowherd boys and the calves (*Brahma-vimohana līlā*), Lord Balarāma wondered why the cowherd men and the cows were so extraordinary attached to their sons and calves. What actually happened to Lord Balarāma at the time of stealing the cowherd boys and the calves, did not he stay with the cowherd boys when Kṛṣṇa left to see where the calves are. Did Brahṁā also steal Lord Balarāma or what happened to him?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 20, 1994

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "Up to this time, even Balarāma was captivated by the bewilderment that covered Brahṁā. Even Balarāma did not know that all the calves and cowherd boys were expansions of Kṛṣṇa or that He Himself was also an expansion of Kṛṣṇa. This was disclosed to Balarāma just five or six days before the completion of the year." (*Bhāg.* 10.13.28, Purport)

Lord Balarāma's whereabouts at the time Brahṁā stole the cows and cowherd boys is not mentioned, either in the Kṛṣṇa Book nor in the 10th Canto Chapter 13 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Since the *śāstra* and the commentators are silent as to where He was at that time, I

will also remain silent. What is clear is that Lord Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* (pastime potency) is so powerful that Lord Balarāma did not know the cowherd boys and cows had been hidden by Brahṁā, and did not know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had expanded Himself to replace the missing boys and cows, until almost one year later. Note that Śrīla Prabhupāda states that Balarāma did not know that He Himself was also an expansion of Kṛṣṇa. That COULD mean that He was also stolen by Brahṁā, and Kṛṣṇa expanded another form of Balarāma to take His place, or it could mean that Balarāma, who is always an expansion of Kṛṣṇa, was not aware of it before this time. Either way, the conclusion is the same: Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastime potency can bewilder even Lord Balarāma.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
February 2, 1994

Raktāmbhara Prabhu reports that his Guru Mahārāja explained in a lecture that Brahṁā stole the cows and cowherd boys on Lord Balarāma's birthday, so therefore He was not present.

Comment by Varnadī d.  
February 5, 1994

This is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.40): "When Lord Brahṁā returned after a moment of time had passed (according to his own measurement), he saw that although by human measurement a complete year had passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after all that time, was engaged just as before in playing with the boys and calves, who were His expansions."

Purport, last paragraph: "On the day when Lord Brahṁā had first come, Baladeva could not go with Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys, for it was His birthday, and His mother had kept Him back for the proper ceremonial bath, called *śāntika-snana*. Therefore Lord Baladeva was not taken by Brahṁā at that time. Now, one year later, Brahṁā returned, and because he returned on exactly the same day, Baladeva was again kept home for His birthday. Therefore, although this

verse mentions that Brahṁā saw Kṛṣṇa and all the cowherd boys, Baladeva is not mentioned. It was five or six days earlier that Baladeva had inquired from Kṛṣṇa about the extraordinary affection of the cows and cowherd men, but now, when Brahṁā returned, Brahṁā saw all the calves and cowherd boys playing with Kṛṣṇa as expansions of Kṛṣṇa, but he did not see Baladeva. As in the previous year, Lord Baladeva did not go to the woods on the day Lord Brahṁā appeared there."

What the exact reason is, for why the stealing of the boys and calves was to take place on the Lord Baladeva's birthday, so as for him to have not been taken, I do not know. There are probably several, as Lord Kṛṣṇa likes to fulfill multiple purposes simultaneously. One reason I have heard though, is that Brahṁā would have had a really hard time stealing the boys and calves and not loosing his four heads had Lord Baladeva been present.

Mahārāja, could you please reflect on this?

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
February 5, 1994

Very good!

This reference lays to rest the question of Lord Balarāma's whereabouts when Brahṁā stole away the cowherd boys and calves. He was at home, celebrating His birthday. As to your question about further reasons why Kṛṣṇa arranged for this pastime to take place at this particular time, there is one more that I know of, which is given in the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāna*: that just after Balarāma's birthday is a very auspicious time for marriage. Soon after Lord Kṛṣṇa returned with His expansion-friends, He requested His father to take advantage of the marriage season by matching up the unmarried *gopīs* to His friends (who were actually Him). Thus, at this great wedding, Śrī Kṛṣṇa married Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and all the *gopīs*. This pastime renders null and void the criticism that Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance with the *gopīs* (which took place later) was immoral.

Thank you for offering this conference the fruit of your careful reading.

## LORD ŚIVA UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MĀYĀ

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
January 20, 1994

Śiva is the husband of Durgādevī, and as such only he can enjoy her. How is it that Śiva is also under the influence of māyā (*Bg.* 7.14, purport *Fboth Brahṁā and Śiva are also under the influence of māyā.*)?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 20, 1994

Śiva, the original mundane male, is the husband of the original mundane female, Durgā. By their sexual combination, all conditioned souls are placed within the material nature. Mundane females are Durgā's expansions. Mundane males are expanded from Śiva. This is explained in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Text 9:

*līṅga-yony-ātmikā jātā  
imā māheśvart-prajāḥ*

"All offspring of the consort of the great lord [Maheśvara, or Śiva] of this mundane world are of the nature of the embodiment of the mundane masculine and feminine generative organs." In other words, a male's masculinity (*līṅgātmikā*) is derived from Śiva, and a female's femininity (*yonyātmikā*) is derived from Durgā.

Males are bewildered when they associate with females, and likewise females are bewildered by the association of males. This bewilderment is called *māyā*. This bewilderment begins with the archetypal *grhasta* couple, Śiva and Durgā. Therefore, it is said that Śiva is influenced by *māyā*, because having accepted Durgā as his wife, he is slightly bewildered by her association.

**MAHĀ-PRASĀDA PRAYER**

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
January 20, 1994

Here in Sofia the devotees are always chanting before taking prasādam the verse which in other temples I have heard to be chanted only on Ekādaśī day. The verse is:

mahāprasāde govinde  
nāma brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave  
svalpa puṇya-vatām rājan  
viśvāso naiva jāyate

Is this verse necessary to be chanted every day or it is enough to just chant Prasāda-sevayā?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 20, 1994

The "mahā-prasāda" prayer is chanted on Ekādaśī because the Prasādaya-sevayā prayer contains the word *anna* (grains). That does not mean that the "mahā-prasāda" prayer cannot be chanted on any other day. What it means is that Prasāda-sevayā should not be chanted on Ekādaśī.

Question by Varnadī d.  
February 5, 1994

What would you say in this regard to the following arguments?

"Anna" does not only mean "grains" but also simply "food" or "foodstuff." In the Prasāda-sevayā prayer it refers to prasāda in general, *sva-prasād-anna dilo bhāi, sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo*

"Now we take this prasāda to our full satisfaction and glorify You - Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." (Songs of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas, p. 46)

Not all prasāda is made of grains.  
If we cannot use a prayer on Ekādaśī because there is a word in it that (might) mean "grains," then where is the limit? Shouldn't we then also avoid using the word "grains" in any other language or while speaking or

even thinking about it? If we cannot sing the Prasāda-sevayā on Ekādaśī because the word *anna* is used in it, then we can also not sing the *gurv-aṣṭaka*:

caur-vidhā-śrī-bhagavat-prasāda-  
svādy-anna-trptān hari-bhakta-saṅghān

"The spiritual master is always offering Kṛṣṇa four kinds of delicious FOOD.

Hoping not to have been too impudent with this question, I remain your humble servant.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 5, 1994

Regarding your question on *anna*, you are right in saying that it may also mean food, but it is a stronger synonym for grains, particularly rice. That's why sweet rice is called *parama-anna*, for instance. When a child is given it is first rice to eat, the ceremony is called *anna-prāśana*.

As to why the "Mahā-prasāda govinde" prayer is substituted for Prasāda-sevayā on Ekādaśī, the limit of my knowledge is that this is the Bengali Vaiṣṇava tradition. I learned about this in India from Acyutānanda Swami, who, having been stationed in West Bengal for ten years, knew all the niceties of Bengali Vaiṣṇava etiquette. I am sure my good friend Bhaktividyāpūrṇa Mahārāja could give a detailed answer to your question - he's a walking encyclopedia on matters of Vaiṣṇava etiquette, especially with regards to cooking and serving of prasādam. I will see him in a few weeks, and if I remember your question, I will ask. Stay tuned.

Comment by Varnadī d.  
February 6, 1994

Thank you very much for your enlightening answer. It shows that although we may sometimes think that we know something, there is always something new or another point of view to be added.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
March 4, 1994

In response to an earlier question by Varnadī d., Bhaktividyāpūrṇa Mahārāja says that when Indians invite one another for meals, they say "Come for *anna*," which means, "Come for rice." The understanding is that nobody eats just rice. Everyone knows that there will also be other preparations. So in this sense *anna* means "food," that along with *anna* (rice) other foodstuffs are served. However, the main foodstuff for human beings is *anna* (rice grains).

**EARTHQUAKES**

Question from Suṣīla d.  
January 22, 1994

What is the Vedic explanation for earthquakes?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 22, 1994

Earthquakes and all forms of catastrophe are the result of too many accumulated sinful reactions. Thus material nature punishes humanity with all sorts of calamities, of which earthquakes are one.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
January 25, 1994

As an example of how earthquakes are reactions to sinful life, I just read today that practically all of the studios and distribution outlets of the US pornographic video industry were located directly at the epicenter of the recent LA earthquake. It was all destroyed.

**FIVE KINDS OF  
CONDITIONED CONSCIOUSNESS**

Question from Marcus  
January 22, 1994

How many subtle bodies do we have? In esoteric circles, it is said that we have five different subtle bodies, i.e. Astral body, Causal body etc. One of these bodies disappears if the gross body dies. Where is it described in the śāstras to give proper contra arguments to these rascals?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
January 22, 1994

We have only one subtle body, called the *līṅga-śarīra*, made up of mind, intelligence and false ego. However, within that one subtle body are *kośās* (sheaths) of conditioned consciousness, numbered as five: *annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya*. When the mind is oriented towards eating, it is in the *annamaya* phase. When it is oriented towards physical endeavors, it is in the *prāṇamaya* phase. When it is oriented towards mental activity, it is in its *manomaya* phase. When it is oriented towards intellectual discrimination, it is in its *vijñānamaya* phase. When it is oriented to spiritual happiness, it is in its *ānandamaya* phase. The impersonal conception of spiritual happiness is not free of mental conditioning; therefore it is called *vimukta-mānina* (the mental idea of liberation). That *ānandamaya* is therefore still a feature of the subtle body, "the last snare of *māyā*," as Śrīla Prabhupāda said about merging into the Brahman effulgence. Real *ānandamaya*, which is beyond the subtle body and beyond impersonalism, is attainable only in the spiritual body, the *svarūpa* of the soul. The causal body (*kāraṇa-deha*) is the *līṅga-śarīra* that has been purified by mystic yoga. It is called *kāraṇa-deha* because in this subtle body endowed with mystic power one can reach the edge of the spiritual world, the causal ocean (*kāraṇa-jāl*), but one

can enter into Vaikuṇṭha only with the *siddha-deha* (spiritual body). The four Kumāras reached the gate of Vaikuṇṭha in their *kāraṇa-deha* forms, but they could not enter.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
February 2, 1994

Here are some further details about the subtle body.

The gross physical body is called the *sthūla-śarīra*. It is nourished by consciousness in the *annamaya-kośa*. *Anna* means "grains"; when Lord Kṛṣṇa states in *Bhagavad-gītā* that all living beings live by grains, he is speaking of living beings in the *annamaya* conception who nourish their gross bodies by eating. The *annamaya* conception is predominant in Bhūir-loka (the earthly region of the universe). In other words, those in the *annamaya* conception cannot be promoted beyond the earth.

The *līṅga-śarīra* (consisting of mind, intelligence, and false ego which together form the *ceṭanā* or conditioned consciousness, which is loosely called "the mind") also includes the subtle *karmendriyas* (five working senses), the subtle *jñānendriyas* (five knowledge-acquiring senses), and the five *prāṇas*. Living beings who are not so much concerned with the nourishing of the gross body, who are in the conceptions of *prāṇamaya, manomaya* and *vijñānamaya*, identify with the *līṅga-śarīra*. Such beings include the civilized humans who live on the earthly Bhūriloka, the denizens of the Bhuvar-loka (where water or liquidity predominates - the example is the moon, which is cooling and nectar-producing because of the predominance of the watery element), and the denizens of the Svarga and Maharlokas, where fire predominates.

The planet of Brahmā is the goal of those in the *ānandamaya* conception (the conception that spiritual bliss is achieved by becoming one with Brahman). They aspire to merge into the existence of Brahmā and go with him to the region of Mahā-Viṣṇu (the *kāraṇa-jāl*) when the universe is destroyed. Those who are less ad-

vanced dwell in the Jana and Tapalokas, where the airy element predominates. Those who are more advanced reside in Satya or Brahmaloaka itself, where ether is the predominant element. The residents of Jana, Tapa and Satyalokas are advanced in the eight *yogic* perfections. They have transcended even the *līṅga-śarīra*. Their forms are called *kāraṇa-deha* (causal bodies). The causal body is fully endowed with mystic powers. It is not engaged either in subtle or gross sense gratification, like the *līṅga-śarīra* and *sthūla-śarīra*.

The *kāraṇa-deha*, however, is not free of the false ego. Therefore these mystics are generally attached to their powerful positions within the universe, and when Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu breathes the universes out again, they return to their former posts in the Satya, Tapa and Janalokas.

**ANNAMAYA, PRĀṆAMAYA, ...**

Question from Rājāvidyā d.  
February 14, 1994

What is the exact śāstric source of the analysis *annamaya, prāṇamaya, etc.*? Where in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books can we find the most complete description of this subject matter?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 14, 1994

My main source for the intricate details is the *Govinda-bhāṣya, Vedānta-sūtra* commentary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhāṣana, and my secondary sources are the books of BNK Sharma, a Vaiṣṇava scholar of the Madhva Dvaita-Vedānta line, whom I, Kṛṣṇakṣetra Prabhu and Bhaktivaiṣṇava Swami met in Udiipi a few years ago. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives a basic explanation of *annamaya, prāṇamaya, etc.* in the Kṛṣṇa Book chapter entitled Prayers by the Personified Vedas. He gives a briefer summary of these in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.15.12-15.

## NASA DEMONS AND THE FACE ON MARS

Text by Suhotra Swami  
January 26, 1994

The following information has nothing directly to do with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but it is interesting, and some members of this conference may be able to use it in preaching/publication.

You may have heard reports on August 22, 1993, of the disappearance near Mars of a NASA space vehicle named the Mars Observer. The mission of this spacecraft was to photograph the surface of Mars with a camera 50 times more powerful than the one used by the Viking probes, which photographed Mars in the 1970's.

There is a lot of controversy about the disappearance of the Mars Observer that goes unreported in the general press. First, some background:

In NASA, there is an inside joke about a "Great Galactic Ghoul" which seems to foil missions to Mars, especially those attempted by the Russians. The Russians launched two probes to Mars in 1960. Both failed to reach Earth's orbit. In 1962, the USSR tried again, twice. The first was stranded in Earth orbit. The second disappeared from radio contact just ten weeks before it was to reach Mars. In 1965 the Russians lost another Mars probe, called Zond 2. In 1971 they launched the Mars two and three spacecrafts. One crashed on Mars, the other landed safely but went dead after 20 seconds on the surface of the Red Planet, and in 1989, the Russian Phobos probes got lost in space. NASA had better luck. The first US Mars probe, Mariner 3, failed in 1964, but Mariner 4 was able to fly by Mars in 1965, sending back 22 pictures. In 1969, Mariners 6 and 7 sent back 200 pictures, and in 1971 Mariner 9 became the first US space probe to orbit Mars. In 1976, two Viking probes orbited and photographed Mars, then landed on the surface and took more pictures and ran tests.

Among the Viking orbital pictures are two very controversial images of a region of Mars known as Cydonia, in which there appears to be artificial structures: a huge humanlike face (or maybe it is more accurate to say Hanumān-like), some pyramids and a formation known as "the fortress." NASA's official claim is that these were just the result of tricks of light and shadow, but computer enhancement of the pictures indicates that these landforms really have symmetrical shapes, as if they were constructed by intelligent beings. Then NASA claimed in a report (to a US Senator, no less) that it had other photos taken from different angles that proved "the face" etc. were just natural formations, but NASA never published these photos; later, the statement concerning "other photos" was removed from that report.

When the Mars Observer mission was announced, a group of non-NASA scientists formed an organization they called the Mars Mission. Its purpose was to make sure that NASA would rephotograph Cydonia. The Mars Mission group applied political pressure, forcing NASA to give its assent. However, the scientist in charge of Mars Observer's camera operation, who had been hired by NASA but was not a member of the agency, flatly said that there are no artificial structures on Mars, and that the mission of Mars Observer was not to look for evidence of Martian life – so photographing Cydonia would not be his priority concern. In other words, though NASA had "officially" agreed to do a fly-over of Cydonia, the camera operator declared his unwillingness to take pictures of the region. The Mars Mission group saw the handwriting on the wall – NASA's consent guaranteed nothing.

A much-respected independent scientist (allied neither with NASA nor the Mars Mission group), whose name is Professor Stanley McDaniel, started an investigation into the controversy between NASA and Mars Mission, which of course was an embarrassment to the US scientific establishment. McDaniel's field is the history and ethics of science. An advance copy of his report was hand-delivered to the head scientist of the

Mars Observer program, Dr. Bevan French, on August 20, 1993 – just two days before NASA announced the disappearance of the spacecraft, which at that time was just completing its approach to Mars.

In the report, McDaniel revealed his discovery of a protocol within NASA to hide information from non-NASA inspection, particularly information regarding the discovery of evidence of life on other planets. According to a NASA document from 1961, the space agency considered that its confirmation of extraterrestrial life "would be electrifying" to "fundamentalist and other anti-science" sects. Moreover, the report stated that "scientists and engineers might be the most devastated by the discovery of relatively superior creatures, since these professions are most clearly associated with the mastery of nature." McDaniel's report is an academic indictment of NASA's own claim of being "the most open agency in [the US] government" (these are the words of NASA Public Affairs Officer Don Savage).

Two days later (Sunday, August 22) Dr. French (head of the Mars Observer program) then debated the head of the Mars Mission group, Richard C. Hoagland (who formerly worked for NASA), on ABC's Good Morning America. This was the first public confrontation over the McDaniel report between NASA and Mars Mission, and Dr. French did not do well in the debate. He simply avoided talking about the censorship issue.

Here is the most interesting fact of all: right after this debate ended, NASA announced the failure of the billion-dollar Mars Observer spacecraft. It had disappeared. Moreover, NASA revealed that the spacecraft supposedly disappeared 12 hours BEFORE the announcement was made. NEVERTHELESS, DR. FRENCH NEVER MENTIONED THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SPACECRAFT DURING HIS DEBATE WITH HOAGLAND. When asked why, he blandly replied, "I was not asked how the mission was doing."

Hoagland suspects that the Mars Observer is working fine, but is transmitting its data to NASA on a secret encrypted radio frequency.

## TRANCE IN THE WOMB

Text by Suhotra Swami  
January 27, 1994

Every devotee knows that Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī remained in trance for 16 years within the womb of his mother. Probably we think of this yet another miraculous example of spiritual power, which it certainly is. Yet for a nondevotee, this is simply unbelievable, because nothing like this ever happens in the "real" world, or...?

Today in Chichester, England, there lives a young woman named Tina Houghton. While she was within the womb of her mother, Tina went into an unexplained "hibernation" – in other words, a trance. During that time, the fetus-form that was Tina's body stopped growing, and when the normal time of birth came due, nothing happened. Tina stayed within the womb for 13 months before she finally took birth. Not that there is anything of transcendental significance in her birth, but her case shows that the *Bhāgavatam* account of Śukadeva Gosvāmī's birth should not be dismissed as fantasy by someone with only material vision, because even in the modern world babies go into trance within the womb and take birth much later than usual.

## LOST SKILL

Joke by Suhotra Swami  
January 28, 1994

"Guruji, it is said that Kṛṣṇa could speak to the animals."

"Yes, my dear disciple, that is true. Actually, all of us have the same skill, though most of us have forgotten it."

"Can you teach me this lost skill, oh guru?"

"Certainly. Let us start with speaking with wasps. This is what you should say: 'Aargh! It is a wasp! Get off me! Go away!'"

## VARNA-SAṅKARA

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
January 31, 1994

*I was listening to one of your very old lectures. You were explaining something very interesting about how Lord Śiva (Saṅkara) is giving possibility to ghosts taking birth as varna-saṅkaras. However the explanation remained unfinished, because the tape ended. I tried to find something about this in Prabhupāda's books, but I did not. Would you kindly explain this?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

If you could not find in Prabhupāda's books about Śiva's placing ghosts in the wombs of women having illicit sex, it must be that you did not read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto Three, Chapter 14, starting with verse 24. Also, read the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.17.15.

