

# What the Upanisads Teach

by Suhotra Swami

## Part One

The *Muktikopanisad* lists the names of 108 Upanisads (see *Cd Adi* 7. 108p). Of these, Srila Prabhupada states that 11 are considered to be the topmost: *Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brhadaranyaka* and *Svetasvatara*. For the first 10 of these 11, Sankaracarya and Madhvacharya wrote commentaries. Besides these commentaries, in their *bhasyas* on *Vedanta-sutra* they have cited passages from *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, as well as *Subala, Kausitaki* and *Mahanarayana Upanisads*. Ramanujacarya commented on the important passages of 9 of the first 10 Upanisads. Because the first 10 received special attention from the 3 great *bhasyakaras*, they are called *Dasopanisad*. Along with the 11 listed as topmost by Srila Prabhupada, 3 which Sankara and Madhva quoted in their *sutra-bhasyas*--*Subala, Kausitaki* and *Mahanarayana Upanisads*--are considered more important than the remaining 97 Upanisads. That is because these 14 Upanisads are directly referred to by Srila Vyasa-deva himself in *Vedanta-sutra*.

Thus the 14 Upanisads of Vedanta are: *Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Svetasvatara, Kausitaki, Subala* and *Mahanarayana*. These 14 belong to various portions of the 4 Vedas--*Rg, Yajus, Sama* and *Atharva*. Of the 14, 8 (*Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taittiriya, Mundaka, Katha, Aitareya, Prasna* and *Svetasvatara*) are employed by Vyasa in *sutras* that are considered especially important.

In the Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya*, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana shines as an *acarya* of *vedanta-darsana*. Other great Gaudiya *acaryas* were not met with the need to demonstrate the link between Mahaprabhu's *siksa* and the *Upanisads* and *Vedanta-sutra*. Jiva Gosvami, whom Srila Prabhupada said was the greatest scholar and philosopher in the world, wrote his *Sandarbh*s to leave no doubt that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the natural commentary on Vedanta; the Gaudiya standpoint was that no other commentary is required. But in the 1700s a doctrinal dispute between the Gaudiyas and the Ramanandi sect at the Jaipur court of Jai Singh II obliged Srila Baladeva to compose the *Govinda-bhasya* commentary on *Vedanta-sutra* so as to demonstrate that *acintya-bhedabheda-tattva* is a bona fide Vaisnava Vedanta doctrine distinct from *dvaita, vasistadvaita, suddhadvaita* and *dvaitadvaita*. Baladeva also wrote commentaries on 10 *upanisads*, like Madhva and Sankara. Unfortunately only his commentary on *Isopanisad* is extant.

The Upanisads are *vedasya-antah*, meaning that they express the conclusion of Vedic knowledge. They are to be learned by "sitting close to the spiritual master" (*upa-ni-sad*). The knowledge of the Upanisads is *guha-vidya*, secret. The ancient sage Dramida defined *upanisad* as *brahmani upanisanneti upanisat*, "that which is deeply immersed in Brahman. "

All the different schools of Vedanta (*advaita, suddhadvaita, vasistadvaita, dvaita, dvaitadvaita* and *acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*) agree that the Upanisads cover five topics of instruction:

1. The nature of Brahman
2. The nature of the individual self and its relationship to Brahman
3. The origin and development of the universe and its relationship to Brahman
4. The means of attaining Brahman
5. The nature of the supreme goal of life.

So, starting with topic number 1 we may ask, "What is this word, Brahman?" The Sanskrit word *brahma* is neutral in gender; it does not mean Brahma, the four-faced *rajoguna-avatara* of creation whose name has a long second vowel and is masculine in gender. The literal meaning of *brahma* or Brahman can be found in its root, *brih--* "growth," "expansion," "evolution," and "development. " *Brhanti brhmayati tasmad ucyate para brahma*, states *Atharvasiras Upanisad*: "What is called Brahman grows and causes to grow. " Thus *Vedanta-sutra* 1. 1. 2. defines Brahman as *janmady-asya-yathah*, that from which everything originates.

Again, Brahman is a neutral appellation, like the English word "God. " *Prasnopanisad* says the syllable *aum* is verily that Brahman:

*etad vai satyakama parama ca aparama ca brahma yad aumkarah  
tasmad vidvan etenaiva ayatanena ekataram anveti*

That which is the syllable *aum*, O Satyakama, is verily the *parama* and *aparama* Brahman. Therefore, he who meditates attains one or the other through this support alone.