## PRĀHLĀDA MAHĀRĀJA POISONED BY HIS FATHER

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
January 31, 1994

*Very often, I hear from devotees how Prāhlāda Mahārāja offered poison to Lord Nṛsimhadeva, when he*

*was forced to drink it, but I do not remember reading it anywhere. Is this a bona fide statement?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

In a 1973 *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda said the following about Hiranyakaśipu's attempt to poison Prāhlāda. As far as I know, this is the only record of an elaboration by Śrīla Prabhupāda on this particular event. Perhaps Śrīla Prabhupāda did tell someone that Prāhlāda offered the poison to Lord Nṛsimhadeva when there was no tape recorder running, but I have never heard about it. You ask those who tell this story, "Why did Prāhlāda offer poison to the Lord?" Below is all that I know for sure. Śrīla Prabhupāda said about Hiranyakaśipu's giving poison to Prāhlāda:

"Just like Prāhlāda Mahārāja, his father was putting him in so many dangerous conditions, even he was supplying with poison. He knew that 'My father has given me poison to drink. All right, let me drink. If Kṛṣṇa likes, He will save me. I am now put into such dangerous position. I have to drink. Father is giving poison. Who can check?' And such a big powerful Hiranyakaśipu. The mother cried, requested... He forced the mother, Prāhlāda's mother, 'Give your son this poison.' So she begged so much, but he was a rascal demon. 'No, you must give.' So the mother knew, the son knew that the rascal father is giving this poison. What can he do, a small child? 'All right, let me drink.' *Gurunāpi duḥk-hena na vicālyate*. He is not agitating. 'All right, if Kṛṣṇa likes, I will live.' This is the position of *sādhu*. He is not agitating. 'All right, if Kṛṣṇa likes, I will live.' This is the position of *sādhu*. He is not disturbed. *Tirikṣavah*. In all circumstances, he is tolerant. That is *sādhu*. *Sādhu* does not become disturbed. *Tirikṣavah*. At the same time, *kāruṇikāh*. He is himself disturbed, but he is merciful to others."



Comment by Suhotra Swami  
February 2, 1994

Regarding Prahlāda's offering poison to Nṛsiṅhadeva, although I do not have a specific reference from Śrīla Prabhupāda for that, there is the following one for "offering" wine (that is, remembering that Kṛṣṇa is the taste of liquid). So, in this sense at least, it can be said that Prahlāda offered the poison, because he knew the taste of all liquids, including poison, is Kṛṣṇa. So the story Bhāgavata-dharma d. has referred to can be understood in this way.

A quote from a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda is next: "It is not difficult to remember Kṛṣṇa. Here Kuntidevi describes Kṛṣṇa with reference to lotus flowers. Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa describes Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*. He says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*: 'I am the taste of liquids.' So one can remember Kṛṣṇa by tasting water. Even if one is drinking liquor, if he thinks, 'The taste of this drink is Kṛṣṇa,' he will one day turn out to be a great saintly person. So I can request even drunkards to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, what to speak of others, because Kṛṣṇa says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*: 'I am the taste of liquids.' Generally, in this context "liquid" is taken to mean water, but liquor is also liquid; it is only sugar and molasses or some other combination fermented and distilled. Of course, it is bad because it creates intoxication. Although in one sense nothing is bad, liquor is bad because it creates bad effects. In America, there are many drunkards. There is no scarcity of them, but I may request even the drunkards, 'When drinking wine, kindly remember that the taste of this drink is Kṛṣṇa. Just begin in this way, and one day you will become a saintly, Kṛṣṇa conscious person.'" (*Teachings of queen Kuntī*, Chapter 5)



## CATUR-VYŪHA AND LORD VĀSUDEVA

Question from Mukhya d.d.  
January 31, 1994

*In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.26.21) Lord Vāsudeva is described as Kṛṣṇa alone, without His internal potency. I remember I have heard from devotees that Vāsudeva is Kṛṣṇa without Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. What is the special significance of this form of Kṛṣṇa? We always hear that Kṛṣṇa is never separated from His eternal consort.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

Here are two relevant citations from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 5.41, purport): "The quadruple forms have a spiritual existence that can be realized in *vāsudeva-satva* (*suddha-satva*), or unqualified goodness, which accompanies complete absorption in the understanding of Vāsudeva. The quadruple forms, who are full of the six opulences of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, are the enjoyers of the internal potency. Thinking the absolute Personality of Godhead to be poverty-stricken or to have no potency – or, in other words, to be impotent – is simply rascaldom. This rascaldom is the profession of the conditioned soul, and it increases his bewilderment. One who cannot understand the distinctions between the spiritual world and material world has no qualification to examine or know the situation of the transcendental quadruple forms."

[Comment: the quadruple forms are Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha; note that Śrīla Prabhupāda says they are indeed enjoying Their internal potency.]

"In his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, verses 80-83, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has refuted the charges directed against the devotees by Śrīpāda Saṅkarācārya regarding their explanation of the quadruple forms Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. He says that

these four expansions of Nārāyaṇa are present in the spiritual sky, where They are famous as Mahāvastha. Among Them, Vāsudeva is worshiped within the heart by meditation because He is the predominating Deity of the heart, as explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.3.23).

"Saṅkarṣaṇa, the second expansion, is Vāsudeva's personal expansion for pastimes, and since He is the reservoir of all living entities, He is sometimes called *jīva*. The beauty of Saṅkarṣaṇa is more than that of innumerable full moons radiating light beams. He is worshipable as the principle of ego. He has invested Anantadeva with all the potencies of sustenance. For the dissolution of the creation, He also exhibits Himself as the Supersoul in Rudra, irreligiosity, *ahi* (the snake), *antaka* (death) and the demons.

"Pradyumna, the third manifestation, appears from Saṅkarṣaṇa. Those who are especially intelligent worship this Pradyumna expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa as the principle of the intelligence. The goddess of fortune always chants the glories of Pradyumna in the place known as Ilāvṛta-varṣa, and she always serves Him with great devotion. His complexion appears sometimes golden and sometimes bluish like new monsoon clouds in the sky. He is the origin of the creation of the material world, and He has invested His creative principle in Cupid. It is by His direction only that all men and demigods and other living entities function with energy for regeneration.

"Aniruddha, the fourth of the quadruple expansions, is worshiped by great sages and psychologists as the principle of the mind. His complexion is similar to the bluish hue of a blue cloud. He engages in the maintenance of the cosmic manifestation and is the Supersoul of Dharma (the deity of religiosity), Manu (the progenitor of mankind) and the *devatās* (demigods).

[End of quote]

For the purpose of creating, maintaining and destroying the material world, the *catur-vyūha* exhibit specific expansions. The Vāsudeva described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.21) is the state of pure goodness,

which manifests within the *mahat-tatva* by the grace of Lord Vāsudeva in Vaikunṭha. Saṅkarṣaṇa manifests the *tamasic* state of the *jīva* under false ego and the gross sense objects, Pradyumna manifests the passionate intelligence of creation, and Aniruddha manifests the mundane goodness of the mind. Vāsudeva is "Kṛṣṇa alone" in the sense of the Lord's being always above the material cause and effect. To come to clear consciousness, one's meditation on the Lord must be free of material desires. Thus, one meditates upon Vāsudeva alone, who appears within the *mahat-tatva* as the Supersoul. Within the *mahat-tatva*, Saṅkarṣaṇa is represented by Śiva, Pradyumna as Brahmā and Aniruddha by the demigods, but Vāsudeva is the Lord alone.

Because of His expanding the energies of creation (as Pradyumna), maintenance (as Aniruddha) and destruction (as Saṅkarṣaṇa), Lord Vāsudeva seems to be without His internal potency. Thus He is meditated upon as being alone, by those who desire to get free of the three modes of material nature, but His internal potency is eternally with Him in Her form of Yoganidrā. Below is the verse from *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.17) that explains this:

*atha tais tri-vidhair veśair  
līlām udvahaṭṭhāṅ kila  
yoga-nidrā bhagavatī  
tasya śrīr iva saṅgatā*

"Thereupon the same great personal Godhead, assuming the threefold forms of Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Śambhu, entering into the mundane universe, plays the pastimes of preservation, creation and destruction of this world. This pastime is contained in the mundane world. Hence, it being perverted, the Supreme Lord, identical with Mahā-Viṣṇu, prefers to consort with the goddess Yoganidrā, the constituent of His own spiritual [cit] potency full of the ecstatic trance of eternal bliss appearing to His own divine personality."

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
June 6, 1994

Here's a little more light on a previous question from Mukhya d.d. about the following quote from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.21, purport): "Vāsudeva is Kṛṣṇa alone. When Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu, is alone, without the accompaniment of His internal energy, He is Vāsudeva. When He is accompanied by His internal potency, He is called Dvārakādhiśa."

In a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture from 1974, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Kṛṣṇa does not go away from Vṛndāvana, but when He has other business to do, He does it as Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva is in Mathurā. Vāsudeva is in Dvārakā, but original Kṛṣṇa is in Vṛndāvana." If we carefully consider the pastimes He exhibits in Mathurā and Dvārakā, we will find that in Mathurā Lord Vāsudeva is "alone." He displays no conjugal pastimes with His internal energy, either as the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana or as the queens of Dvārakā. It is only when Vāsudeva is established in Dvārakā that Rukmiṇī and the other queens join him (see Kṛṣṇa book, Chapter 52). In Dvārakā, Lord Vāsudeva is known as Dvārakādhiśa.

## INFLUENCE OF EVIL STARS

Question from Pracārānanda d.  
February 1, 1994

*I would like to ask you about how devotees should see astrology. This question came to my mind after Mrṅendra Prabhu put an article on astrology on Free Forum, but it has been bothering me for some time. It seems to me that sometimes devotees adjust their lives to what "planets say." Personally, I am a bit skeptical about the subject.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

Here is a quote from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.4.37, purport): "It is sometimes said that when one is influenced by evil stars like Saturn, Rāhu or Ketu, he cannot make advancement in any prospective activity. In just the opposite way, Prahlāda Mahārāja was influenced by Kṛṣṇa, the supreme planet, and thus he could not think of the material world and live without Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the sign of a *mahā-bhāgavata*."

Therefore, devotees should always remain under the influence of the Kṛṣṇa-graha (the Kṛṣṇa planet).

The GBC is preparing a philosophical paper on astrology that should become official in the next GBC meeting in Mayapura.

## MANVANTARA AVATĀRA

Question from Govinda Mādhava d.  
February 1, 1994

*Is this an avatāra which appears for a specific manvantara period (one per manvantara), or is it the Manu himself?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

In the Purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Mādhya 20.246), Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly refers to the *manvantaras* as "avatāras of Manu." They are a special category of incarnation of Kṛṣṇa.



## RĀDHĀRĀNĪ, SUBHADRĀ, YOGAMĀYĀ, MAHĀMĀYĀ....

Question from Govinda Mādhava d.  
February 1, 1994

Is the internal energy of Kṛṣṇa Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or Yogamāyā? Is Yogamāyā the same as Subhadrā, the sister of Kṛṣṇa?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 1, 1994

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *ādi-śakti* (original potency). All other forms of *śakti* (including Lakṣmī, Subhadrā and even the external potency Mahāmāyā) expand from Rādhārāṇī. In a lecture Śrīla Prabhupāda said the original Yogamāyā is Rādhārāṇī. Yet within the one *śakti* are distinctions. Thus, Yogamāyā is also said to be distinct from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is the *hlādinī-śakti* (pleasure potency). For more information on this, refer to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.57, Purport. It is exactly the same with Kṛṣṇa: He is the original Supreme Person from whom all other forms of God emanate. So in one sense, He includes all other forms of God. Yet, they are nonetheless distinct from Him.

## DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS OF LIVING ENTITIES

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 11, 1994

Please correct if I am wrong and if possible please mention references in the śāstra.

The soul goes:

to:	when:
hell	to much sin
earth	not much sin not much pious activity

heavenly planets brahmajyoti	much pious activity free from material desire
Vaikuṅṭha Goloka	servant of viṣṇu-tatva servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

1. HOW TO GO TO HELL  
How one attains hell in the next life is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.26.6:

*yatra ha vāva bhagavān pitr-rājo vaivasvataḥ sva-  
viṣayaṁ prāpīteṣu sva-puruṣair jantuṣu sampareteṣu  
yathā-karmāvadyaṁ doṣaṁ evānullaṅghīta-bhagavac-  
chāsanaḥ sagoṇo damān dhārayati.*

"The King of the *pitās* is Yamarāja, the very powerful son of the sun-god. He resides in Pitrloka with his personal assistants and, while abiding by the rules and regulations set down by the Supreme Lord, has his agents, the Yamadūtas, bring all the sinful men to him immediately upon their death. After bringing them within his jurisdiction, he properly judges them according to their specific sinful activities and sends them to one of the many hellish planets for suitable punishments."

2. HOW TO RECEIVE AN EARTHLY HUMAN BIRTH

One may attain a human form by gradually being promoted life after life from a condition of hellish punishment:

*adhastan nara-lokasya  
yāvatr yātanādāyāḥ  
kramaśāḥ samanukramya  
punar atīrvrajat chucih*

"Having gone through all the miserable, hellish conditions and having passed in a regular order through the lowest forms of animal life prior to human birth, and having thus been purged of his sins, one is reborn again as a human being on this earth." (ŚB. 3.30.34)

Or one may attain an earthly human form after falling down from heaven:

*annaṁ reta itī kṣmeṣā  
pitr-yānaṁ punar-bhavaḥ*

*ekaikaśyenānupūrvam  
bhāvā bhūtvēha jāyate*

"Then, however, the performers of sacrifice descend again to earth to become herbs, creepers, vegetables and food grains. These are eaten by different living entities and turned to semen, which is injected into female bodies. Thus one takes birth again and again." (ŚB. 7.15.51)  
The same applies to unsuccessful *yogīs* (either mystic yogis or *bhakti-yogīs*), who come down from a life in heaven:

*prāpya punya-kṛtām lokān  
uṣṭivā śāsvaṭṭh samāḥ  
śucīnām śrīmatām gehe  
yoga-bhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate*

"The unsuccessful *yogī*, after many, many years of enjoyment on the planets of the pious living entities, is born into a family of righteous people, or into a family of rich aristocracy." (Bg. 6.41)

A man who is too attached to his wife may get an earthly woman's body in his next life. A woman may likewise receive an earthly man's body.

*tām eva manasā grhṇan  
babhūva pramadantamā  
anantaram vidarbhasya  
rāja-simhasya veśmani*

"King Purānjana gave up his body while remembering his wife, and consequently in his next life he became a very beautiful and well-situated woman. He took his next birth as the daughter of King Vidarbha in the very house of the King." (Bhāg. 4.28.28)

3. HOW TO GO TO HEAVEN

One attains heaven via two paths: *deva-yāna* and *pitṛ-yāna*. These paths are explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.50-56. These are also known as the path of light

and the path of darkness (Bg. 8.26). The *deva-yāna* path is the mystic path to Brahmaloaka via the higher planets. How a mystic yogi elevates himself along this path is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.23-26. The *pitṛ-yāna* is the path of pious fruitive work to Pitrloka or Candraloka, where the living entity enjoys heavenly sense gratification. So the heavenly world is attainable by mysticism and by pious fruitive activities. *Bhāgavad-gītā* (6.40-41) explains that an unsuccessful *bhakti-yogī* also attains heaven.

4. HOW TO ATTAIN THE BRAHMAJYOTI

One attains the Brahmajyoti by worship of Lord Brahmā (Bhāg. 2.2.2-7) and by practice of mystic yoga (Bhāg. 1.13.53-57). The Brahmajyoti is reached by *jñānīs* and *yogīs* who are not pure in intelligence (Bhāg. 10.2.32). The pure devotees attain the Brahmajyoti, but they pass through it to finally reach the personal form of the Lord (Bhāg. 3.33.26, 29, 30; Śrī *Īsopaniṣad*, Mantra 15). The demons also attain the Brahmajyoti by being killed by the Lord (Bhāg. 2.7.34-35).

5. HOW TO ATTAIN VAIKUNṬHA AND GOLOKA

The abode of the Supreme Lord is attained by those who have developed transcendental attachment (*rati*) for Him. There are two kinds of *rati*: *aīśvarya-jñāna* and *kevala*. They are explained in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 19.192-193):

*punaḥ kṛṣṇa-rati haya duita prakāra  
aīśvarya-jñāna-mīśrā, kevalā-bheda āra*

"Attachment for Kṛṣṇa is divided into two categories. One is attachment with awe and reverence, and the other is pure attachment without reverence."

*gokule 'kevalā' rati—āīśvarya-jñāna-hīna  
puri-dvaye, vaikuṅṭhādye—āīśvarya-pravīna*

"Pure attachment without reverence is found in Goloka Vṛndāvana. Attachment in which awe and reverence are prominent is found in the two cities Mathurā and Dvārakā and in Vaikuṅṭha."

## TULSIDAS'S RĀMĀCARITAMANASA

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 11, 1994

Is it wrong to read and quote from Tulsidas Ramāyāna in order to preach to Hindus in order to establish ISKCON philosophy.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Śrīla Prabhupāda once gave a lecture on the first verse of Tulsidas's *Rāmācaritamanasa*. He did this at the request of a Hindu lady. Otherwise, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that book is not very authorized because it is tinged with Māyāvādī philosophy. Therefore, I would not say it is wrong to read and quote from that book to reach Hindus with Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, but one should be careful not to become contaminated.

## BLOOD TRANSFUSSION

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 11, 1994

Is it forbidden to have blood transfusions? Does karma sit in blood?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Conversations with Śrīla Prabhupāda, Perth, May 16, 1975:

Guest (2): Are blood transfusions permissible, Swami?

Paramahansa: He says, "Are blood transfusions permissible?" When one is in an accident or cut and he loses blood, they take another man's blood and put it. He says...

Prabhupāda: Well, that is not bad. Because if one life is saved by transfusion admission... He is not dying. He is living. He is contributing his blood. So if he is contributing, you are saving some life, there is no harm.

## UGRA-KARMA IN HOSPITALS

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 11, 1994

Is it murder when a doctor doesn't treat the patient anymore by switching the machines off causing death to the patient?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Allopathic medicine is a product of the mode of ignorance. Therefore, it is full of *ugra-karma*, including the killing of patients when their life-support machines are turned off. Therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda compared hospitals to slaughterhouses.

## TRANSPLANTATIONS IN ŚĀSTRA

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 11, 1994

What does the śāstra say about transplantation of parts of a body?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Śiva transplanted an elephant's head to the neck of Gaṇeśa. He transplanted a goat's head to the neck of Dakṣa. The *Āsvini* kumārās replaced Dadhyah's head with a horse-head, then took away that head and put back the original one. There are other such accounts of transplantation in the *śāstras*.

**TRIDANDI-BHIKSU**

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
February 12, 1994

*What does tridandi-bhikṣu mean?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

*Tridandi-bhikṣu* means a renunciate (*bhikṣu*, which literally means "one who begs his meals") who carries the *tridanda* (Vaiṣṇava *danda*).

**PAÑCA-TATVA MAHĀ-MANTRA**

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
February 12, 1994

*Is it true that the Pañca-tatva mahā-mantra is even more powerful than the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

Yes. Once Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the *Pañca-tatva mahā-mantra* is 1000 times more powerful than the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. I predict your next question will be: "Why do not we just chant the *Pañca-tatva mahā-mantra*?" The answer is, because Lord Caitanya told us to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

**ONE NEVER RETURNS TO THE MATERIAL WORLD**

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
February 12, 1994

*Can you give a more elaborate answer to the question; why are we here in the material world, even though Kṛṣṇa asserts that once having attained the spiritual sky*

*one never returns to the material world? I was asked this question a few times in classes, but I could never really satisfy the devotees with my answers.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

This is a foolish question. Yes, Lord Kṛṣṇa says one never RETURNS to the material world once he has gone back to the spiritual world. Only after we go back to Godhead is there a question of RETURNING to the material world. When we came for the first time to the material world, we were not RETURNING here. Perhaps you should look up the word RETURN in the dictionary.

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
May 24, 1994

*After reading your answer to my question regarding the living entities' returning to the material world, one other question comes to my mind. Is it that all living entities were initially in the spiritual sky, or were some never actually there?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 24, 1994

The simple answer is yes. All living entities are originally with the Supreme Lord, but they may not have realized their relationship with Him, and thus He places them in the material world to give them a chance to serve Him here, and thus go back home, Back to Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda compared the relationship of the unrealized souls to the Lord to the relationship of a son to his father, before the father has impregnated the mother. There is surely a connection between father and son even at this stage, but it is unrealized and unmanifest.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
June 8, 1994

I answered very briefly concerning the previous question, here are two relevant quotes.

Letter to Jagadīśa of April 25, 1970:

"Yes, the conditioned souls are parts and parcels of the Lord and thus they were with Kṛṣṇa before being conditioned. Just as the child must have seen his father because the father places the child in the womb of the mother, similarly each soul has seen Kṛṣṇa or the Supreme Father, but at that time the conditioned souls are resting in the condition called *śuṣupti* which is exactly like deep sleep without dream, or an anesthetized state, therefore they do not remember being with Kṛṣṇa when they wake up in the material world and become engaged in material affairs."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.26.22 and Purport:

"After the manifestation of the *mahat-tatva*, these features appear simultaneously. As water in its natural state, before coming in contact with earth, is clear, sweet and unruined, so the characteristic traits of pure consciousness are complete serenity, clarity, and freedom from distraction."

PURPORT: "The pure status of consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, exists in the beginning; just after creation, consciousness is not polluted. The more one becomes materially contaminated, however, the more consciousness becomes obscured. In pure consciousness one can perceive a slight reflection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As in clear, unagitated water, free from impurities, one can see everything clearly, so in pure consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one can see things as they are. One can see the reflection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and one can see his own existence as well. This state of consciousness is very pleasing, transparent and sober. In the beginning, consciousness is pure."

Observation by Suhotra Swami

A fuller meaning of these two quotes from His Divine Grace may be appreciated by studying them to-

gether. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse and purport describes the state of consciousness of the living entity just after he is first placed in the womb of the *mahat tattva* by the Supreme Father, Kṛṣṇa. It is clearly stated that at this point the consciousness of the living entity is unpolluted. Thus, he can see a slight reflection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At this point, the living entity is still spiritually situated; in fact, from the verse we can understand he is still in *Vaikuṅṭha*. *Vaikuṅṭha* means "the place of no anxiety." Akrūra saw the very reflection of Lord Kṛṣṇa indicated here in the waters of the *Yamunā*. Akrūra indeed saw the *Vaikuṅṭha* where the He lays upon *Śeṣa* surrounded by His creative energies in the form of the demigods when he took his bath at the border of *Ymādvana* on the way to *Mathura*.

Such a vision of the Lord is seen in a trance of ecstasy, but the living entity's relationship with the Lord is not fully manifest as *vastu-siddhi*. Thus, as the creative process unfolds, the living entity may be overcome by forgetfulness and ignorance. Thus he slips into *śuṣupti* and forgets his eternal tie to the Lord.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
June 10, 1994

On topic, namely the previous text with quotes about the living entity's spiritual situation before entering the material world. I suppose there is a lot more that could be asked about this. I did not mean for this answer to completely address what for many devotees is the "ultimate question" - how did the spirit soul fall down in the first place?

All I want to show is that the living entity certainly was transcendently situated before entering the material sphere. Also, do not take this as my answer to the question, "Was the spirit soul originally in one of the personal *rasas* with Kṛṣṇa before he fell down?" Obviously, the answer I gave focuses on the soul who is not active in *rasa*. Still, he was in the spiritual world (i.e. with the Supreme Lord) before he came to the material

world. That's clear. That's as far as Bhagadatta's question went.

If someone wants answers to the *rasa* question and the "how did we fall down?" question, there is as some of you may know a compilation of material available from *Dravida* and *Drutakarma* Prabhus. I could add a bit more to what they've provided, I guess, but does it really matter so much?

**KNOWING KṚṢṆA IN FULL**

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
February 12, 1994

*What does it mean to know Kṛṣṇa in full?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
February 12, 1994

This question could be answered in many ways without answering it in full, because Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, but in a 1970 *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda said full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa means to know *īśvara*, *jīva*, *prakṛti*, *kāla* and *karma* (the five subject matters of *Bhagavad-gītā*). In the same lecture he said it means to know that Kṛṣṇa's appearance and activities are transcendental (*janma karma ca me divyam*).

**POSITION OF THE DEMIGODS**

Question from Śrīdāmā d.  
February 27, 1994

*Could you please explain, what is the position of the demigods within the 8,400,000 species of life? Do they belong to 400,000 of human species or do they constitute a separate class of living beings?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 4, 1994

In answer to your question, here is a quote from Chapter Six of the Science of Self Realization.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda: The human being should exert his energy for that thing which he did not get in many, many lives. In many, many lives the soul has been in the forms of dogs, or demigods, or cats, birds, beasts, and many others. There are 8,400,000 different types of bodies. So this transmigration of the soul is going on. The business in every case is sense gratification."

[End of quote]

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states:

*jalajā nava-lakṣāni  
sthāvarā lakṣa-viṁśati  
kṛmayo rudra-sankhyakāḥ  
pakṣiṇāṁ daśa-lakṣaṇam  
triṁśat-lakṣāni paśuśaḥ  
catur-lakṣāni mānuṣāḥ*

"There are 900,000 species life in the water, two million varieties of trees and plants, 1,100,000 varieties of insects, one million types of birds, three million types of animals, and 400,000 different types of humankind."

This adds up to 8,400,000 species. Where are the demigods? Here's an excerpt from a conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda to help us understand how the demigods fit into the 8,400,000 species: "Devotee: Do the number of demigods have something to do with the number of species, like there are thirty-three million demigods?"

"Prabhupāda: There are thirty-three million. Thirty crores. There are also divisions. *Gandharvas*, *Apsarās*.

"Svarūpa Dāmodara: Do they belong to these species? They are also included in these eight million four hundred? These *Gandharvas*?"

"Prabhupāda: Yes.

"Svarūpa Dāmodara: So they are counted, what, as human beings?"

"Prabhupāda: Some of them are *devatās*, some of them are human being.

"Rūpānuga: When we say four hundred thousand species of human beings, that doesn't include all the demigods then.

[End of quote]

The conclusion is that among the 400,000 human species are included lower forms of demigods like the *upadevas* (*Gandharvas*, *Kinnaras*, *Kimdevas*, etc.). The more important demigods are considered above the 8,400,000 species of *samsāra* life. This is important: the 400,000 human forms are the pinnacle of the wheel of *samsāra*. The higher demigod forms are not attainable by the normal evolution of the soul, which brings the living entity from plant to animal to human forms. The higher demigod forms are reserved for living entities who are especially empowered by the Lord to serve Him as universal administrators – just as Bali Mahārāja was empowered by Lord Vāmanadeva to become Indra in the next *manvantara*. Unless they are cursed or liberated, when the great demigods die they do not fall down into lower species but take birth among the demigods again. It is the living entities who worship the demigods and who take birth on their planets to serve them as *upadevas* who fall down to earth after death.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

December 17, 1994

Yesterday I reviewed the questions and answers in the Danda conference, which are saved on the Athens temple computer hard disk. I am not happy with the answer I gave to a question by Śrīdhāma d. (his question and the answer are stored on the old "kom" database, which some newer members of Danda may not have seen).

In my answer, I replied that the higher demigods constitute a separate class of living beings, above the 8,400,000 species. I gave evidence from a talk Śrīla Prabhupāda had with some disciples, and also argued that the higher demigods are empowered agents of the Lord whose positions are not attainable by ordinary *karma*, but are awarded by the Lord Himself in return for service. Thus, they are considered liberated, free

from *samsāra*. The 8,400,000 species refers to species within *samsāra*.

Yesterday I was surprised to read that answer. It is misleading and needs correction.

In his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.33, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes as follows:

"There are 8,400,000 species of living beings beginning from the highest intellectual being, Brahmā, down to the insignificant ant, and all of them are enjoying the material world according to the desires of the subtle mind and gross material body.

That is very clear.

In the previous answer, the quote I employed to show that the higher demigods are not within 400,000 human species is actually a statement of Rūpānuga d., not Śrīla Prabhupāda himself:

"Svarūpa Dāmodara: So they are counted, what, as human beings?

"Prabhupāda: Some of them are *devatās*, some of them are human being.

"Rūpānuga: When we say four hundred thousand species of human beings, that doesn't include all the demigods then.

It should be noted that Śrīla Prabhupāda replied to Rūpānuga d., "The demigods are like human beings."

There are various quotes from the *śāstras* that concern this question, and I will present some of them below. Finally, we must adhere to Śrīla Prabhupāda's presentation of the *śāstra*. He clearly declared the 33 million demigods to be part of 400,000 human species.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.10.26) states that the human beings all belong to only one specie. Moreover, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.10.29) states that the demigods are a separate creation from the human beings, and are comprised of eight types or species, which are *devas*, *pitrs*, *asuras*, angels (*Gandharvas* and *Apsarās*), *Yakṣas* and *Rākṣasas*, ghosts (*Bhūtas*, *Pretas* and *Pīśacas*) and *Vidyādharas* and *Kinnaras* (superhuman beings and celestial singers).

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.14.5), purport, offers a quote from Śrīla Madhvācārya. Therein 90 million demigods and 70 million sages are counted. They are all *siddha*, or liberated, although only a few among them are pure devotees of the Lord.

But though there may be eightkinds of demigods, or 33 million, or 90 million, and though in Madhva's *Vedānta* ontology demigods are classified as *vimuktas* (released from bondage), that does not mean that Śrīla Prabhupāda's inclusion of the demigods up to Brahmā himself within 400,000 conditioned human species is contradicted.

The demigods are associates of the Lord "without personal touch" (*Bhāg.* 1.15.49, purport). They are *siddhas* and *vimuktas*, but still they occupy posts described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.14) as *doṣa-grbhīta-guṇām*, "tainted with the faults of the material qualities." Even the post of Brahmā is *doṣa-grbhīta-guṇām*. Thus, Śrīla Madhvācārya places these *vimuktas* demigods in the category of *duḥkha-sprṣtas*, or those who are associated with material woes. They experience suffering in the mind. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.10.26), where humans are said to be one species different from the demigods, the humans are also said to be *duḥkhe* – in misery. Suffering is the thread of commonality between the demigods and human beings. Thus, demigods may also be counted amongst the species of human beings.

In conclusion, though it is possible to assemble a novel conclusion from the above quotes, Śrīla Prabhupāda gives us the final answer. We should stick to it.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

December 17, 1994

Apropos of the previous text, one may wonder how 33 million or even 90 million kinds of demigods can fit into 400,000 species of humankind.

These numbers come from different sages cited in the *śāstras*. All Vedic authorities are *māyām madhyām*, "under the shelter of My mystic potency" (Lord Kṛṣṇa

speaking to Uddhava, *Bhāg.* 11.22.4). In this verse the Lord explains, "All such philosophers spoke under the shelter of My mystic potency, and thus they could say anything without contradicting the truth." In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.7), the Lord says, "O best among men, because subtle and gross elements mutually enter into one another, philosophers may calculate the number of basic material elements in different ways, according to their personal desire."

The Lord thus answered a question posed by Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.1-3) about the various enumerations of material elements that are given in *śāstra* by different authorities. Uddhava wondered why Kṛṣṇa told him there are 28 elements, whereas some Vedic authorities say there are 26, 25, 27, 7, 9, 6, 4, 11, 17, 16 or 13.

The answer to Uddhava's question may be applied to the calculation of the species of life. In one place (*Padma Purāna*), 8,400,000 species are described, out of which 400,000 are human beings, with no mention of demigods as being distinct from human beings. Yet, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* third canto, chapter 10, humans are said to comprise one specie, while demigods are of eightkinds. Elsewhere 33 million demigods are mentioned and 90 million. I just found a lecture in which Śrīla Prabhupāda said there are 200,000 human species out of 8,400,000 total species. (Is he reserving the other 200,000 for the demigods?)

The point is, we should stick to the statements of authorities. For us, the foremost authority is Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Śrīla Vyāsadeva of the modern age.

## PŪRNA - COMPLETENESS

Question from Raghunātha d.  
February 28, 1994

I have read in the *Jaiva Dharma* that the *nitya-siddhas* comes from *ci-śakti* and that they are *pūrṇa* (perfect). The other souls come from the *īva-śakti* and they are

not *pūrṇa* (not perfect). The *Upaniṣads* say that the Lord is *pūrṇa* and everything that comes from Him is *pūrṇa*. Please explain the right way to understand this matter.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

March 4, 1994

Yes, the material world and the conditioned souls within it are called *pūrṇa* in the invocation to the *Īṣopaniṣad*, because the world emanates from the supreme *Pūrṇa*. Though the material world is *pūrṇa* (complete), it is not independently complete. Due to *māyā*, the conditioned soul thinks he is independently complete, and that is the cause of his falldown. The living beings of the spiritual world know that their completeness depends upon the Supreme Whole. Therefore, they are always engaged in serving the Supreme. That is their qualification for living in the Lord's own transcendental abode.

## QUARREL OF TWO BRĀHMANAS

Question from Vaikuṇṭheśvarī d.d.

March 3, 1994

We can read that the *brāhmaṇas* had a quarrel over a cow, and they cursed King Nrga. Why did they have this quarrel and why couldn't they give up the cow?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 28, 1994

The quarrel of the two *brāhmaṇas* was not due to material attachment. It was an argument over *śāstric* injunction. A *brāhmaṇa*'s actions must stand upon knowledge, realization and proper religious principles (*jñānam vijñānam āstikyam* – see Bg. 18.42). Therefore if two *brāhmaṇas* have a different understanding of a *śāstric* injunction, it is not uncommon for them to debate (*nāsau munir yasya mataiṇa bhinnam* – "unless a *brāhmaṇa* gives his own unique interpretation of the scriptures, he is not known as a *muni*, a sage"). In addi-

tion, remember that this argument took place under the will of Kṛṣṇa so that Mahārāja Nrga would be delivered from illusion.

## FAINTED PRADYUMNA

Question from Vaikuṇṭheśvarī d.d.

March 3, 1994

How could Pradyumna have fainted, when he fought with mace and Dyumna kicked him, if Pradyumna possessed Kṛṣṇa's qualifications?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 28, 1994

Even Lord Kṛṣṇa sometimes shows such weakness when fighting the demons – for instance, when Śālva, by his magic, killed an illusory Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa's father), Kṛṣṇa momentarily showed grief. There are many examples of this. Such displays of weakness make the pastime more thrilling. Kṛṣṇa and His servants are always victorious in the end.

## CITRAKETU'S OFFENCE

Question from Vaikuṇṭheśvarī d.d.

March 3, 1994

I read that King Citraketu fell down, because he committed offenses against the lotus feet of Lord Śiva. How did this happen?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

May 28, 1994

This history is narrated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 6, beginning with Chapter 14. In brief, Citraketu expressed amazement at Lord Śiva's sporting with Mother Pārvatī in the presence of great sages. Greatly offended, Pārvatī-

devi cursed him to become the demon Vrtrāsura. However, Lord Śiva himself was not offended.

### SANNYĀSA TITTLE IS ADDED

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*I read that it is forbidden in ISKCON to change the names of sannyāsīs, but we heard that some devotees have changed their names after getting sannyāsa initiation. Why does it happen?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

The name does not actually change. Simply a *sannyāsī* tittle is added. Śrīla Prabhupāda's initiated name is Abhaya Caranaravinda d.; when he received the *sannyāsī* tittle Bhaktivedanta, he retained his initiation name as A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. Similarly, the former Avināsa Candra d. is now A.C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami, and Anirdeśa Vapu d. is A.V. Bhaktividya-pūrṇa Swami.

### PARVATA, NĀRADA AND DAMAYANTĪ

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*I read that once Nārada and Parvata had difficulties because of Mahārāja Śrījaya's daughter. Could you tell us more about it?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

Nārada and Parvata Munis once stayed at the palace of Mahārāja Śrījaya to observe *cāturmāsya*. They were served by the king's daughter, whose name was Damayantī. Parvata Muni noticed that Damayantī seemed to

serve Nārada with greater devotion, and so he mentioned this to Nārada, who remarked, "Yes, I think so too." This made Parvata Muni angry, because he and Nārada have an agreement to reveal one another's mind to each other. So when Nārada said, "Yes, I think so too," that meant Nārada had already noticed Damayantī's special affection to him but had not said anything before about it to Parvata Muni. Therefore Parvati Muni got angry and broke his friendship with Nārada Muni. Later they became friends again.

### STARS IN THE SKY

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*I do not understand the situation of the stars on the sky. Are they persons? Are they women? Are they a kind of men, or are they demigods? Why are they appearing in the sky in this shining form? What is the significance of the constellations?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

There are 33 million demigods. Shining with the effulgence of their pious credits, they reside in the sky as the stars along with other elevated personalities. Their respective positions form the constellations – for instance, the Big Dipper or Great Bear constellation (Ursa Major) are the positions of the Seven Sages (Sapta Rsis).



### UNALLOYED AFFECTION FOR THE LORD

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.11.36) Cupid (Kṛṣṇa) was affected so much to see the behavior of the queens, that he gave up his bow. Why did this happen?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

The point to learn here is simply that the pastimes of the Lord with His queens in Dvaraka or the *gopis* in Vṛndāvana are transcendental. This is explained in the Purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.11.36. Therein Śrīla Prabhupāda writes as follows: "This unalloyed affection for the Lord is never to be compared to mundane lust. It is purely transcendental. And the grave dealings, which the queens displayed in natural feminine ways, were also transcendental because the feelings were expressed out of transcendental ecstasy. It is already explained in the previous verse that the Lord appeared like a mundane husband, but factually His relation with His wives was transcendental, pure and unconditioned by the modes of material nature."

### ĀCĀRYAS NEVER DISAGREE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in the Kṛṣṇa Book that the comments of Śrīdhara Swami to the Bhāgavatam are accepted by every Vaiṣṇava. However, we could see (SB. 1.12.23.) that the comments of Viśvanātha Cakra-*

*vatrī and Jīva Gosvāmī are sometimes different from each other. Why?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

The Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura never disagree with one another, but they do point out different ways of understanding the Lord's instructions and activities. These different understandings are harmonious. The Lord is compared to a jewel. Depending up the angle of vision, a jewel may glow with red, green or blue light. These colors do not contradict one another. They are the glory of the jewel. Similarly, Vaiṣṇavas may point out different aspects of the Lord's instructions and activities, which are all glorious. They do not contradict one another.

### KANVA, DUŠYANTA AND ŚAKUNTALĀ

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*Kanva Muni cursed Dušyanta Mahārāja to forget his wife Śakuntalā. Why did he curse the king?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

If you care to know more about this, you may read the *Mahābhārata* or Kalidās's work named *Śakuntalā*. Śrīla Prabhupāda says this is just a mundane love story. I do not care to comment on it.



### KṚṢṆA DRESSED IN TEN DIRECTIONS

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*In the purport of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.12.11) it is stated that: "Kṛṣṇa is mentioned as one who is dressed in the ten directions. This means dressed with garments on ten sides, up and down." What does it mean in detail?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

Kṛṣṇa is known as Lokapāla, the guardian of all directions. The directions are North, Northeast, East, Southeast, South, Southwest, West, Northwest, Up and Down.

### SLEEPWALKER AND DREAM INTERPRETATION

Question from Vaikuṅṭheśvarī d.d.  
March 3, 1994

*What is the cause if someone (a devotee) walks or talks in his sleep? Could we interpret the dreams?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 28, 1994

Usually when one dreams, the subtle body detaches from the gross body and acts in the subtle realm. If the subtle body remains with the gross body during dreaming, the gross body may talk and even walk during sleep. Regarding the interpretation of dreams, that is a Vedic science. It is explained in Chapter 229 of the *Agni Purāṇa*.

### NITYĀ AND NAIMITTIC AVATĀRAS

Question from Pūrṇaprajña d.  
March 9, 1994

*Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma, Nṛsiṃha, they are various pastimes forms of the Lord, Viṣṇu-tatva, not different from Him. In what forms do they manifest in the spiritual world? In forms of a boar, fish etc. or in the four-handed forms of the Lord Nārāyaṇa? For instance there is one form of the Lord Nārāyaṇa called Nṛsiṃha. What happens to a devotee who worships the Lord in one of these forms, after leaving his body?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 11, 1994

In a letter to Ekayani Dasi dated 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 1970, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

"So far the Avatāras are concerned there are two types. One is called *nitya* and the other is called *naimittic*. *Nitya* means eternal and *naimittic* Avatāras appear for some specific function in the material worlds. *Nitya* Avatāras have their eternal abodes in the spiritual sky from which they may sometimes descend to the material worlds, but *naimittic* Avatāras are expansions of *Nitya* Avatāras for some timely purpose. So the non-human forms of Avatāras do not have their planets in the spiritual sky."