*Isopanisad* addresses Brahman as *Isa*, the supreme controller of the universe. *Mahanarayana Upanisad* declares,

*narayana param brahma tattvam narayanah parah  
narayanaa paro jyotir atma narayanah parah*

Narayana is the Supreme Brahman. Narayana is the Supreme Reality. Narayana is the Supreme Light. Narayana is the Supreme Self.

Other terms often found in the Upanisads for Brahman are *atman, sat, aksara, prana, akasa, jyotis, purusa, isvara* and *paramesvara*.

### The Nature of Brahman

Vedantists consider the nature of Brahman in two categories: *svarupa* (essence) and *svarupa-nirupaka dharma* (attributes). According to *Taittiriya Upanisad*, Brahman is *satya* (real), *jnana* (knowledge) and *ananta* (endless). The Upanisads themselves apply these three to both the *svarupa* and *svarupa-nirupaka dharma* of Brahman; Mayavadi commentators reserve them only for *svarupa*, considering the attributes (which include the living entities and the material energy) to be unreal, ignorant and limited, thus having no relationship to Brahman whatsoever.

To illustrate how the Upanisads apply *satyam jnanam anantam* to both Brahman in essence and Brahman in attribute, *Chandogya* VIII. 3. 4 states *tasya ha va etasya brahmano nama satyamiti*, that *satyam* is a name of Brahman. The next verse explains that *satyam* is composed of 3 syllables: *sat*, *ti* and *yam*; the first means "immortal," the second means "mortal" and the third means "that which holds the two together" (*yamayati*). Thus Brahman is that which controls both the conscious living entities and the non-conscious material energy, and brings them together to exhibit the universal creation. About the next feature of Brahman's nature, *jnanam* (knowledge), *Aitreya Upanisad* III. 1. 3 states *prajnanam brahma*, that Brahman is *prajnana* (great knowledge), and that living entities and non-sentient matter are *prajnana pratisthitam*, sustained by the *prajna* that is Brahman. Regarding the endlessness of Brahman (*ananta*), *Isopanisad* 5 states, *tad antarasya sarvasya tad u sarvasyasya bahyatah*, that Brahman is within everything and at the same time outside of everything. Similarly, *Katha Upanisad* teaches that Brahman is at once smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest.

All this is consistent with the basic definition of Brahman as that which expands and causes everything else to expand. If Brahman is essentially *satyam jnanam anantam*, then that which grows from Brahman must share in that nature to some degree. Brahman as the source of expansion is not well-served by the Mayavadi theory that the cosmic manifestation is of a different essence than Brahman, i. e. unreal, ignorant and limited.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Two**

#### The Bliss of Brahman

Yesterday we learned that *Taittiriya Upanisad* presents three characteristics that define Brahman: *satyam*, *jnanam* and *anantam*. The same Upanisad expounds the Vedantic doctrine of *panca-kosa* or five levels of Brahman realization. The fifth and ultimate level is *anandamaya* (abundantly blissful). For an explanation of all five, one may refer to *Bhagavad-gita As it Is* 13. 5p and Chapter 86 of *Krsna*, "Prayers by the Personified Vedas." About *anandamaya*, *Taittiriya* II. 6. 1 states, *so akamayata bahusyam prajayeyeti. . . idam sarvam asrjata*, "this willed to become many. . . and created everything." Remembering the definition of Brahman that was discussed yesterday, we must conclude that *ananda* is intrinsic to Brahman that expands and causes everything else to expand.

In the entry to this journal of 2nd November I related the teaching of the *Brahmavalli* portion of *Taittiriya Upanisad*. Here too the conclusion is that Brahman is the state of incomparable bliss, beyond even the happiness of Prajapati Brahma, what to speak of entities below him. *Vedanta-sutra* 1. 1. 12 makes reference to *Brahmavalli* in Vyasadeva's statement *anandamayo abhyasat* (*V-s* 1. 1. 12). Srila Prabhupada discusses this *sutra* in his introduction to *Bhagavad-gita As it Is* and in his purport to *Bg* 6. 20-23.

For Gaudiya Vaisnavas, the message of *Taittiriya* II. 7. 1 is most pertinent: *raso vai sah*, "He is *rasa*." The Upanisad explicates *rasa* thusly: *esa hy eva anandayati*, "this verily bestows bliss." If *rasa* bestows *ananda*, and *rasa* is Brahman, then Brahman must be of the nature of bliss.

In *Taittiriya* III. 6. 1, Brghu Maharsi declares, *anando brahmeti vyajanat*: "Brahman is bliss. " Yajnavalkya Muni, speaking in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* III. 9. 28, says *vijnanam anandam brahma*: "realization, bliss, Brahman. " The personified sacrificial fires tell Upakosala Kamalayana in *Chandogya* IV. 10. 4-5 that *prana*, which denotes Brahman, is of the nature of bliss.