In the Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter Seven, (Unlimited Forms of Godhead), the following statement appears:

"The conclusion is that the Supreme Original Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. He is called *līlā-puruṣottama*, and He resides principally in Vṛndāvana as the son of Nanda. It is also learned from the *Hayasīrsa-pañcārātra* that there are nine forms protecting each of the two Puris known as the Mathurā Purī and the Dvārakā Purī: Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha protect one, and Nārāyaṇa, Nṛsiṃha, Hay-

agrīva, Varāha and Brahmā—protect the other. These are different manifestations of the *prakāśa* and *vilāsa* forms of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

All forms of the Lord are aspects of *līlā-puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead. So regarding the forms of Matsya, Varāha and Nṛsiṅha in the spiritual world, this is the first consideration – the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is the origin of these forms. He is like a jewel, and the features of Matsya, Varāha etc. are like glinting colors that can be seen within the jewel. In the material world, some of Kṛṣṇa's expanded forms display *naimittika* (occasional) qualities, such as non-human features. The most important thing to understand is that whether the *avatāra* forms are *niryā* or *naimittika*, they are all aspects of Kṛṣṇa's original form.

### SOUND ENCIRCLES THE EARTH

Question from Rati-mañjarī d.d.  
March 15, 1994

*I have heard that all sound goes around the earth seven times. Is that true? Where is it stated? Why is it so?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 16, 1994

In a lecture given in 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda stated the following:

“So Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, and if you are devotee, then you can catch Him. This is the secret. Just like electricity is everywhere, electrons. One who can tackle the electrons, they can talk without any direct connection by electronic method, thousand thousand miles away. Just like radio message, television message. So similarly, Kṛṣṇa is also everywhere. Just like the waves of sound wave is going on. As soon as you produce, I produce one sound, immediately within a second the sound goes round the earth seven times.”

In a talk with Śyāmasundara d., Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that sound is the vibration of ether, and ether (*ākāśa*) is the most subtle of the great material elements (*mahābhūtas*). Therefore, the potency of sound is so wide-ranging, that within an instant any vibration encircles the earth seven times.

### THE BEST IS TO FEED VAIṢNAVA

Question from Rati-mañjarī d.d.  
March 15, 1994

*I was wondering how forefathers accept śraddhā offerings. Then I heard that you have once said: Through feeding brāhmaṇas, and through feeding birds(?). Is this so? Are there other ways also?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 16, 1994

The best way is to feed a pure Vaiṣṇava. Advaita Ācārya therefore gave the *śraddhā-patra* (plate of foodstuffs meant for the forefathers) to Haridāsa Thākura. This was a little controversial, because in Hindu tradition a caste *brāhmaṇa* is selected to eat on behalf of the forefathers. However, Advaita Ācārya told Haridāsa Thākura, “Feeding you is equal to feeding ten million brāhmaṇas. Therefore, accept this *śraddhā-patra*.” (C.c. Antya 3.222)

### BHAYAM DVIṬIYĀBHINIVEŚATAH SYĀD

Question from Rati-mañjarī d.d.  
March 15, 1994

*In one of your lectures, you spoke on vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhāḥ, and how devotees have to become free from these things. You said this bhaya refers to the fear of*

*one's personal identity in spiritual life. Can we say then that all fears originate from that type of fear?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 16, 1994

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37) explains that fear is the result of presuming that there is some other reality besides God (*bhayaṁ dviṭyābhiniveśataḥ syād*). *Dviṭyā* means “second.” When we think that besides Kṛṣṇa, there is some second source of happiness (i.e. *māyā*), we are immediately plunged into fear. The example is given of our acceptance of this body as the self. Actually, our real self is spirit, which is non-different from Kṛṣṇa. The body represents a “second” conception of the self as something completely different from Kṛṣṇa. If we accept that conception, we must also accept the fear of losing this body.

### NUMBER OF VERSES IN ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Question from Rājavidyā d.  
March 17, 1994

*In the Garuḍa Purāṇa, it is stated that the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam contains 335 chapters and 18'000 verses, and that is what we always say.*

*But now, I actually counted all the verses in all the cantos both in Śrīla Prabhupāda's edition as well as in the one from Motilal Banarsidas, and this is what I have found:*

First Canto	19 chapters	808 verses
Second Canto	10 chapters	393 verses
Third Canto	33 chapters	1416 verses
Forth Canto	31 chapters	1449 verses
Fifth Canto	26 chapters	668 verses
Sixth Canto	19 chapters	851 verses
Seventh Canto	15 chapters	750 verses
Eighth Canto	24 chapters	931 verses

Ninth Canto	24 chapters	960 verses
Tenth Canto	90 chapters	3936 verses
Eleventh Canto	31 chapters	1367 verses
Twelfth Canto	13 chapters	565 verses
TOTALS	335 chapters	14'094

*In other words, the number of chapters is correct, but somehow or other, there is a considerable amount of verses less than expected.*

*Does anyone know where the 3906 missing verses are?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
March 23, 1994

The answer was provided by Dharmarāja d., who revived an earlier text by a leading disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, addressing this subject. I personally received this answer but I do not know if other members of the Danda conference did also. Just to make sure that all Danda participants see it, I am sending the answer (below) to the Danda conference.

[From COM Text]:

“There are no verses lost from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. All the 18,000 verses are there. Here is a quote from a commentary of Satya Nārāyaṇa d. from *Taitrya Sandarbha*. It explains how to count the verses... ‘According to the *Matsya*, *Viṣṇu* and *Skāṇḍa Purāṇas* and the *Nārada-Pañcarātra*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* should have 18,000 verses. No one has any disagreement over this point. Gangasahaya, the writer of *Anvītartha Prakāśa* counted all the words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* including the *uvāca* and chapter endings, added them up and divided it by 32 to convert the whole *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into *anuṣṭup* verses. This is the standard way to count the number of verses. He did this thrice and his calculation was short by one and half verses.”

### WOMEN – THE LOWER CLASS?

Question from a Melbourne lady  
April 20, 1994

*Suhotra Swami: Aniruddha Prabhu sent a private COM letter to me that contained a question addressed to him from a lady congregational member. He was not sure if the question was appropriate for Danda. I think it is, so it will be answered here. The lady wants to know why women are included in the lower classes in the Vedic scriptures.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
April 20, 1994

The Vedic scriptures are many, and they may be categorized according to *karma-kāṇḍa*, *jñāna-kāṇḍa* and *upāsanā-kāṇḍa* (i.e. the portions of the Vedas that deal with fruitive work, transcendental knowledge and worship of God). The *karma-kāṇḍa* scriptures are intended to reform persons who are in the bodily concept of life. Within *karma-kāṇḍa* are the *dharma-sāstras*, which lay down the rules and regulations for the *varṇas* and *āśramas*. It is in these scriptures that the status of women is defined. Women are said to be in the class of dependent persons, like children and *śūdras*. Thus they must be protected throughout their lives by father, husband and sons. Whether they are wives of brāhmaṇas, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* or *śūdras*, their *dharmaic* perfection is in being a faithful servant of their husbands and good mothers to their husbands' sons.

The *varṇāśrama* definition of the woman's role in society just suits the female nature. After all, women are as a class generally weaker than men, physically, emotionally and intellectually. They therefore need protection. Moreover, where can be the argument about a woman's biological function of mothering children? *Varṇāśrama* prescribes the means by which the female nature may be naturally dovetailed in the service of Kṛṣṇa – thus pointing the way back home, Back to Godhead for the soul in the woman's body.

Modern people may say such a definition of a woman's role in society is “patriarchal” and even “misogynist,” but what social system have they invented that can surpass Kṛṣṇa's own *varṇāśrama-dharma*? Actually, such people are simply barbarians who can understand only one social principle: sense gratification, which is the principle of animal society. In the *varṇāśrama* system, the *guna* (natural quality), *karma* (natural propensity of work and its reaction) and *dharma* (divinely ordained purpose) of the human being are the key factors of civilization. Yet in modern society these factors are totally ignored or totally misunderstood. Those who condemn the Vedas are themselves condemned to blunder about in the darkness of social, moral, and religious “experimentation” – which again amounts to little more than animalism.

Actually, women are not inferior to men under *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Both are equally bound by scriptural injunctions. The upper-caste male is expected to serve his *guru* with as much care and attention as a wife serves her husband. A man who accepts a wife must return her service in so many ways (e.g. by protecting and caring for her). He must also respect all other women besides his wife just as he respects his own mother. Śrīla Prabhupāda said therefore that the men are not “superior” to the woman under Vedic injunction: they simply serve in different ways. He is Kṛṣṇa-dāsa, she is Kṛṣṇa-dāsi.

In a higher sense, however, it is true that a woman's position is inferior according to Vedic injunction – because the Vedic injunctions are themselves inferior, meant as they are for living beings trapped in the inferior material energy of the Lord. The superior situation of the living entity is seen in the state of pure love of Godhead, which surpasses even the spiritual perfection obtained through *siddha-yoga*. This is nicely explained in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.8.45. The example given is of Mother Yaśodā, who is a woman, yet God Himself has come into her hand as

her small child. So, by her love for Kṛṣṇa, she has made the Supreme Being her "inferior" and "dependent."

### QUOTING SUPERIOR DEVOTEES

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
April 30, 1994

*Sometimes I hear far out descriptions from the śāstras from you and also from other devotees with references. I'm wondering if it is ok to repeat these descriptions in lectures or not? The question arises because some devotees, after hearing these nectarine insights into the śāstras, wonder if they should believe what I say or not.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 2, 1994

One is always safe when he quotes superior devotees. If you simply say, my Guru Mahārāja said, or this spiritual master said, then where is the question of anyone disbelieving you? If there is a question of disbelief, it can't be directed to you because you are just quoting others. However, you should make sure that you yourself have understood the quote correctly and can defend it philosophically. Do not just quote something, and then when you are asked how it should be understood, you just answer, "I dunno, I'm just saying what so-and-so said ... far out, isn't it?" That's not good preaching.

### SPIRIT SOUL QUESTIONED THREE TIMES BY KṚṢṆA NOT TO LEAVE HIM

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
April 30, 1994

*Is this a bona-fide statement? While the living entity is falling from the spiritual world, he is asked by Kṛṣṇa*

*three times not to leave him, in the form of Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 2, 1994

In some talks I have given I remarked that Śrīla Prabhupāda said that Kṛṣṇa requested the spirit soul three times not to leave the spiritual world, and I pointed out that as the spirit soul progresses through his relationship with each of three *puruṣa-avatāras* on his way into material existence, there is an opportunity to take shelter of each form of Viṣṇu. In *Brahma-samhitā*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura writes that when the living entities emanate from Sankarṣaṇa (Mahā-Viṣṇu), that have a chance to surrender to Him and be incorporated in Vaikuṇṭha. According to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 3, when the living entities collectively appear within the Hiraṇyagarbha (see the previous Danda text on *mahat-tatva* and *pradhāna* for a full explanation), they have the chance to surrender to Him and thus be born in Brahmaloaka to serve him there (Hiraṇyagarbha or the Mahāpuruṣa is the worshipable Deity of Brahmā). Finally, according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto four, when the living entity first appears in the human form, he gets an opportunity by the grace of Paramātmā in the heart to receive Vedic knowledge from a spiritual master and execute Vedic *dharma*, so that after one birth from the womb of a mother he may go back home, Back to Godhead. If he doesn't take that chance but engages in sense gratification, he's entangled in *samsāra* and thus must accept repeated birth in the 8,400,000 forms of material bodies.

So there's a symmetry between what Śrīla Prabhupāda said and the opportunity offered the living entity in his relationship with each *puruṣa-avatāra* as he descends into the material realm from the spiritual realm. Though I have pointed out the symmetry, I do not intend to say that one equals the other.

### KṚṢṆA IS NOT DVĀPARA-YUGA AVATĀRA

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
April 30, 1994

*Is Lord Kṛṣṇa considered to be the Dvāpara-yuga Avatāra? If yes, why did he appear at the end of that yuga?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 2, 1994

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya are Svayam Bhagavān, the original form of the Lord, not expansions. So it is not correct to say that Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the "Dvāpara-yuga avatāra." Rather, He takes the place of that *avatāra* once in a day of Brahmā, just as Lord Caitanya takes the place of the *avatāra* in the Age of Kali once in Brahmā's day. Their purpose in doing so is to give special mercy, coinciding with the purpose of the regular *avatāra* of the age. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa is the *pūrṇa-avatāra* or *avatāra-avatāri* (source of all *avatāras*), the Dvāpara-avatāra is included within Him.

Why did Kṛṣṇa appear at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga? Well, why not? Is there some higher authority that Kṛṣṇa has to report to, to answer why he came so late in the Dvāpara-yuga? He comes and goes when and where He likes. This reminds me of the question one devotee put to Prabhupāda, "Why did not Lord Caitanya go to the Western countries if He came to deliver the whole world?" Which Śrīla Prabhupāda answered by saying, "Because He gave that for me to do." There's really not much sense in this line of inquiry.



### RIGHT-HAND AND LEFT-HAND TANTRA

Question from Vaidyanātha d.  
May 3, 1994

*In the 4th Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.2.29) Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions, "In the initiation into Śiva mantra there are mudrikāṣṭaka, in which it is sometimes recommended that one make his sitting place on the vagina and thus desire nīrvāṇa." I came across this passage translating the book. To translate it properly I need to know what mudrikāṣṭaka is, and how we should understand the expression "sitting place on the vagina." Outside of this, it would also be interesting to know how this is connected with the desire for nīrvāṇa. Could you elaborate on this?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 3, 1994

It would seem that *mudrikāṣṭaka* (which Bhaktividyāpūrṇa Mahārāja, who is here with me in Greece, thinks means "eightmudrās") has something to do with the *Tantrika-pañca-ma*, though I am not sure, not being a Tantric myself. *Pañca-ma* means "five M's," five words that begin with the letter M which are important in Tantric practice. They are *māmsa* (meat), *matsya* (fish), *mada* (wine), *mudrā* (hand symbols and *yoga* postures) and *matīnyā* (sex). Tantrics are initiated into the ritual use of these items in their *pūjā* of Śiva-Śakti (Lord Śiva and Durgā-devī, represented by the *liṅga* and *yoni*, the male and female genitalia either worshiped separately or combined together in one image that is worshiped in Śiva and Durgā temples).

The word *tantra* refers to a tradition of worship (*tantra* means "book," particularly books that supplement the Vedas; the *tantras* are also called *āgama-śāstras* to differentiate them from the Vedas, the *nigama-śāstras*). The Vaiṣṇava system of Deity worship comes from the *Nārada-pañcarātra* and other Vaiṣṇava

*tantras* and *āgamas*. Just as we have our tradition of worship, so do the Śāktas (worshippers of *Śakti*) and the Śaivites (worshippers of Śiva), who are in the mode of ignorance. They are also known as Tantrics.

In Tantra there are two paths, the right-hand (*dakṣiṇa-bhāga mārga*) and the left-hand (*vāma-bhāga mārga*). On the right-hand path, the *pañca-ma* are employed only symbolically in temple *pūjā*. On the left-hand path, Tantrics directly engage in eating meat and fish, drinking wine and engaging in sex while practicing "yoga." The "making of the vagina as one's sitting place" can therefore be understood symbolically and literally, depending on the path of Tantra. In Śiva Kañcīpuram in South India is the Kamakoti Pīṭham, the headquarters of the Kañcī Śaṅkarācārya (Māyāvādī "Pope"), where the main deity worshiped is the *yoni* (vagina) of Durgā-devī. Sometimes small versions of this deity appear on ISKCON altars as those brass *ācamana* pots called *koṣa-koshi*, which when you see them you'll think look fish-shaped. The *koṣa-kōṣī* is actually the symbol of Durgā's vagina, and why they end up on ISKCON altars I do not know – I suppose ISKCON *pūjārīs* eager to be "authentic" buy them in India and bring them home. However, Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava temples in India do not use *koṣa-kōṣī*. Anyway – the Kañcī Śaṅkarācārya sits in the Kamakoti Pīṭham where he worships and meditates on the vagina of Durgā to attain *nīrvāṇa*, liberation. Why? He thinks she is Saviṣeṣa-Brahman (Brahman with form), and that her *yoni* is the source of the material world (*janmādy asya yataḥ*). Moreover, he thinks by this meditation, he is Śiva, and so on and so forth.

I will not describe the left-hand method of this meditation. For that, you can read the article, "Tantra – Can Sex Be Yoga?" by Acyutānanda Swami in BTG Vol. 13 No. 7.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
May 4, 1994

It would not be correct to designate as "Tantrics" the Kañcī Śaṅkarācārya or any other Māyāvādī in the line of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (the original Śaṅkarācārya who introduced Māyāvāda to defeat Buddhism). However, Ādi Śaṅkara did establish the system of *pañcopāsana* (worship of five deities) in his *sampradāya*, and among these five – each of which is conceived by the Māyāvādīs as *saviṣeṣa-brahman* – are Durgā and Śiva. Śaṅkara also prescribed a method of *pūjā* for these deities that is derived from the *tantras* and *āgamas*, therefore the system of worship employed at the Kamakoti Pīṭham is right-hand *tantra*. Actually, the Kamakoti Pīṭham is an ancient *tīrtha* for worshippers of Durgā-devī that existed long before the Māyāvādīs took it over. Before they took up the worship, it was done by regular Tantric *brāhmanas*.

The special significance of the Kamakoti Pīṭham is that it is supposedly the place where Satī-devī's *yoni* fell to earth after she burned her body in anger at her father Dakṣa (vid. ŚB. Canto 4). There are 108 Devī-pīṭhams in India, each one a site where a part of her body landed. These places are still magnets for Tantrics. One can just imagine how important a place of pilgrimage the Kamakoti Pīṭham must have been to the Tantrics of both the right and left paths; probably all sorts of perverted things were going on there. Śaṅkara's mission was to reform the Hindu religion, so after he and his followers took over that place, the Kamakoti Pīṭham became a respectable Hindu temple. Still, the practice that is referred to in the purport that Vaidyanātha Prabhu quoted is going on there, but in a symbolic way that is in accordance to Śaṅkara's philosophy and method of *pūjā*.



## MOON – ŚIVA'S SYMBOL

Question from Vaidyanātha d.  
May 17, 1994

*Do you know why Lord Śiva has a moon on his head?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 22, 1994

Kṛṣṇa Book Chapter 35 informs us that Lord Śiva's day is *caturdaśī*, the 14th day of the lunar cycle. On this day, the moon is just a thin crescent. That's the last visible phase of the moon before it completely disappears. This thinnest crescent moon, visible on the *caturdaśī*, Śiva's day, is the emblem of Lord Śiva and is thus worn by him on his head.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
May 24, 1994

I should add, regarding Śiva's *caturdaśī*, that his crescent moon emblem is the moon of the *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa caturdaśī*. Today is *Nṛsimha-caturdaśī*, but as you may have noticed, the moon is almost full. This is the *śukla-pakṣa caturdaśī* (the 14th day of the waxing moon). So Śiva's moon emblem is the lunar phase of the 14th day of the waning moon (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*). That is the last day before *amāvasyā* (the dark moon). Today's *caturdaśī* is the last day before the *pūrṇimā* (the full moon).

## LORD ŚIVA

Comment by Mukhya d.d.  
Jun 21, 1994

I remember some time ago you [Labaṅgalatikā d.d.] asked Suhotra Swami why Lord Śiva has a moon over his head. Today I happened to look up the word śiva in the Sanskrit dictionary and found some interesting information about Śivas moon crescent. It is said there that Śiva has three eyes, one of which is on his forehead,

and which are to denote his view of the three divisions of time, past, present, and future, a moon crescent above the central eye marks the measurement of time by months, a serpent round his neck the measure by years, a second necklace of skulls with other serpents around his person marks the perpetual revolution of ages, and the successive extinction and generation of the races of mankind. I found it interesting and hope it will be interesting for you as well.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
June 29, 1994

Thank you. That is indeed interesting.

## KṚṢṆA KARMA

Question from Jahnū d.  
May 22, 1994

*I have this question about karma. If I witness a crime, say I see a robber come running out of a bank and I do not do anything to stop him or maybe I recognize him as one of my friends and therefore do not report him to the police. Do I then in either case partake in his reactions? Furthermore, does it make a difference in the above mentioned hypothetical situation if I'm a devotee or a karmi? In Vr̄ndāvana, I heard that the devotees have nothing to do with interfering into people's karma except to give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, if a devotee sees someone drowning he has no business rescuing him, although he may do so in order not to generate a bad impression in the public. This is the example I heard. Could you please comment?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 23, 1994

As Śrīla Prabhupāda often said, if you are silent about another person's actions or statements, that means you agree with them. Thus, you get implicated in that per-

son's *karma*. The *sāstric* example is Grandfather Bhiṣma, who said nothing when Draupadī was insulted. Of course, he was above ordinary *karma*, but the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa has its own system of action and reaction too. The workings of "Kṛṣṇa-līlā *karma*" can also be seen in Akṛūrā's entanglement in the Syamantaka jewel affair because of his displeasing the *gopīs* when he took Kṛṣṇa away from Vr̄ndāvana.