#### Brahman is Pure

Since the material happiness of the fallen (*ksara*) living entities brings them into contact with many impurities which in turn cause suffering, we must know that the happiness of Brahman is pure. The Upanisads are emphatic that Brahman is *aksara*, infallible, and thus pure beyond reproach. This is discussed by Yajnavalkya Muni and the female sage Gargi, daughter of Vacaknava, in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* III. 8. Saunaka and Angirasas speak of the same pure nature of Brahman in *Mundakopanisad* I. The strong statements of these Upanisads on the infallibility of Brahman are summed up by Srila Vyasadeva in *Vedanta-sutra* I. 2. 21-24, in the *adhikarana* entitled "Brahman is *aksara*. "

#### Brahman is the Source of All

Varuna, speaking in *Taittiriya* III. 1. 1, says "That from which all these beings are born, that by which they live and that unto which they enter when they depart this world--seek to perceive that! That is Brahman. " Srila Vyasadeva composed *V-s* 1. 1. 2 (*janmady-asya-yatah*) in reference to this statement of Varuna to Brghu. This same Upanisad indicates that ether, air, fire, water, earth and *purusa*, the soul, are emanations of Brahman. *Mundaka Upanisad* employs the term *bhutayoni*, "the womb of all beings," as an appellation of Brahman and mentions the life airs, the sense organs and the five gross elements as taking birth from Brahman. Declaring that *sat* alone existed before creation, *Chandogya* says that by its will, *sat* generated the universe. *Aitareya* states that *atman* existed alone prior to creation; it thought, "Let me create the world. "

### What the Upanisads Teach Part Three

Brahman is *Adhara*, the Support of Everything.

Uddhalaka Aruni, a *rsi* speaking in the sixth *adhyaya* of *Chandogya Upanisad*, states that all living entities are *san-mulah*, rooted in *sat*, the Supreme Absolute Truth. He furthermore says they are *sadayatanah*, dwelling in *sat*, and they are *satpratisthah*, sheltered in *sat* only.

When Yajnavalkya Muni tells of Brahman as *aksara* in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, he says that the sun, moon, heaven and earth are fixed in their positions by the command of *aksara*; the measurements of time like moments, hours, days and so on are fixed by the same command. It is stated in the fourth *adhyaya* of the same upanisad, *esa setuh vidharana esam lokanam asamhbedaya*: "Brahman is a bridge (*setu*) holding together all the worlds. "

*Mundaka Upanisad* II. 2. 5 declares:

*yasmin dyauh prthivi catariksam  
otam manah pranasica sarvaih  
tamevaikam janatha atmananam  
anyo vaco vimuncatha  
amrtasy esa setuh*

In Him are woven the sky, the earth and outer space, as well as the mind and all the vital airs; know Him alone as the one *atman* and give up all other talk; He is the bridge to immortality.

It was mentioned in Part One of this series that that *Aitreya Upanisad* states, *prajnanam brahma*, "Brahman is great knowledge. " Furthermore it is said,

*sarvam tat prajna-netram  
prajnane pratisthitam  
prajna netro-lokah  
prajna pratistha*

The great knowledge (of Brahman) is the ground of everything in the universe; it guides the universe; it supports it.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Four**

Brahman is Antaryami, the Inner Controller

Chapter 7 of Part III of *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* is called the Antaryami Brahmana. Here Uddhalaka, the son of Aruna, questions Yajnavalkya about the *antaryami*, the inner controller. The sage replies:

This Self of yours who is present within but different from earth, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, and who controls the earth from within--He is the inner controller, the immortal.

The sage then speaks twenty passages that repeat the themes of this one, describing how the Self is the inner controller of water, fire, sky, air, heaven, the sun, the four quarters, the moon and the stars, ether, darkness, light, all living entities, the life-breath, speech, the eye, ear, mind, skin, the individual self, and semen.

These passages of Yajnavalkya Muni are repeated in *Subala Upanisad* with a few changes. One significant addition is that the *antaryami* is referred to as Paramatma. Another addition is this line:

*esa sarvabhutantaratma apahatapapma divyo eko narayanah*

"He is the indwelling Self of all living entities. He is free of all sin. He is the divine One, Narayana. "

*Chandogya Upanisad* proclaims:

*esa ma atma antar-hrdaye*

He is my Self within the heart.

In the second *valli* of *Katha Upanisad*, Yamaraja tells Naciketas:

The Primeval One who is hard to perceive wrapped in mystery, hidden in the cave, residing with the impenetrable depth-- the wise, perceiving Him as God by meditating within, abandon joy and sorrow.