ISKCON is not a mundane institution. Its activities transcend the *karma* of the material world. ISKCON devotees therefore have no *karmic* liability to mundane society, as explained in the well-known *Bhāgavatam* verse, 11.5.41. However, ISKCON devotees do have a responsibility to satisfy the Founder-*ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their activities. This responsibility comes with its own law of action and reaction. For instance, if a devotee robs a bank thinking that he is doing pure devotional service by freeing Lakṣmī from Rāvana, he violates his responsibility to Śrīla Prabhupāda to properly represent ISKCON to the fallen souls so that they might see the right path of human life. Thus that devotee gets reactions for his offense to the Founder-*ācārya* that may coincide with the reactions that come to ordinary *karmi* bank robbers – he may be caught by the police and imprisoned. Kṛṣṇa explains a devotee's "piety" and "sin" to Uddhava in the 11th Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: for a transcendentalist, real piety is the performance of his duty, and real sin is the transcendentalist's neglect of his duty. Piety and sin calculated in terms of sense gratification (as is done in mundane society) is unreal.

## YADU/JEW SPECULATION

Question from Jahnū d.  
May 22, 1994

*Is there somehow any connection between these two tribes of people? There seems to be an etymological connection between the two words. Furthermore, the*

*Jews claim to be the chosen people of God. Where did they get that idea? I know it says so in the Bible but I mean originally?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 23, 1994

For all its good intentions, this question just invites us to speculate, and speculation on the Yadu/Jew topic is pretty useless.

I once read an Indian speculator's essay, which argued that the Jews are descended from the Yadus, and that Jerusalem is a contraction of *yadu-śā-ālayam*, "The City of the Lord of the Yadus." But he offered no proof for his speculations, and I just found his essay rather boring. If Jahnū d. is fired up about such things, he should write to Satyarāja (Steve Rosen) in New York. I think it was Satyarāja who sent me a photocopy of that essay.

I recall seeing somewhere (maybe in a letter, but I can't find it now in Folio) that Śrīla Prabhupāda rejected the Yadu/Jew connection. In addition, somebody did tell me a long time ago that in the early days of ISKCON His Divine Grace once entertained this connection in a conversation with some Jewish disciples. If that's true, he may have done that just to encourage them. Who knows for sure? And really, who cares? The Yadu/Jew connection seems absolutely useless to me as a preaching topic. It is of the same class of speculation as that found in the books of P.N. Oak (for instance, that the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome was formerly a Śiva temple). Only loonies will take such notions seriously.

As to why the Jews think they are the chosen people, if you do not know by now, Jahnū, do not mess with it. If you must dwell on such things, write Satyarāja, and try reading his wonderful but semi-fictional work, *Om Shalom*. It is fictional in the sense that the Rabbi Schimmel he supposedly interviews does not exist.

One area of research somebody might like to get into is the connection of the ancient Middle Eastern flood accounts to the Purāṇic account of the appearance of the

*Matsya-avatāra*. The Old Testament flood story of Noah is a revision of the much older Sumerian story of Gilgamesh. It seems the Sumerians worshiped God or a god in the form of a fish. The old Sumerian word for fish is something like *pish* (I do not remember exactly), and from this comes the Greek *pisces* and the English fish. One writer I have read suggests that the Sumerian word for fish comes from the Sanskrit name "Viṣṇu." The fish-god of the Sumerians was therefore Matsya. The Jews, who absorbed spiritual concepts from the Sumerians, were therefore indirectly influenced by Vaiṣṇavism through them. All this is too sketchy to take very seriously. More research has to be done. Therefore, do not go around quoting this. It is speculation. I only added it here because one speculation deserves another.

## JĀGRATA, SVAPNA AND SUŚUPTI

Question from Labaṅgalatikā d.d.  
May 29, 1994

*If the subtle body is not within the gross body when one is sleeping, where is it?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 30, 1994

It enters the subtle plane of material existence (the mental world). It is still connected to the gross body, of course. Otherwise the gross body would die.

Question from Labaṅgalatikā d.d.  
May 30, 1994

*Does that mean that the mental world is an actual place that exists independent of our dreaming it up?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
May 30, 1994

You ask if "the mental world is an actual place that exists independent of our dreaming it up." Well, the mental world is what we experience in the subtle body, just as the gross material world is what we experience in the gross body. The spiritual world is what we experience in the spiritual body. According to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the gross and subtle bodies are both products of the material mind. Since both the gross and subtle bodies as well as the worlds, they allow us to experience are temporary, being based upon the mind and not on spirit, they are equally dream states. Therefore, everything we experience in the material world is either a daydream or a nightdream, because neither gross nor subtle material experiences are factually real.

"The mind is the subtle substance in which the body is created, as we actually experience in our dreams and also when we are awake in contemplation. One must understand that the process of mental speculation develops a new type of body that does not actually exist. If one can understand the nature of the mind (*manorathena*) and its thinking, feeling and willing, one can very easily understand how from the mind different types of bodies develop." [Teachings of Queen Kuntī, Chapter 9]

Thinking, feeling and willing are the three stages of the mind's manifestation of desire. The "actual place" where the mind's desire manifests is within the three modes of material nature. The three modes of material nature reciprocate with the three stages of desire by supplying three platforms upon which the mind's desires are exhibited. The mode of goodness supplies the platform called *jāgrata*, the waking or bodily stage perceived through the gross senses of the body. This is the physical world. The mode of passion supplies the *svapna* platform on which sleeping dreams and other internal speculations are perceived through the subtle senses of the mind. This is the mental world. The mode of ignorance supplies the *susupti* platform, the primeval condition of the false ego, in which dreamless sleep or



total unconsciousness is experienced. The experience upon all three platforms is nothing other than a hallucination of the spirit self. In other words, it is all a dream.

"These dreams are on the mental platform, the egoistic platform, and the bodily platform. But I am not the body. The gross body and subtle body are different from my actual self. The gross body is made of earth, water, fire, air, and ether, and the subtle body is made of mind, intelligence, and false ego. But the living being is transcendental to these eight elements, which are described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the inferior energy of God." [Teachings of Queen Kuntī, Chapter 9]

The following verse is relevant in this connection.

*adr̥ṣṭān dr̥ṣṭāvan naṅkṣed  
bhūtam svapnavad anyathā  
bhūtam bhavad bhaviṣyac ca  
suptam sarva-raho-rahah*

"Everything happening within time, which consists of past, present and future, is merely a dream. That is the secret understanding in all Vedic literature." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.2b]

The platforms of goodness, passion and ignorance are like reflective surfaces where our gross and subtle desires are projected by the mind. These reflections of our desire, or perversions of our desire, appear within the modes as the temporary activities of gross or subtle bodies.

"But this dream, these gross and subtle dreams, are simply reflections. Just like what is dream? The whole day, what I think, the dreaming is a reflection, reflection. My father was doing cloth business. So sometimes he, in dreaming he was quoting price. 'This is the price.' So similarly it is all dreaming. This material existence, made of these five gross elements and three subtle elements, they're exactly like dream. *Smara nityam anityatam*. Therefore Cāṅkya Paṇḍita says, *smara nitya anityatam*. This *anitya*, temporary... Dreaming is always temporary. So we must know that whatever we possess, whatever we are seeing, these are all dream, temporary. Therefore if we become engrossed with the temporary

things, so-called socialism, nationalism, family-ism or this-ism, that-ism, and waste our time, without cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then that is called *śrama eva hi kevalam*, simply wasting our time, creating another body." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam lecture, 1973]

Is that clear? If not, sleep on it.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

June 6, 1994

A question may arise about an argument I gave in that answer. I have phrased it as follows. "You write that the waking state of bodily consciousness is supplied by the mode of goodness, and that the dreaming or mental platform is supplied by the mode of passion. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses like 2.5.30, 3.5.30 and 3.10.17 all indicate that the mind is produced of the mode of goodness. In addition, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.5.31) states that the sense organs are produced from the mode of passion. So isn't it more logical to say that the subtle mental world is in the mode of goodness and the gross physical world is in the mode of passion?"

First, here's a direct quote that supports goodness as the source of *jāgrata*, passion the source of *svapna*, and ignorance as the source of *susupti*, from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.22.36, purport):

"The three destinations are meant for persons who are under the control of the three modes of material nature. These destinations are sometimes described as the awakened, dreaming and unconscious stages. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the three destinations are described as the destinations of persons in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance."

*Jāgrata* in this sense means more than the mind's casting off a night's sleep. It means the state in which the mind thinks, feels and wills according to Vedic injunctions. That is the mode of goodness, the real sense of *jāgrata*. In that awakened state of mind, one sees the true worth of the human body. In other words, *jāgrata* means the mind's CORRECT perception of the physical world. In the mode of goodness, one knows the human

body is meant to facilitate spiritual progress. As Śrīla Prabhupāda many times declared (here's just one quote from 1973): "*Utīṣhata jāgrata*. The advice is that 'Eve-ryone should now wake up. They should not sleep under the spell of illusion, material nature. This human form of body must be utilized.'"

The mind is generated out of the mode of goodness as the energy of Lord Aniruddha. Its correct purpose under Vedic injunction is to be the natural instrument with which the human being focuses his consciousness upon the Lord, so as to rise from goodness to the *turiya* (transcendental) platform. *Turiya* means "the fourth state" above the three modes of material nature.

But in the material world, goodness never exists separately from the modes of passion and ignorance. Therefore, if the mind is allowed to function on the material platform instead of being fixed on the Lord, the mind is sure to be colored by the lower modes. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.14) explains that there are four aspects to the functions of the subtle body. Subtle functions begin with *cetanā*, consciousness, which is actually the function of the soul. The function of consciousness under the three modes of nature transforms into the functions of the material mind (in goodness), material intelligence (in passion) and material ego (in ignorance). Among the functions of intelligence listed in ŚB. 3.26.30 is *svapah*, sleep, which means *svapna*, dreaming sleep. Therefore dreaming is a product of passion, as are other intellectual functions like doubt, correct apprehension, misapprehension and memory.

## JESUS – ĪŚA

Question from Johanna

June 20, 1994

I just want to ask you one question because I heard that you are the proper person to answer it. I wonder if it is mentioned somewhere in the Vedas about Jesus Christ, some prediction of his coming to earth or at all some-

thing about the son of God? I would be very grateful if you could answer this question.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 20, 1994

Jesus may very well be the "Īśa" predicted in the *Bhaviṣya Purāna*. I will not go on record as saying that Jesus and Īśa are the same person, because Śrīla Prabhupāda did not exactly confirm that when he was asked about this *Bhaviṣya Purāna* prediction. He simply confirmed that whatever is stated in the *Bhaviṣya Purāna* is accurate.

There are ten verses in the *Bhaviṣya Purāna* that foretell the meeting of King Salivahana of Sindhustana (which is the present-day Sind province of Pakistan) with a saintly person named Īśaputra, "the son of Īśa (God)." The *Purāna* states that this meeting would take place when Salivahana visited the mountainous Hūnadeśa region of what is now Western Tibet. Historically, Salivahana is supposed to have visited Hūnadeśa between AD 39 to 59. There the king came upon an auspicious man who was living on a mountain. The man's complexion was golden and his clothes were white. This was Īśaputra, or Īśa.

The name Īśa resembles the name Jesus. "Jesus" is a modern form of the Hebrew name "Yeshua," which was rendered as "Iesos" in the original Greek of the New Testament.

Īśa introduced himself to the king as Īśa-mastha, which resembles "Jesus, Messiah." In the Sanskrit, Jesus says to Salivahana, *Īśa mūr̥ti-hṛ̥dī prāp̥tā nitya-śuddhā śivankart īśamastha iti ca mama nāma praiṣṭhitam*: "Having placed the eternally pure and auspicious form of the Supreme Lord in my heart, O protector of the earth planet, I preached these principles through the Mlecchas own faith and thus my name became 'Īśa-mastha'."

From this it seems that *mastha* is a title awarded to Īśa by the Mlecchas. Messiah is a Hebrew word that means "anointed one."

The principles Īśa taught to the Mlecchas are listed in the *Bhaviṣya Purāna* as follows.

"The living entity is subject to good and bad contaminations. The mind should be purified by taking recourse of proper conduct and performance of *japa*. By chanting the holy names one attains the highest purity. Just as the immovable sun draws from all directions the elements of all living beings, so does the Lord of the solar region, who is fixed and all-attractive, draws the hearts of all living creatures. Thus by following rules, speaking truthful words, by mental harmony and by meditation, O descendant of Manu, one should worship the immovable Lord."

Good and evil, moral conduct, the chanting the name of God, religious commandments, truthfulness, peacefulness and prayerful meditation are principles that are indeed found in Christianity. "The Lord of the solar region" refers to Sūrya-nārāyaṇa, a form of Viṣṇu. It is said that the Essenes, a Jewish mystical sect from the time of Jesus, worshiped the sun as a representation of the Supreme. Some people say Jesus was an Essene rabbi.

Īśa declared to King Salivahana that he could foresee the rise of the Mleccha's influence in the Kali age, and he feared that their lawless way of life would spread throughout the world unless they were taught religion. Thus he went among them to teach these principles.

There is a legend that Jesus went to India during his so-called "lost years" between ages 13 and 30. These are called his lost years because there is no record in the New Testament of what he did during this time. There is a legend that Jesus returned to India after his crucifixion and resurrection. In present-day Pakistan, there is a place of pilgrimage, which is said to be the tomb of Jesus.

Among Indologists the *Bhaviṣya Purāna* is considered a forgery. So we can expect that academics will not take us very seriously if we quote it. Nevertheless, Śrīla Prabhupāda said of this scripture, "Everything is accurate there." (Bombay conversation, April 2, 1977)

## LAKSMĪ

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.

June 24, 1994

In the purport to the verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.26) Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

"Although Lakṣmī is always in companion of the Lord, the Lord is more inclined to His devotees like *Prahlāda Mahārāja*."

Could you kindly explain this?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 29, 1994

The answer may be understood from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.64) and the purport. The Lord here says, "I do not desire to enjoy my supreme opulences without My devotees." The *samskṛt* word for opulences used in this verse is *śrīyam*. Śrī is also a name of Goddess Lakṣmī, who personifies transcendental opulence.

## SUPERSOUL (PARAMĀTMĀ)

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.

June 24, 1994

In the purport to the verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.33) Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "From *Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu*, *Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu* GRADUALLY expands."

Does this mean that whenever a *jīva* falls into the material world, the Supersoul expands from *Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu* (is this the meaning of the word "gradually"?) or Supersoul accompanying the *jīva*, is an expansion of *Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu*?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

June 29, 1994

Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu gradually expands into the hearts of the living beings as they are given bodies by Brahmā,

the creator of the various species of life. Brahmā does not create all these species at the same instant (see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.10.18-27). Thus, the Supersoul expands gradually as these species come into existence one after the other.

Question from Aprameya d.d.  
July 16, 1994

*Does Paramātmā has senses and pastimes?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 18, 1994

Paramātmā means Lord Viṣṇu. Lord Viṣṇu's pastime is the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material world. In this pastime, He displays three forms: Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Yes, of course these forms of Viṣṇu have senses. Also, Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the source of many, many other *avatāras* who perform pastimes within the material world.

### CHANTING HARE KṚṢṆA

Question from Aprameya d.d.  
July 16, 1994

*It is said that when we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa we associate with Kṛṣṇa. Is it Paramātmā or Kṛṣṇa in His original form?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 18, 1994

When a devotee in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, he associates with Kṛṣṇa. That is because the *mahā-mantra* given by Lord Caitanya awards Kṛṣṇa-prema upon the chanter. *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* explains that when a devotee's eyes are anointed with Kṛṣṇa-prema, he sees the form of Go-

vinda in his heart (*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena...*).

### DEITY WORSHIP

Question from Mitra-sūta d.  
July 19, 1994

*If someone buys, finds or is given a Deity or picture of Kṛṣṇa but he does not know what is it or how to worship it, is he purified just by keeping it at home?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 20, 1994

If that person does all nonsense things in the presence of the form of the Lord, he certainly gets no benefit. If by good fortune or good association he renders service to the form of the Lord, he benefits.

The uninstalled form of the Lord does not reciprocate in loving exchange with one who may render that form service, but He does accept the service. In return, the servant is purified.

Question from Śuci Rāṇī d.d.  
August 7, 1994

*In your reply to a question from Mitra-sūta Prabhu, you said that, "The uninstalled form of the Lord does not reciprocate in loving exchange with one who may render that form service, but He does accept the service. In return, the servant is purified."*

*I was wondering how this applies to temple deities that are not yet installed. Here in Perth we have very potent and merciful Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi deities, and although They have never been officially installed, we are very sure of Their presence and reciprocation with our neophyte attempts to serve Them! Now I am wondering whether it would make a significant difference in terms of loving exchange, if They were properly installed?*

*Another question: In the śāstras it is mentioned that we should first worship Śrī Madana-mohana (sambandha), then Śrī Govinda-ji (abhideya) and then Śrī Gopinath-ji (prayojana). Can you explain what this means in practical terms for ISKCON devotees? (Since we are generally not going to the places where these deities are now residing).*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that to install Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, one needs only to place them on the altar and have a *kirtana*. In ISKCON, we of course "install" Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi by the standard *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* ceremony, and prior to that installation process, some temples, like yours, worship "uninstalled" Gaura-Nitāi Deities. Since in both cases the Deities are being worshiped by *sankīrtana*, the real difference here is just one of standard of worship. The *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* installation of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi is more or less a formal contract to worship Their Lordships according to the regular ISKCON *arcana* standard of daily bathing, dressing, sixtimes daily *bhoga* offerings with *arati* and so on. Before installation, worship can be set at a lower standard. Because Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi are so merciful, They reciprocate with *sankīrtana* even before the *prāṇapratīṣṭhā* ceremony.

As to your second question, these three Deities reside over *sambandha* (the relationship with Kṛṣṇa), *abhideya* (the activity of devotional service) and *prayojana* (the perfection of pure love of Godhead) respectively. This subject can be elaborated upon at great length, but I'd rather just keep it simple by saying that we should pray for the mercy of these Deities for our advancement in these three stages of development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Other members of this conference may like to add something to this answer. There is much to be found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* on *sambandha*, *abhideya* and *prayojana*.

### GUNA-AVATĀRAS

Question from Kanyā-kumārī d.  
July 23, 1994

*Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.17, purport) material qualitative incarnations. Could you please explain this further?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 23, 1994

Basically, "material qualitative incarnation" means the *guṇa-avatāras*, namely Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, who embody the *rajoḡuṇa* and *ramoḡuṇa* respectively. In the purport you mention, Manu, Pṛthu and Vyāsa are also mentioned. Manu hands down the codes of *dharma* to mankind. Pṛthu is a perfect manifestation of the *ksatriya* nature (*rajoḡuṇa*), and Vyāsa compiled the Vedic scriptures. All of these functions pertain to the material world. There is no need for them in the spiritual world. Therefore Manu, Pṛthu and Vyāsa are said to be material qualitative incarnations.

### HIMALAYA

Question from Gussein  
July 28, 1994

*The inhabitants of lower planetary systems (Nāgas, Uragas, etc) are not allowed to see the sun-planet, because of the North part of the universe being covered for them by the Himalaya mountains. Meanwhile the Himalaya manifested on the Earth-planet are just an insignificant part of the Great Himalaya of this universe. Unfortunately, I have no exact address in the śāstras to refer to in this regard, I just heard that in one of the lectures. Therefore, could you please comment on that in a more accessible form, especially connected with the second question?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 29, 1994

Regarding your question about the Himalayas, with their gross senses the people of Kali-yuga perceive the highest mountain of the Himalaya region as being Mount Everest in Nepal, which is about five miles high.

But according to the Vedic scriptures the highest mountain of the Himalaya region is Mount Sumeru, which is 600 000 miles high. Sumeru extends into the heavenly regions of the universe; indeed, by ascending Sumeru one can attain heaven. Śrīla Prabhupāda also said that in the Swiss Alps there was a way to heaven. That statement indicates that the Swiss Alps are also part of the Himalayas, in the sense that they are connected with Meru. However, in Kali-yuga, the way to heaven is closed. It cannot even be perceived, let alone ascended.

### DEMONIAC PLANETS

Question by Gussein  
July 28, 1994

*From Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.6.29) we know that Lord Śiva's associates are situated in the sky between the earthly planets and the heavenly planets.*

*Does it refer to the Rākṣasa's planets, under which whole mankind are walking, or one should accept this verse as the proof that all the planets of so-called "demoniac" heavens one can meet on the way to heavenly planets?*

*Do also Bali Mahārāja, Śrī Prahlāda and Lord Vāmanadeva also live there? If so, how is it that they are not allowed to see the shinning of the sun?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
July 29, 1994

You are confusing two regions of the universe. One region is called *antarikṣa*, the other is called *bila-svarga*.

The *antarikṣa* region is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.24.5) as being situated in the sky above earth and below the planets of the Siddhas and Cāraṇas. Within the *antarikṣa* dwell the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas and ghosts. The ghosts are counted among the *ganas* (followers) of Lord Śiva. The *bila-svarga* region is the main subject of the 24th chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto 5; this chapter is entitled "The Subterranean Heavenly Planets," which is the English translation of the Sanskrit term *bila-svarga*. The *bila-svarga* is situated below the Bhū-maṇḍala earthly region. The sun's rays do not reach there. One of the *talas* (levels) of the *bila-svarga* is Satala, the planet of Bali Mahārāja. Lord Vāmanadeva resides there as Bali's protector. You ask what happens when Bali, Prahlāda and Lord Vāmana are not allowed to see the sun. It is a wrong assumption to presume that the Lord and His pure devotees are prevented from seeing the sun like the ordinary demons. Their vision is transcendental.

### ALL-AUSPICIOUS KṚṢṆA

Question from Jahnu d.  
August 5, 1994

*Is there any significance to the fact that Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana with His left pinky and not His right? Usually when you do something important, like handing over something or receiving something, you do it with your right hand.*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 5, 1994

I have derived two lessons about this from Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. One is that Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana Hill with the little finger of His left hand as a very casual, even childish act. Yet this act, which Kṛṣṇa did with no effort at all, and in complete innocence of any consideration of whether it is more proper to use the

right hand instead of the left, utterly defeated the might of Indra, the king of the demigods. This is confirmed by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the following words.

"So Indra became very much angry, and he sent the vicious cloud, and whole Vṛndāvana was inundated by flood. And Kṛṣṇa showed that 'Your power is not even competent to compare with the finger of My hand.' Therefore He lifted the Govardhana Hill with the finger of His left hand and saved all the people of Vṛndāvana. Then Indra came to worship Him. These things are there in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." (From a 1974 *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* lecture)

The second lesson is that there is no question of Kṛṣṇa's doing anything with His left hand that is "improper," "inauspicious," "impure" or in any way unseemly. Kṛṣṇa's left hand, left foot or any part of His body is incomparably auspicious. Moreover, being the Lord, He is not bound by social convention. He uses His left arm to give protection to His devotees, regardless of whether that is proper from the point of view of the etiquette of ordinary conditioned souls. Therefore, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.62):

vāmas tāmaraśākṣya  
bhūja-Daṇḍaḥ sa pātu vah  
kṛtā-kandukātām yena  
nto govardhana girīh

"May the left arm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose eyes are like the petals of a lotus flower, always protect you. With His left arm He raised Govardhana Hill as if it were a toy."

Perhaps other members of this conference know other lessons from this pastime.

Comment by Raktambara d.

August 5, 1994

Bhaktīcaru Mahārāja was once mentioning this in a lecture, that when you do something with your left arm, it means it is not very important or heavy, because the right arm is much stronger. Then of all fingers, the pinky is the weakest. Therefore, by lifting the hill with

the pinky of His left hand, Kṛṣṇa was showing that doing such a thing is not at all hard or troublesome for Him. It is indeed like a child lifting his toy.

Bhaktī-caru Mahārāja was telling it in a much nicer way than I can repeat, I'm sorry for that.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

August 5, 1994

That's a nice point – that the left hand (of an embodied soul) is weaker than the right, and of all fingers the little one is the weakest. Yet with that finger Lord Kṛṣṇa defeated Indra.

## BODY CELLS

Question from Śrīdāmā d.

August 5, 1994

I have heard from different devotees that every cell of our bodies or any other body is a separate living entity. I have two questions in this regard:

1. Is there any śāstric reference supporting this view?

2. If this is true then what could be the destination of all these jīvas when the owner of the whole body dies (or goes to Kṛṣṇa in the case of a devotee)? Do they form a new body for that living entity or they all have separate karma to fulfill?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 5, 1994

That the cells of the body are counted along with germs and microbes as living beings is indicated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the opening sentence of his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.39. If you search Folio for the two words "body" and "cells," you'll get 37 references, including a number of Prabhupāda's morning walks and conversations in which he unmistakably answers your question with a "yes." There is one verse from the *Bha-*

*gavad-gītā* that also supports this. It is 17.6. Herein demons are described as persons "who torture the material elements of the body."

If "material elements" refers only to dead matter, how can matter be tortured? The Sanskrit for "material elements of the body" is *bhūta-grāmaṁ*. *Bhūta* means the five elements (earth, water, fire, etc.), but *bhūta* also means living entities. The material elements are pervaded by *jīvas*, who are therefore called *sarva-gataḥ* (all-pervading) in *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.24).

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport referred to in the paragraph above, Śrīla Prabhupāda compares the living entities that make up the stuff of the body to the bodies of living entities that are included within the universal body of the Lord. The living entities in this universe are all serving the Universal Form, though many are doing so without any awareness of that fact. While the total body functions, there is a shared activity, but not necessarily a shared consciousness. When the chief living entity ruling the body in the heart leaves that body, the other living entities go their own way. That was confirmed by Śrīla Prabhupāda in several conversations.

But a pure devotee's body is purified, or "Kṛṣṇized," as Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say. My understanding is that all the living entities pervading a pure devotee's body are liberated. That is because his body is engaged only in *brahma-karma* (spiritual activity). See what *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.24 and purport have to say about the results of *brahma-karma*.

## CONSCIOUSNESS

Question from Gussein

August 5, 1994

"In due course of time, the impregnated material energy was manifested first as the total material ingredients... The mahat-tatva is the total consciousness because a portion of it is represented in everyone as the intellect. The mahat-tatva is directly connected with the supreme

consciousness of the Supreme Being, but still it appears as matter." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.27)

"The mahat-tatva is chiefly in the mode of ignorance, and it generates the false ego. It is a plenary expansion of the Personality of Godhead, with full consciousness of creative principles and time for fructification." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.28)

"Mahat-tatva, or the great causal truth, transforms into false ego, which is manifested in three phases—cause, effect and the doer..." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.29)

In your Karma-mīmāṃsā, you also mention some higher level of consciousness from which the vāk-śakti flows. We had here some kind of discussion and came up with the following questions in this regard:

Do the mind and the intellect have separate, or different levels of consciousness according to the cause, the effect and the doer?

Does this mean that the self has his or her own separate consciousness too?

"When there was a desire to think about the activities of His own energy, then the heart (the seat of the mind), the mind, the moon, determination and all desire became manifested." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.10.30)

From *Bhagavad-gītā*, we heard that that, which pervades the whole body is consciousness. The same all-pervading quality also refers to one's subtle body (mental or intellectual)?

Could you please explain these points of view? Because the conclusion question is: How the pure devotee can do his service on our earthly plane and simultaneously take part in the eternal pastimes of the Lord on the spiritual sky?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 5, 1994

The Sanskrit for cause, effect and doer in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.5.29) is *kāraṇa* (cause), *kārya* (effects) and *karṭa* (doer). These same terms are explained in *Bhagavad-gītā* (13.21):

kārya-kāraṇa-karṭrve  
hetuḥ prakṛtiḥ ucyate  
puruṣaḥ sūbha-duḥkḥānām  
bhokṛtve hetur ucyate

"Nature is said to be the cause of all material causes and effects whereas the living entity is the cause of the various sufferings and enjoyments in this world."

This means that *prakṛti* (material nature) is the *karṭa* (doer). Cause and effect in the material world are done by *prakṛti*. The living entity is the non-doer, but enjoys or suffers the results of what *prakṛti* does.

In the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.5.29, the following statement by His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda answers your two questions about cause, effect and doer:

"The eternally liberated souls are called *nitya-muktas*, and they have nothing to do with the material creation. The material creation is meant for rebellious souls who are not prepared to accept subordination under the Supreme Lord. This spirit of false lordship is called false ego. It is manifested in three modes of material nature, and it exists in mental speculation only."

In other words, the separated consciousness of cause, effect and doer that you ask about exists only as mental speculation. These three levels of separated consciousness are creations of the three modes of material nature. They influence the soul only by reflection. "Reflection" was explained in an earlier text in this Danda conference with regard to dreams. In this sense, everything experienced by the conditioned soul is just a dream. The liberated souls have nothing to do with that dream. The conditioned souls foolishly take that dream as reality, and thus are forced to falsely suffer and enjoy.

Regarding the pervasiveness of consciousness with respect to the subtle body, the elements of the subtle body (mind, intelligence and false ego) are contaminations of consciousness. They focus consciousness upon that which is far away from consciousness (dead matter), the way a telescope focuses our vision upon the surface of the moon, where we cannot live. Conscious-

ness pervades the gross body, and since mind, intelligence and false ego contaminate the consciousness, these also pervade the gross body. These are elements of another kind of material body, the subtle body, which is like the shirt and pants upon which the overcoat of the gross body rests. Just as both underclothes and overclothes are different from the person wearing them, so the soul is always different from the gross and subtle bodies.

In answer to your final question, you simply have to understand that the consciousness of the pure devotee is not conditioned by subtle and gross matter. Therefore, the pure devotee's consciousness is not limited to the material world. I gave the example of a telescope, which restricts our vision to some far-off planet where we cannot live. The soul is actually a transcendental spark of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual potency. He is not a resident of the material world at all. His consciousness has been focused upon the material world by the conditioning of mind, intelligence and false ego. Thus, he thinks the material world is nearer to him than the spiritual world, just like by looking through a powerful telescope, we seem to be near to the surface of the moon. Actually the moon, and the material world, is far, far away from us. We are residents of the spiritual world. The pure devotee knows this. To him, the material world is a distant and insignificant spot in some corner of the spiritual sky. How then does the pure devotee operate a physical body in the material world from the vantagepoint of the spiritual world? Through the agency of Kṛṣṇa's *puruṣa* expansions. Kṛṣṇa expands as the *puruṣa-avatāras* (the three forms of Viṣṇu) to manifest the material world. This is simply His play with the *bhinnā-prakṛti*. His separated energy. Thus, manifestation of the material world is nothing else than a *līlā* of the Lord. The pure devotee, without every leaving his position as an eternal associate of the Lord, participates in that *līlā* as a deliverer of the fallen souls. The Lord's *līlā* of manifesting the material world offers a chance to the conditioned souls to return back home, Back to Godhead. The pure

devotee's role in that *līlā* is to point out this chance to the conditioned souls by his preaching. To facilitate that role, the Lord gives His devotee a physical body, which the devotee operates, completely under His direction.

The pure devotee is always with Kṛṣṇa. It is Kṛṣṇa who is simultaneously in the spiritual world and in the material world. By the Lord's arrangement, the pure devotee can also be in many places at once – always in the company of the Lord. This cannot be properly understood in terms of speculative philosophy or mysticism, which is the direction you seem to be taking in the formulation of your questions. It is only to be understood in terms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness – these two words signify the supreme state of awareness, beyond space, time and speculative conceptions of cause, effect and doer.

## SOUL – THE NONDOER

Question from Gopinātha d.

August 6, 1994

Previously you gave this explanation about the *Bhagavad-gītā* 13.21:

"This means that prakṛti (material nature) is the karṇī (doer). Cause and effect in the material world are done by prakṛti. The living entity is the nondoer, but enjoys or suffers the results of what prakṛti does."

When you say, "The living entity is the nondoer," does that mean that the soul is not the doer at all, performing no action whatsoever?

Sometimes devotees quote *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.27 (prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni...) and say that the soul does not perform any action, everything is carried by the modes of nature. Some say that in this world the soul is just completely manipulated by mahā-māyā and in the spiritual world, the soul is completely manipulated by yoga-māyā: in both cases the soul does not act. That does not sound right to me.

My understanding is that the soul is the karṇī, the doer, but it is not the supreme doer. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.14) it is described that there are five factors of action, and the soul, the worker, is one of them. The Supersoul being the supreme cause of action. Prakṛti is also a subordinate cause of action.

As I see it, we are minor "doers" who need the "supersanction" of the Supreme. We desire something (isn't that desire an action in itself?), Paramātmā sanctions it, then the modes of nature, demigods... carry on the bulk of the work. I do not see how we can be complete non-doers.

Is my understanding wrong? It would be nice if you could clarify this point.

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 6, 1994

It is a fact that some śāstric statements declare the soul to be the doer, while others declare him to be the non-doer.

The soul is certainly held responsible for his actions in the human body. That is not because he actually is the doer of those actions, but because he foolishly thinks he is, as the prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni verse indicates. Thus, he is forced to accept the reactions of that body's work.

The soul "acts" in the sense that he energizes the material elements of the gross and subtle bodies with consciousness. This is explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.16.24, which gives the example of the fire (meaning the aṅśa-viddha, the ray or particle of Brahman which is the soul) and the piece of iron (meaning the body, senses, living force, mind and intelligence, described in this verse as mere lump of matter). By the power of the rays of Brahman, matter moves. Certainly, that means that the rays of Brahman are themselves active, otherwise why would matter move under their influence? But even though the soul's activity is admitted, still the conclusion is not that the soul is the direct manipulator of the senses of the body. In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the power of the jīva to energize matter

and thus perform material activities depends completely upon Brahman Himself, the Supreme Lord. Just see how Śrīla Prabhupāda ends this purport: "The Supreme Lord is called Hṛṣīkeśa: He is the only conductor of the senses. Unless empowered by His energy, our senses cannot act. In other words, He is the only seer, the only worker, the only listener, and the only active principle or supreme controller."

You state that the soul may be taken as the doer in the sense that he desires. It is true that the material nature responds to desire in accordance with the karma of the living entity. Again, that does not mean the soul has direct power over the material body. He does not. Therefore, the soul is said to not "do" anything in this material body. *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.4.14) states that the senses of the physical body are activated by the prāṇa, but the prāṇa does not move itself, nor is it moved by the devas or even the soul. The prāṇa is moved by the Supersoul alone, in conjunction with the desire of the soul. This is confirmed by the natural commentary of *Vedānta-sūtra*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.2.45), which states as follows:

"In the body the most important substance is the life air, but that also is neither the listener nor the speaker. Beyond even the life air, the soul also can do nothing, for the Supersoul is actually the director, in cooperation with the individual soul. The Supersoul conducting the activities of the body is different from the body and living force."

Someone by now may be wondering why śāstra says material nature is the doer (for instance, *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.14) when in fact material nature cannot move independently of the Lord. The answer is given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.87.29).

"O eternally liberated, transcendental Lord, your material energy causes the various moving and non-moving species of life to appear by activating their material desires, but only when and if You sport with her by briefly glancing over her. You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, see no one as an intimate friend and

no one as a stranger, just as the ethereal sky has no connection with perceptible qualities. In this sense You resemble a void."

Material nature is indeed the cause of the forms and activities of the living beings, because she induces the material desires by which they are awarded material forms and engaged in material work. She does this only after she is glanced upon by the Lord. Yet, the Lord has no perceptible connection to the material manifestation. Therefore, He is compared to a void. It seems that material nature is the only doer. *Śāstra* even supports that she is the doer to emphasize that the Lord is aloof from material affairs (see for instance *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.15). The atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophers are befuddled by this mystery of the workings of the Lord's bhinnā-prakṛti, and wrongly conclude that she is the self-existent cause of creation.

The answer to this mystery is the *acintya bhēdābheda-tattva* philosophy, as expressed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā* 9.4-5.

## GRADATION OF THE LIVING ENTITIES

Question from Tattvavāda d.

August 7, 1994

According to the *Padma Purāṇa* verse jalajā navakṣāṇi... and the third canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, verses 29-30 and one picture from the *Origin* magazine it seems that aquatics are the lowest categories among 8 400 000 species. Sometimes pupils in schools ask the logical reasons behind this, because for them plants seems to have lower consciousness. Are aquatics the lowest category among the different species and why?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 7, 1994

If you find it a little too controversial to present the description of the evolution of the soul from *Padma Purāṇa*, then you may present it as Lord Caitanya explained it to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 19.144). In this explanation, a basic division of the species of life is made between nonmoving and moving creatures. In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda indicates that the nonmoving species are lower with the words, "There are trees, plants and stones that cannot move, but still they must be considered living entities, or spiritual sparks." Moving species include birds, aquatics and animals, who fly, swim and walk. This division of nonmoving and moving species is made according to the development of consciousness. When it is said in other scriptural statements that moving aquatics are lower than nonmoving land species, that is not so much on the basis of consciousness as on the basis of condition of life. To dwell on the land in the light of the sun is a more advanced condition of life than to dwell underwater in darkness.

## ARCANĀ FOR NEOPHYTE AND ADVANCED DEVOTEES

Question from Mons

August 7, 1994

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.6.5, purport) Śrīla Prabhupāda compares the arcā-vigraha to the virāṭ-rūpa and writes that worship of arcā-vigraha is meant for beginners. I have also heard that it is not so, examples like Gaṅgā-mātā Gosvāmī have been given. What does Śrīla Prabhupāda mean?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 7, 1994

*Arcanā* is certainly meant for neophytes. However, it is not restricted to neophytes. The arcā-vigraha is perceived by the neophytes in the same way as the Universal Form is perceived, in terms of material elements. An advanced devotee sees the eternal spiritual form of the Lord beyond the covering of the material elements. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī used to converse with Lord Madana Gopāla, his worshipable Deity, as did Gaṅgamātā Gosvāmī with her Deity.

## KRSNA – THE OLDEST PERSONALITY

Question from Mons

August 7, 1994

In one often-quoted verse from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.33) it is said that the Lord Govinda is the oldest personality. What does this mean? How is Kṛṣṇa older than we are if we also are eternal parts and parcels of Him and also eternally persons?

Answer by Suhotra Swami

August 7, 1994

He is the oldest because He is the origin of everything, including the spirit souls who radiate from His transcendental body the way the sun's rays shine forth from the sun. Yet, because Kṛṣṇa is timeless, everything He does is likewise timeless. Since the souls begin in Kṛṣṇa and not in material nature, they are timeless like Kṛṣṇa is. "Like father, like son." If you cannot understand that, too bad. These limited Kali-yuga brains can't understand many things, including how a bumblebee can fly (according to the law of aerodynamics, it is impossible for something in the shape of a bumblebee to fly).

### DEPENDING SOLELY ON THE LORD

Question from Mons  
August 7, 1994

In His Śikṣāṣṭaka, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu prays in verse four that He desires only to serve the Lord life after life and nothing else. The verse immediately following this he begs the Lord to lift Him out of this ocean of birth and death, i.e. grant Him liberation. This seems contradictory, could you please explain?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

This is explained by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura in his Śrī Sanmōda Bhāṣyaṁ commentary on Śrī Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka. The point in verse four regarding liberation is that bhakti does not depend upon it. Therefore one should not wait for liberation before taking up bhakti; or to put it in another way, one should not strive for liberation by karma, jñāna or mystic yoga, saving bhakti-yoga for later after liberation is attained. The point in verse five is that once having taken to bhakti, the devotee depends upon the Lord for His deliverance from material existence, and not upon karma, jñāna etc. Depending upon the Lord for deliverance from material existence is not different from bhakti, just as servitorship to Kṛṣṇa is inseparable from one's svarūpa (eternal spiritual form), which is the liberated identity of the servitor. Verse five is actually a prayer for transcendental devotional service on the perfection platform, not for mere liberation.

### LORD BRAHMĀ

Question from Gussein  
August 7, 1994

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.5.30) states: "The false ego is transformed into mind by interaction with the mode of

goodness. All the demigods who control the phenomenal world are also products of the same principle, namely the interaction of false ego and the mode of goodness."

Is it proper to consider to be within this category of demigods Lord Brahmā, who is the chief of all empiric philosophers and pure intellect personified?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

Lord Brahmā appears from the lotus that grows from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is an aspect of Pradyumna of the catur-vyūha. Pradyumna is the origin of the rajoḅha. The demigods are the aṅgas (personal limbs) of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who is an aspect of Aniruddha of the catur-vyūha. Aniruddha is the origin of the satva-guṇa.

Question from Gussein  
August 7, 1994

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.5.31) states: "The senses are certainly products of the mode of passion in false ego, and therefore philosophical speculative knowledge and fruitive activities are predominantly products of the mode of passion."

Do the texts 30 and 31 mean that the intellect of demigods is under full protection of Lord Brahmā, counting the intellect more subtle than mind and Lord Brahmā – the controller of the mode of passion.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

Lord Brahmā guides the intelligence of demigods by Vedic knowledge, which is Kṛṣṇa's revelation of the Absolute Truth to Brahmā in the very beginning of creation. Philosophical speculation (jñāna-yoga) is a way of approaching the Vedic knowledge. This way of approach is tinged with the mode of passion.

### SKY SYMBOLIZING THE LORD

Question from Gussein  
August 7, 1994

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.5.32) states: "The sky is a product of sound, and sound is the transformation of egoistic passion. In other words, the sky is the symbolic representation of the Supreme Soul."

Could you please explain if it refers to the Hiranyagarbha? If not then what is the difference between Hiranyagarbha (The Golden Egg) and liṅgam-āmanah (Symbol of Supreme Soul)?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

Yes, the sky or ākāśa as the liṅga (symbol) of the Lord may be taken to be the Hiranyagarbha manifestation from Mahā-Viṣṇu. This is indicated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.10.15. It may also be taken as a general symbol as well. For instance, Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the sky is blue because it reflects Kṛṣṇa's own color. So in this way too the sky symbolizes Kṛṣṇa. The comparison of the Lord to the sky is a common device in the Vedic scriptures. The Hiranyagarbha was explained at length in a previous text in this conference, i.e. the answer to Jahnū d.'s question about the difference between pradhāna and mahat-tattva.

### THE FINAL STAGE OF ALL ELEMENTS

Question from Gussein  
August 7, 1994

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.5.36, purport) it says: "In the final stage of sky there is one quality, namely sound..."

Without detailed knowledge, that seems to be contradictory. Could you please comment on these points?

"The automatic system is factually activated by the glancing touch of the Lord. Living consciousness is the final word in all physical changes."

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

Taking the purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.36 as a whole, the fragment of the sentence you quote is to be understood as referring to the final stage of manifestation of the pañca-mahā-bhūta (five great elements): "The final stage of sky" means sky as we see it now. Its one quality is sound. In the final stage of air, there are two qualities, sound and touch. The purport goes on to explain the final stage of all the elements in this way, but in the beginning, sky is a product of sound, as stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.32.

### "WAVY STRUCTURE OF THE GLANCE OF THE HUMAN BEING"

Question from Gussein  
August 7, 1994

Is there some order of arrangement (setting) of living entities within the Glance of the Supreme Lord? Because something must be there considering the wavy structure of the glance of human being (an embodied?).

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 7, 1994

I cannot decipher your last question. I do not know what "the wavy structure of the glance of human being (an embodied?)" is supposed to mean, and I think I do not want to know what it means either. Once Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked, "What happens when you look inside of yourself, and you get closer, and closer, AND CLOSER, AND CLOSER..."

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "That you know. I do not know."

I will leave you with that answer.

### DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF STORIES

Question from Gopinātha d.  
August 17, 1994

We usually hear the story that Bhīma was given poisoned food, tied with a rope, thrown in the Ganges where he was bitten by serpents... all at once.

But in the last BTG (June), Hṛdayananda Mahārāja was clearly writing that these were separated incidents:

- Bhīma was poisoned but was not affected
- Duryodhana brought some serpents but the serpents could not bite his iron-like body
- Duryodhana tied him up and threw him in the Ganges

Now, is the first story a concocted mixture or a līlā that was enacted "in another day of Brahmā" or in another universe?"

What is the best way to react when we hear different versions of līlās?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 17, 1994

Regarding the best way to react when one hears different versions of a līlā, I'll quote a brahmana who is an expert on the Purāṇas and itihāsas, namely my God-brother Ātmatattva Prabhu.

In his recitation of Rāmāyana, Ātmatattva Prabhu once explained: "Brahmā lives for a long time, and so many Rāmāyaṇas are happening. So he knows that it is almost the same every time, but the pastime is a little different in each kalpa." We should always keep this in

mind whenever the question of different versions of a līlā comes up.

Another point is that to understand the scriptures, we must receive them as they are presented by the ācāryas.

There are many translations of the Mahābhārata stories available on the market.

But HH Hṛdayananda Mahārāja is following the presentation of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya. Whatever is presented by Madhvācārya, who revived the Brahma-sampradāya in the Age of Kali, we must accept as the "real" Mahābhārata.

### FASTING FROM BEANS AND GRAINS

Question from Bhāgavat-dharma d.  
August 21, 1994

Today an Indian guest asked me why we eat beans today (Balarāma's Appearance Day) because Viṣṇu told Māyā that she should capture everyone who is eating beans and grains on His Appearance day.

Is this story true? And how strict are we in following Ekādaśī diet on Viṣṇu-tattva-appearance-days? I know that we follow this principle on Janmāṣṭamī, but is it also applying to days like today when we are breaking the fast at noontime?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 21, 1994

According to Chapter 16 of the Teachings of Lord Caitanya, a Vaiṣṇava should fast on the following Viṣṇu-tattva appearance days:

1. Janmāṣṭamī
2. Rāma-navamī
3. Nṛsīmha-caturdaśī
4. Vāmana-dvādaśī.

According to the strict application of the rules, the break-fast that is taken when these fasts are completed should not consist of grains, beans, etc. However, even in the ISKCON Māyāpura Śrī Caitanya Candrodāya Mandira, Ekādaśī prasādam is only served on Jan-māstamī and Gaura-pūrnīmā. I remember that wheat flour puris were distributed to the devotees for the 1975 Rāma-navamī break-fast in Vrndāvana. Moreover, this feast was taken at mid day, not at moonrise – on Śrīta Prabhupāda's personal order.

So in ISKCON we strictly follow Ekādaśī fast at least on the appearance days of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Some ISKCON temples have a more strict standard than others. The German farm seems to be more strict than ISKCON Māyāpura. Bhaktividyāpūrnī Mahārāja remarked when he was on the farm during Nṛsiṅha-caturdaśī, that in Māyāpura, Ekādaśī fast is not observed on that day, even though Nṛsiṅha-mūrti is installed and worshiped there.

### TRANSCENDENTALISTS, YOGĪS, LIBERATED, DEVOTEES...

Question from Gopinatha d.  
August 24, 1994

Maybe you can enlighten me a little about the specific details on how a liberated person (jīvan-mukta) can come back to the material plane, or fall down from the "real Brahman" in particular.

I just came back from Sweden where I was doing a last proofreading of the French Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Anya-līlā, which is now almost ready to go to press. While doing this proofreading, I found that in the purport of Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Anyā-līlā 8.26) Śrīta Prabhupāda gives three quotes saying that a jīvan-mukta can fall. I report one of these quotes here:

"In his Laghu-toṣaṇī commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32), Jīva Gosvāmī says;

jīvan-muktā api punar  
yānti saṁsāra-vāsanām  
yady acintya-mahā-śaktau  
bhagavaty aparādhinaḥ

'Even if one is liberated in this life, he becomes addicted to material desires because of offenses to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.'

Does that indicate that the person was "fully liberated," situated in Brahman, and then fell down or does the word jīvan-mukta mean "considered liberated" as Śrīta Prabhupāda sometimes translates? (And the verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.32 seems to indicate vimukta-māninas?) Here follows the example of "considered liberated" as translation to jīvan-mukta:

jīvan-muktā api punar  
yānti saṁsāra-vāsanām  
yady acintya-mahā-śaktau  
bhagavaty aparādhinaḥ

"If a person considered liberated in this life commits offenses against the reservoir of inconceivable potencies, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he will again fall down and desire the material atmosphere for material enjoyment." (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 24.76)

Again, where are these persons, "considered liberated," situated?

The following is from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.2.31): "...when the materialist becomes frustrated in his attempts to enjoy himself in the limited material world, he may seek impersonal liberation by merging either with the Causal Ocean or with the impersonal brahmajyoti effulgence (1). However, as neither the Causal Ocean (2) nor the impersonal brahmajyoti effulgence affords any superior substitute for association and engagement of the senses, the impersonalist will fall again into the limited material world to become entangled once more in the wheel of births and deaths, drawn on by the inextinguishable desire for sensual engagement.

Śrīta Prabhupāda in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 6.269, purport) says:

"The word siddha is very significant. Siddha refers to one who has realized the Brahman effulgence and who has complete knowledge that the living entity is not a material atom but a spiritual spark. This understanding is described in Bhagavad-gītā as brahma-bhūta. In the conditioned state, the living entity is known as jīva-bhūta, or 'the living force within matter.' Brahmā-bhūta living entities are allowed to stay in Brahmhaloka (3) or Siddhaloka, but unfortunately, they sometimes again fall into the material world because they are not engaged in devotional service. This is supported by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32): ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa. These semi-liberated souls falsely claim to be liberated, but unless one engages in devotional service to the Lord, he is still materially contaminated.

From these two quotes, we find that the liberated or "semi-liberated" jīva is merged either:

- 1- in the brahmajyoti
- 2- in the causal ocean
- 3- in Siddhaloka or Brahmhaloka

Now the third one, Siddhaloka, is interesting, if this refers to the Brahmhaloka in this world. We know from the Bhāt-bhāgavatāmṛta that Gopa-kumār saw the "passage" of a liberated soul passing through Brahmhaloka out of the universe (everyone was praising that soul, but then the personified Vedas revealed that liberation is not such a big thing). This implies that there is another destination for "truly (?) liberated soul.

If this Siddhaloka is just another name for the brahmajyoti (as some purports seem to indicate) then the question remains: "How is it that one can fall down from Brahman once he has attained it???" and if one can fall from this Brahman how can this be considered a transcendental plane at all???

I will stop here trying to formulate my question by giving quotes "in fear that this 'book' becomes too voluminous." I hope you can help me to clarify all this. I would sincerely like to know how exactly it works because, as you wrote to me in another letter: "without having the proper siddhānta one cannot reach Kṛṣṇa"

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
August 24, 1994

Due to some mistake either in COM or my computer, your COM text was not completely saved to my floppy disk when it was downloaded. It stops with the sentence that begins, "Now the third one, Siddhaloka, is interesting." Anyway, I will reply to what I have.

The term jīvan-mukta was explained in my presentation on Vedānta. It means, "liberated while still within the body."

For a nice definition from Śrīta Prabhupāda, see his translation and explanation of Rūpa Gosvāmī's Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.187), which appears in the purport to Bhagavad-gītā (5.11). This verse of Rūpa Gosvāmī that defines jīvan-mukta appears in many other places in Śrīta Prabhupāda's books as well.

According to Śrī Tatva-sūtra by Bhaktivinoda Thākura, the jīvan-mukti stage of liberation corresponds to the bhāva-bhakti stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The prema-bhakti stage corresponds to videha-mukti. Since all this was presented already in my Vedānta and Rāgānuṅga-bhakti texts, I do not wish to elaborate on these definitions again.

Obviously, Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of jīvan-mukta does not include the vimukta-māninas, who are impersonalists. Still, impersonalists who meditate upon the rays of the brahmajyoti are called liberated.

Thus, the term jīvan-mukta may be loosely applied to them, if their consciousness is fixed in Brahman while they are still within the physical body. Yet, impersonal liberation is not of the same caliber as personal liberation. The impersonalist liberated souls (brahmānandīs) are compared by Śrīta Rūpa Gosvāmī to rivers flowing into the ocean, whereas the personalist liberated souls are like the aquatics living deep under the waves of the ocean. Water from the river mixed with the ocean may still be evaporated by the sun and be turned to rain clouds that drift over the land, returning the water to the earth. Thus, the brahmānandī's position is not as secure as the premānandī's. Nevertheless, both are tran-

scendental and free of contamination while in their spiritual situations. This is confirmed in these words by Śrīta Prabhupāda from his purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.4.13): "But both the brahmānandīs and the premānandīs are transcendentalists, and they have nothing to do with the inferior, material nature full of the existential miseries of life." Both personalists and impersonalists may be called ātmārāmas, because they enjoy the bliss of the eternal self.

Regarding the impersonalists who merge into the Causal Ocean or Virajā River, Śrīta Prabhupāda gave the example of the Buddhists in The Topmost Yoga System (Chapter 9). Buddhists do not accept the bliss of the eternal ātman or self as the goal (like the ātmārāmas). They aim at the unmanifest state of material nature (pradhāna) as their goal. The "near" shore of the Causal Ocean is identified with pradhāna, which Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes as śūnya-vat in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 12. Śūnya-vat means "like a void." The position of such śūnyavādīs, like the Buddhists, who merge into pradhāna is even less secure than the brahmānandīs, because the pradhāna is the upādāna-kāraṇa (ingredient source) of the material manifestation. The "far" shore of the Causal Ocean is the entrance to the spiritual world, which may be called Brahmhaloka and Siddhaloka. Brahmhaloka and Siddhaloka are names that are also used to refer to Satyaloka within this universe, i.e. the planet of 4-headed Brahmā. Yogīs who enter that Brahmhaloka by way of the mystic path called arcirādi-varma are also sometimes said to be liberated, but only inasmuch as the Brahmā that they follow is himself liberated. Brahmā leaves Satyaloka at the time of the Mahā-pralaya, accompanied by the mystic yogīs who attain his planet, and goes to Mahā-Viṣṇu. There Brahmā is inclined to bheda-dṛṣṭya, as explained in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.12-15, purport.) Thus, he comes back with the next manifestation of the material world along with the yogīs who've taken shelter of him. This is understood as a fall down back into material existence.

The yogīs who go to Brahmhaloka are referred to in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.8, purport), as "worshippers of Hiraṇyagarbha, the plenary expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu".

I explained in the Danda answer to Jahnū d. about pradhāna and mahat-tatva that the body of the Hiraṇyagarbha feature of the Lord is the mahat-tatva.

In your past text you presented an opinion by Satyanārāyaṇa Prabhū about impersonalists who believe they've attained Brahman when in fact they have not surpassed the mahat-tatva. This is precisely explained in the purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.12-15). Such yogīs ride on the coat-tails of Brahmā, and if he does not surpass the mahat-tatva to enter Vaikuṅṭha, then neither do they.

You are concerned about knowing what "Real Brahman" is. It means the state of ātmārāma, which begins in śānta-rasa. According to the Teachings of Lord Caitanya, Chapter 16, ātmārāmas who are brahmānandīs and mystic yogīs are counted among the śānta-bhaktas. Below is an outline of the relevant portion of Teachings of Lord Caitanya Chapter 16 that lists 13 kinds of śānta-rasa ātmārāmas from among the categories of the 1) brahmānandīs, 2) mystic yogī and the 3) nirgrantha-muni who worships Kṛṣṇa even without brahma-jñāna.

Kinds of ātmārāmas:

1. The neophyte [śādhaka];
2. The neophyte absorbed in Brahman meditation [brahma-māyā];
3. One who has attained the Brahman position [prāpta-brahma-laya];
4. One who is desiring liberation [mumukṣu];
5. One who is liberated even in this life [jīvan-mukta];
6. One who is self-realized [prāpta-svarāpa].

a) Though there are six kinds, the sense of ātmārāma as one who is inclined to worship Kṛṣṇa [nirgrantha-muni] fits all.

b) Apart from the *brahmānandīs*, there are *yogīs* who worship the Supersoul in their hearts. They are also *āmārāmas*. There are two kinds:

1. *saḡarba-yogīs* – they worship Supersoul with form
2. *nirgarba-yogīs* – they worship Supersoul without form. Each of these two can be further divided into three categories:
  - A) Beginners (*ārurukūs*)
  - B) Ascendant *yogīs* (*ārūdhās*)
  - C) Perfected *yogīs* (*siddhas*)

If these *yogīs* come in contact with a devotee, they too become devotees of the Lord.

All the above kinds of *āmārāmas* (six kinds of *brahmānandīs*, six kinds of *yogīs* and the *nirgrantha-muni*) are called *śānta-bhaktas* by Lord Caitanya.

In your earlier text on this matter, which I sent to Drutakarma Prabhu, you asked, "If one can fall down from Brahman, how can that Brahman be seen as a transcendental platform since Kṛṣṇa emphatically repeats that there is no fall down for one who has attained a spiritual platform?"

This question leads directly into the "big" question of how the spirit souls get to the material world in the first place. If you think that "no fall down for one who has attained a spiritual platform" means that a truly liberated soul cannot misuse his free will and leave the spiritual platform, you are mistaken. This is a wrong interpretation of "no fall down." This crucial point is the subject of Drutakarma Prabhu's book, and I said before, I would rather leave this area to him.

Another point for you to consider is that the terms "Brahman-realized" and "liberated" need not be synonymous.

When one bathes in the Ganges, he is liberated. As long as he is within the holy waters flowing from Lord Viṣṇu's lotus feet, he can be called a *jīvan-mukta*. That does not mean he is Brahman-realized. It means he is liberated from all his past sins.

There is a Bengali saying: "Every day 1000 prostitutes bathe in the Ganges." They are bathing in Gaṅgādevī's liberating waters, but they remain prostitutes day after day. Why? Precisely because they are NOT Brahman-realized. As soon as they leave the Ganges, they again commit sins. You know the example of the elephant's bath.

But there is no doubt that while they are within the Ganges, even the prostitutes are liberated. This is sometimes called "momentary liberation." It is not the same as being established in *śānta-rasa*. It is not equivalent to *svarūpa-siddhi* and *vastu-siddhi*.

Another meaning of liberated is to be free from birth and death. The *yogīs* who attain Brahmā's planet are liberated in that sense, because they are free of repeated birth and death for as long as the universe exists (because the duration of a single life on Brahmāloka is as long as the universe exists). The Buddhists who attain the Causal Ocean are also free of birth and death for as long as they stay there. Thus, they too are liberated. Nevertheless, neither the Hiraṇyagarbha-yogīs nor Buddhists are established in full Brahman realization. Nor for that matter are the Māyāvādīs. This is another point. There is a difference between the Māyāvādīs and the *brahmānandīs*. Māyāvādīs are dogmatically opposed to spiritual name, form, quality and activity of the Lord. Thus, they are offenders. *Brahmānandīs* and mystic *yogīs* are *śānta-bhaktas* who maintain some attraction to the processes: *jñāna*, *yoga* and the Lord's impersonal or localized features. However, they are not dead set against the personal nature of the Lord like the Māyāvādīs. Māyāvādīs are therefore compared to the demons who are granted impersonal liberation by the grace of the Lord although they are enemies of the Lord. Whereas *brahmānandīs* like the four Kumārās have the chance to advance beyond impersonalism, because they are not offenders. Still, Māyāvādīs and demons who attain the *brahmajyoti* are liberated for as long as they float in the divine light, because in that situation there is no birth or death.

Again we come to the point of "how can the Māyāvādīs fall down if the *brahmajyoti* is an eternal situation?" This leads into the bigger question, which I do not want to get into. Two quick points: 1) Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the impersonal *brahmajyoti* of the Māyāvādīs is already a fallen condition. 2) again, the idea that "eternal situation" must mean "one cannot leave it" is based on a poor reading of *śāstra*. You have referred to Satyanārāyaṇa Prabhu, and he is one that Drutakarma Prabhu maintains reads *śāstra* poorly in this particular respect. The elaboration must be left to Drutakarma Prabhu himself.

It seems to me that the essential point of the question you raise about "real" Brahman is the relationship of the transcendentalist to Kṛṣṇa. As is indicated in *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* and in the *Bhāḡavatam* description of Mother Devahūtī's liberation, a devotee on the way back to Godhead also passes through the *brahmajyoti*. In addition, some sages like the four Kumārās, who are initially situated in the impersonal Brahman conception, advance to a personal understanding. Other mystics go only as far as the rays of Brahman, and then fall back. Others do not even get that far. They stop at *pradhāna* or the *mahat-tattva*.

In a famous verse of *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.11) Lord Kṛṣṇa says all beings are on "His path," i.e. the way Back to Godhead. On any path, there are two directions, forward and backward. Moreover, since Kṛṣṇa Himself is ever "advancing" down His own path (in the sense that His own unlimited glories are ever increasing, His path has no end. Even the topmost devotees, the *gopīs*, are always advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their association with Kṛṣṇa. So on Kṛṣṇa's path, there is no static situation. It would be a big mistake to think that "real" Brahman realization can be defined by some other point of reference besides Kṛṣṇa Himself. That would just be impersonalism.

To be situated in "real" Brahman, from which one does not fall down, one has to be always advancing. The *brahmānandīs* and the *paramātmavādīs* are counted as a

kind of *bhakta*. If they do not advance further, they will fall back. Even one who is situated in a personal, transcendental relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world will find himself suddenly "out" if he is not ever-advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

By condensing my previous texts into four *sūtras*, we get this formula:

1) Personalist devotees advance in relationship with Parabrahman; because this relationship is ever expanding, personalists remain ever established in transcendence as long as they continue to advance in love of Godhead.

2) Impersonalists (*brahmānandīs*), semi-personalists (*paramātmavādīs*) and neophyte personalists (*nirgrantha-munis* like Mrgāri the Hunter) advance to *nirguṇa* Brahman. They are all *āmārāmas* and *śānta-bhaktas*. They can naturally advance further to a direct personal relationship with Parabrahman in the *dāsyā*, *sākhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya rasas* because they are free of material contamination and can thus be easily attracted to the personal glories of the Lord as the famous "āmārāma verse" of *Śrīmad-Bhāḡavatam* declares. If they (especially *brahmānandīs* and *paramātmavādīs*) do not advance further, they risk falling down as *vimuktamānīnas* as per the example of river water mixing with the Ocean of the Nectar of Devotion and later getting evaporated by the sun. (See Śrīla Prabhupāda's London departure lecture, March 12 1975, where His Divine Grace explains this example fully)

3) Yogis who attain the Virajā (Causal Ocean) advance up to the *avyakta* (unmanifest) state referred to in *Śrīmad-Bhāḡavatam* 1.3.32. As the next verse clearly explains, until this subtle state of material identification is transcended, one cannot get the *darśana* of Brahman. These *yogīs* are not counted as *śānta-bhaktas*. However, they may be considered liberated because they get out of *samsāra* for a long time.

4) The *yogīs* who enter Brahmāloka (meaning Satyaloka, the planet of Brahmā) are worshipers of the materially manifest *saḡuṇa* Brahman (Brahman with

material qualities). That means they are not *śānta-bhaktas* but are worshipers of the demigods of whom Caturmukha Brahmā, the *rajo-guṇa avatāra*, is the progenitor. In other words they worship the universal form, which *Bhāḡavatam* declares is imaginary. The limit of their progress is more or less the same as that mentioned above in 3). These Hiraṇyagarbha-yogīs get out of *samsāra* for a long time, and thus can be said to be liberated compared to living entities who are born again and again from the wombs of mothers.

Comment by Suhotra Swami

August 27, 1994

In reference to the previous texts concerning "real" Brahman realization, here are some supportive quotations from Renunciation Through Wisdom (BBT 1992), a collection of essays translated from Bengali that were written by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the 1950's.

I have taken the liberty to present these quotes as if in answer to certain questions. These questions echo aspects of Gopīnātha Prabhu's inquiry.

Q. Can impersonalists actually merge into Brahman? And is the merging into Brahman actually liberation?

A. "So when the *jīva* soul, a product of Lord Viṣṇu's superior, spiritual energy, attains *sāyujya-mukti*, or liberation by merging with Brahman, it is not at all surprising. The energetic principle always enjoys the prerogative of unfolding within itself His own energy, but that does not destroy the energy's eternal individuality." (Page 122)

Q. Is eternal liberation in impersonal Brahman possible?

A. "The Māyāvādīs are never successful in their attempts to attain liberation by dint of their own effort." (Page 154) "As it is impossible to dam a flooding river, so it is impossible to control the senses by meditating on the impersonal Brahman." (Page 122) "A few of them may have a moment's glimpse of transcendence, but end up concluding everything backwards. They fall prey to the erroneous impersonal principle." (Page 161)

Q. Are all impersonalists condemned as nondevotee Māyāvādīs?

A. "The Māyāvādīs are always eager to deny the Supreme Energetic His potencies. They are no better than demons like Rāvaṇa, who tried to usurp the Lord's potency." (Page 151) "Of course, not all impersonalists are demonic. As soon as an impersonalist realizes that the Absolute Truth is a person endowed with all transcendental qualities, he immediately begins to serve Him. This is confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāḡavatam* 1.7.10..." [the *āmārāma* verse] (Page 140) "If an impersonalist philosopher, due to some piety, engages in devotional service to the Lord, then only does he become dear to the Lord." (Page 143)

Q. By what kind of *jñāna-yoga* can one progress from impersonalism to personalism (or in other words, what kind of discipline is followed by the *brahmānandīs* who are accepted by Lord Caitanya as *śānta-bhaktas*)?

A. "To show mercy to such pretenders, impersonalists, empiricists, and fruitive workers, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, has in the *Bhagavad-gītā* discussed *jñāna-yoga*, or *yoga* through knowledge." (Page 131) "By practicing *jñāna-yoga*, even an empirical philosopher will develop a taste for hearing purely spiritual topics from the scriptures. Eventually he will come to understand the Supreme Lord's position and potency, and ultimately he will relish the Lord's transcendental form, which is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss." (Page 132) "Only those who possess the qualities of a *brāhmuṇu* and are situated in the mode of goodness are eligible to chant the *gāyatrī mantra*. Gradually, by constant chanting, they come to realize Parabrahman (the Supreme Brahman) or the Absolute Truth." (Page 160)

Q. Is there a distinction between Māyāvādīs? Can one Māyāvādī be closer to the proper understanding than another?

A. "The Māyāvādīs attempt to know the oneness of everything, but their search takes them only up to realization of the impersonal, nondual Brahman." (Page 143) "Śrī Aurobindo rose beyond this limited sphere of

thinking and talked about 'supramental consciousness' in such books as Life Divine. We consider this book a hazy attempt to present the Supreme Lord's transcendental potencies." (Page 143) "Śrī Aurobindo has discussed this subject (though not in detail), and for this we appreciate him more than Rāmāna Maharṣi." (Page 148)

Q. *Śrī Iṣopaniṣad* Mantra 12 states, "Those who are engaged in the worship of demigods enter into the darkest region of ignorance, and still more so do the worshipers of the impersonal Absolute." What is that darkest region that such impersonalists enter?

A. "If a human being tries to exist without ego, desires, feelings, dislikes and so on, he will be converted into inert matter." (Page 149) [Note: Śrīla Prabhupāda is describing the fate of the *śūnyavādīs* who attain *avyakta* in the Causal Ocean, where the subtle material ingredients of the universes are stored. Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya also said *Māyāvādīs* become trees. This is of course after they fall back into the material world.]

Q. Human desires are dangerous for spiritual advancement. *Bhagavad-gītā* instructs that they must be transcended. How is one to do that, and not end up as inert matter?

A. "Those who understand that the multifarious human desires are a reflection of the Supreme Brahman's desires are careful not to discard them but to use them in the Lord's service. Long ago, the seven great sages and the Manus all used their God-given desires in the Lord's service, and anyone today who emulates the example of these illustrious ancestors will never see desire as mundane or as an impediment to spiritual progress." (Page 151) [Here again is a reference to the bona-fide path of *jñāna-yoga*, which leads to bhakti.]



## DEDUCTIVE METHOD

Question from Kamalavati d.d.  
September 12, 1994

Śrīla Prabhupāda stresses that Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is not a faith but a science and if I have correctly understood he is saying that by practicing Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in the prescribed way and getting the promised results gradually we can come to the conclusion that, what is written in the books about the higher truths we cannot realize immediately must also be true. This is the method of deduction as called by the scientists. One person pointed out that many philosophers do not accept proofs made on the basis of deduction because, for example, if we've seen 100 black crows it doesn't necessarily mean that all crows are black. Therefore, if Śrīla Prabhupāda is really using deduction as a scientific proof how can we defend the validity of this method.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
September 12, 1994

Do not try to understand the term deductive according to some materialistic definition. Just take Śrīla Prabhupāda's definition and stop speculating uselessly.

"Perfect knowledge is called *paramparā*, or deductive knowledge coming down from the authority to the submissive aural receiver who is bona fide by service and surrender. One cannot challenge the authority of the Supreme and know Him also at the same time. He reserves the right of not being exposed to such a challenging spirit of an insignificant spark of the whole, a spark subjected to the control of illusory energy. The devotees are submissive, and therefore the transcendental knowledge descends from the Personality of Godhead to Brahmā and from Brahmā to his sons and disciples in succession. This process is helped by the Supersoul within such devotees. That is the perfect way of learning transcendental knowledge." [From *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.21, purport]

## BRAHMĀ'S BIRTH

Question from Suśīla d.d.  
September 26, 1994

Do the Brahmās in all the other universes take birth on a lotus flower, as our 4-faced Brahmā does?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
September 27, 1994

There are not many scriptural references that give information about what is happening in other universes. In *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Chapter Five verse 330, it is stated, "After destroying them, the Lord creates the universes again. Sometimes He makes them all different, and sometimes He makes them all the same." So sometimes, the universes are different from one another. Some may be bigger than others. In the bigger ones, the Brahmās have more heads. The life span of the demigods may be different from universe to universe. These differences are mentioned in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*. However, in all universes Brahmā appears within the lotus that grows from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. The pastimes of the *puruṣa-avatāras* (the three forms of Viṣṇu) are clearly described in the scriptures; nowhere do we find an indication that the *puruṣa-avatāra* forms and pastimes are different from universe to universe. From Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu expands into all the universes that emanate from Mahā-Viṣṇu's body, and He is the source of Brahmā by way of His navel-lotus. Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu then expands from Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu into the hearts of all living entities within each universe. These pastimes pertain to ALL the universes. It is not that Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu displays completely different pastimes in different universes: in one growing a lotus from His navel, and in another growing some other kind of flower; or not growing anything, just making Brahmā appear from His ear. Moreover, *śāstra* says that the planetary systems are unfurled when the lotus opens. So

from this I conclude that basically all the universes are structured alike.

## YUGA-AVATĀRAS

Question from Suśīla d.d.  
September 26, 1994

Who are the *yuga-avatāras* in *Satya* and *Tretā-yugas*?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
September 27, 1994

They are named Śukla (in *Satya-yuga*) and Rakta (in *Tretā-yuga*), and are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.21 and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.24.

## VAMŚĪ DAS BĀBĀJĪ

Question from Nanda Kumāra d.  
October 1, 1994

I read in the book about Vamśī das Bābājī that he used to smoke tobacco. How can I understand this? How can smoking be devotional service?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
October 2, 1994

Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! What a question. This is a topic that I do not want to be drawn into, not the least for the fact that I am not the author of that book, and I am not in a position to answer for him. I will say this much: Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed that Vamśī das Bābājī was a liberated soul, as did Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The activities of liberated souls are inconceivable to gross material perception and subtle mental speculation. Such personalities are *acintya* (inconceivable), just like Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is also criticized for "non-spiritual" activity. How do we know that Kṛṣṇa's dancing with the *gopīs* is transcendental? Only by hearing faithfully from

authorities. Independently, we cannot understand. I do not know very much about Vamśī das Bābājī, so I cannot elaborate on the deeper meaning of his activities. Consider this – Garuḍa, Lord Viṣṇu's carrier, is a liberated soul. He eats snakes. So how is that devotional service? This is not up to us to judge. We must simply accept the statements of Vaiṣṇava authorities.

## REVEALING THE MIND

Question from Kamalavati d.d.  
October 3, 1994

In *The Nectar of Instruction* it said that one of the loving exchanges between devotees is revealing the mind. I was wondering, what does it exactly mean for neophytes, since neophytes, as the word itself indicates, are not so Kṛṣṇa conscious and their mind, being not yet fully under control, is full of garbage?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
October 05, 1994

The sharing of confidential matters between devotees is an exchange of love. Love is inseparable from trust; indeed Śrīla Prabhupāda often declared that the basis of personal dealings in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is "love and trust." So we should reveal our minds to devotees we trust. Naturally, that means our spiritual master, in whom we place our love and have full trust. In addition, that should mean other Vaiṣṇavas including peers (those on the same level as we). Nevertheless, one should not reveal his mind to a person who is untrustworthy, who is irresponsible, a gossipmonger etc. These persons are not sincere and mature enough for confidential exchanges.



## KAPOTA-VĀYU – TRAINED PIGEONS?

Question from Vaidyanātha d.  
October 7, 1994

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 4.12.27 Śrīla Prabhupāda describes different ways of travelling in outer space, and he mentions *kapota-vāyu*: "*kapota* means 'pigeon'. One can train pigeons to carry one into outer space."

Could you elaborate on this? I can imagine that for people in general this phrase would sound strange, to say the least.

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
October 7, 1994

I have a reference from *Mahābhārata*, *Udyoga-parva* Chapter 101, that Garuḍa has a son named Kapota. I find it doubtful that a flock of ordinary earthly pigeons can be trained to carry a man into outer space, but a *kapota* like the son of Garuḍa certainly would be capable of that.

Comment by Varnadī d.  
October 8, 1994

There is a historical account of some guy in Europe, quite some time before the Wright brothers made their first airplane, who had the idea that man could fly with the help of birds. He constructed a framework for his trained pigeons, and sure enough, on his maiden trip, he could not restrain his pigeons any longer from ascending and they took him off into space... He was never seen again.

True, a weird story, to say the least, but funny that many years after I had read about this incident I also came across the *kapota* statement.

Maybe I can still get access to the book I got this story from. If so, I'll let you know the details.



Comment by Suhotra Swami  
October 8, 1994

Sounds very esoteric. Can you quote source material for this?

Comment by Varnadī d.  
December 11, 1994

One source I found back.

The man was Domingo Gonsales, and his story can be found in "The Man in the Moon" by Bishop Francis Godwin, 1638.

There are some controversies on the details though. Some say he used wild swans that happened to come by on their annual migration and a chariot. Others say he used geese and a very primitive and small framework. Some say he used pigeons (trained by himself) and a big framework with a small sitting place.

It is also a popular believe that the book was one of the first science-fiction novels. According to this version, he ended up on the moon.

So whoever wants to check out the original...

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
December 11, 1994

I personally would relegate this to the realm of fantasy.

Comment by Suhotra Swami  
December 18, 1994

There is an explanation of *kapota-vāyu* on page 286 of Sadāpīta Prabhu's book, ALIEN IDENTITIES. *Kapota* can, but does not have to, mean pigeon.



### SHIFT OF FOCUS BETWEEN TWO SENTENCES

Question from Tamoha Kṛṣṇa  
October 9, 1994

In "Conversation with Śrīla Prabhupāda" on page 360 Śrīla Prabhupāda is saying: "...So this Kumāra-sampradāya, he belonged, this Keśava Kāśmīrī, Kumāra-sampradāya. Now they are known as Rāmānuja, Madhavācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī, and Nimbārka..."

Later on SP is saying: "...No, worship is the same, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Only Rāmānuja-sampradāya, they worship Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa because it is sampradāya from Lakṣmī..."

So, how to understand this, Rāmānuja-sampradāya from Lakṣmī or Kumāra?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
October 10, 1994

My understanding is that a shift of focus occurs between the two sentences you've quoted:

"...So this Kumāra-sampradāya, he belonged, this Keśava Kāśmīrī, Kumāra-sampradāya. Now they are known as Rāmānuja, Madhavācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī, and Nimbārka..."

In the first sentence, Śrīla Prabhupāda is focusing on the *sampradāya* of Keśava Kāśmīrī, which is the Kumāra (Nimbārka) *sampradāya*. In the second sentence, Śrīla Prabhupāda is focusing on the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* that were started by the four *ācāryas* he cites. It is not that he is connecting Rāmānuja with the Kumāra-sampradāya.

### CATUR-VYŪHA THE CAUSE OF DEVELOPMENT OF MIND AND INTELLIGENCE

Question from Bhagadatta d.  
October 12, 1994

In the chapter *Subduing Kālīya* from *Kṛṣṇa Book* there's one statement by the *Nāgapatīs* in their prayers to Kṛṣṇa: "By your expansion as *catur-vyūha* namely Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Aniruddha and Pradyumna You are the cause of the development of mind and intelligence." Could you explain this statement?

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
October 12, 1994

*Catur* means four, *vyūha* means array or formation. The *catur-vyūha* is the four-fold manifestation of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha arrayed around Kṛṣṇa (sometimes it is said *Balarāma*) in *Goloka*, and also a secondary four-fold manifestation arrayed around Nārāyaṇa in *Vaikuṅṭha*. The *catur-vyūha* have *svānīta* aspects in the form of the *puruṣa-avatāras*: Mahā-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. In the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.1.27, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that Mahā-Viṣṇu and Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu are *vāsudeva-tattva*. In the purport to CC *Ādi* 2.56 Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that Mahā-Viṣṇu expands from Saṅkarṣaṇa, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu expands from Pradyumna and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu expands from Aniruddha.

Saṅkarṣaṇa as Mahā-Viṣṇu breathing out the universes is the controller of the mode of ignorance. The false ego and the sense objects (sound, touch, sight, taste and smell) are products of ignorance. Pradyumna as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is the controller of the mode of passion. The senses (five knowledge-acquiring and five active) are products of the mode of passion, as well as intelligence. Aniruddha as Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is the

Question from Cit Śakti d.  
November 28, 1994

*I'd like to ask about the spirit soul*

*a) Is he in interplanetary space? They are innumerable and they are travelling from one planet to another - it seems, that space is full of them*

*b) I would like to know if the material atom about which we are speaking is of the same concept as what so-called scientists speak about today, or if it is just some particle? Is the reason for the movement of protons and neutrons the presence of the Supersoul or just some material energy?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
December 11, 1994

Regarding whether the spirit soul exists in interplanetary space, the spirit souls are *sarva-gataḥ* or all-pervading. According to Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya 3.78-79, besides the embodied *śhāvara-jāṅgamam* (moving and non-moving) creatures, there are *jīvas* called *sūkṣma* who are undeveloped. They do not have bodies, and hence are not counted amongst the 8,400,000 species of embodied living entities. They are merged in the material elements. Interplanetary space is composed mostly of ether (*ākāśa*), which is one of the five gross elements. So it is to be concluded that the ethereal space is pervaded with *sūkṣma-jīvas*. Certain embodied species move through ethereal space (for instance, the demigods, Siddhas and Cāraṇas).

Regarding the movements of what today's scientists call subatomic particles, if the movement these scientists detect is real, then of course Kṛṣṇa is behind it. *Mayād-hyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ śāyate sa-carācaram*. Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in *Bhagavad-gītā* that material nature is moving under his direction. While we can accept this principle, I think your question is too speculative. You are taking for granted the material scientists' belief in protons, neutrons, electrons, etc. The existence of these particles is only inferred. No one has ever seen a proton. Certainly, you have not seen one. You have only learned

about protons from persons, Śrīla Prabhupāda would call "rascal scientists," "bluffers" and "cheaters." So you need not take such ideas very seriously and try to fit them into our philosophy. So many times Śrīla Prabhupāda dismissed such modern scientific theories with a statement like, "Let them talk all nonsense."

### ŚRĪNGI - SHAME OF THE BRĀHMANAS

Question from Śrīdhāma d.  
December 17, 1994

*Dear Mahārāja, we've just read in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.18.47 that Śamīka Ṛṣi was praying to the Supreme Personality of Godhead to pardon his immature son, who had committed a great sin by cursing Mahārāja Parīkṣit.*

*I wonder why the ṛṣi felt that he should pray to the Lord. From the story of Māṅḍavya Muni we know that the children up to the age of 14 years do not suffer heavy sinful reactions for their acts. I have also heard from many devotees (although I never read this) that the reactions of children's acts at that age go to the parents.*

*Could you please explain the reasons behind this act of Śamīka Ṛṣi?*

Answer by Suhotra Swami  
December 17, 1994

I do not think it is appropriate to connect Māṅḍavya Muni with Śrīngi, the son of Śamīka. Māṅḍavya Muni's fault was insignificant because it was really an act of childish innocence. Śrīngi, on the other hand, had been a demon in his last life. This is revealed in the purport of the verse you mentioned. Here Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that though Śrīngi was a child (and because of this the prayer of his father to the Lord to excuse his son was accepted by the Lord), the fact that the boy was a member of the *brāhmaṇa* community put all the *brāhmaṇas*

to shame. Śrīngi did not curb his latent demonic propensities even though he had the good opportunity of birth as the son of a great sage. That is why, as Śrīla Prabhupāda stated in a 1973 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, "Therefore sometimes it is said that the *brāhmaṇas* are responsible for introducing Kali-yuga." This is why the offense was so serious, not merely, because a foolish child had cursed a great king. His act of childish foolishness could be excused, but what was terribly portentous was the appearance of demonic qualities within the brahminical community. This was the clear sign that Kali-yuga had arrived.



**"Our movement is for ānanda, simply bliss, and the method of pushing this movement is chanting, dancing, feasting and philosophizing."**

*Śrīla Prabhupāda*