. . . . .

Finer than the finest, larger than the largest, is the Self that lies there hidden in the heart of a living entity. Without desires and free from sorrow, a man perceives by the creator's grace the grandeur of that Self.

This, says the Upanisad, is *sarva-bhuta-antaratma*, the inner Self of all living entities.

*Svetasvatara Upanisad* VI. 11 similarly declares:

*eko devah sarvabhutesu gudhah sarva bhuta antaratma*

The Lord is hidden in all beings as the inner Self of them all.

One might question whether the Upanisads mean to say that the *antaryami* and the individual self are one and the same. The answer is a clear no. Chandogya VI. 3. 2 teaches *anena jivenatmana anupravisya nama rupe vyakaravani iti*: "Brahman enters into creation *along with the jivatma* in order to manifest material names and forms. " The word *anupravisya* indicates that Brahman associates with matter and the individual souls as their controller. *Taittiriya* III. 29 states, *antah pravistah sasta jananam sarvatma*. In his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4. 8. 79, Srila Prabhupada notes:

In the Vedic hymns also the Supreme Brahman is described as *antah-pravistah sasta*. This indicates that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is controlling everything and entering into everything.

That controller of everything is the *sarvatma*, the Soul of All, distinct from the *jivatama*, the controlled individual soul. Thus when the Upanisads say, "This Self of mine," it is to be understood as meaning the Self residing alongside the soul in the same body Who is the controller of not only that *vyasti* body but all bodies; indeed He is the controller of the *samasti* body of the whole universe. Since the individual self is always controlled by that Supreme Self, he may refer to Him as "this Self of mine," which means "this Self of my self. "

## What the Upanisads Teach Part Five

### Brahman is Isvara, the Supreme Controller

Throughout the Upanisads we find names like Isa, Isvara, Isana, Sarvesvara, Mahesvara and Vaisvanara. All confirm that Brahman is the supreme controller. The texts in which these names appear do not assign them to Saguna Brahman only, as opposed to Nirguna Brahman. It is the theory of the impersonalists that Isvara is not Brahman *per se* but rather a personification of the highest grade of the material mode of goodness. That is Saguna Brahman; but the *real* Brahman is *nirguna*, so the Mayavadis say, and it is completely disassociated from the affairs of the universe. But *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, which is supposed to be the most monistic Upanisad of all, declares *atma* (the Supreme Soul) to be *sarvesam bhutanam adhipatih* (the ruler of all beings) and *sarvesam bhutanam raja* (the king of all beings). (*Br. U. II. 5. 15*) In IV. 4. 22 of the same *upanisad* we find Brahman to be the controller of all (*sarvasya vasi*), the ruler of all (*sarvasya isanah*) and the Lord of all (*sarvasya adhipatih*).

A section of *Chandogya Upanisad* is dedicated to *vaisvanara-vidya*. In it the sage Asvapati Kaikeya instructs five householder sages on how to properly meditate upon Vaisvanara. And what is Vaisvanara? Srila Vyasadeva makes that clear in *sutra* 1. 2. 25 of the Vedanta: *vaisvanarah sadharana sabda visesat*--"The word *vaisvanara* denotes Brahman because of its special properties. " Therefore Vaisnavara cannot possibly refer to the *jiva*. *Chandogya V. 18* explains that the word is derived from *visvanara*, which means "He who is the ruler of all human beings" (*visvesam naranam netara*) and "He who is the soul of all" (*visvesam ayam narah*). The conclusion is inescapable: Brahman is directly Isvara. The theory that Isvara is only the topmost evolute of matter is not supported by the Upanisads.

*Svetasvatara Upanisad* is most explicit in this regard: *sarvasya prabhu isana; vasi sarvasya lokasya sthavarasya carasya ca*: "Brahman is the Lord and ruler;" "He is the controller of all the moving and non-moving entities in the world. " (*Svet. U III. 17, 18*) Other verses of this Upanisad declare *isvaranam paramam mahesvaram*, "He is the Lord of lords;" *devatanam paramam daivatam*, "He is God among the demigods;" *patinam paramam patim*, "He is the Leader of leaders;" *na tasya kascit patirasti loke no ca isita*, "No one within the universe is master to Him, nor does anyone rule over Him. "

### Brahman is Purusa, the Personality of Godhead

In Sanskrit, *purusa* means "one who dwells in the body. " Thus it is applied to both soul and Supersoul. When the Upanisads employ this word as an appellation of Brahman, the meaning is that the Supreme is a person and His body is transcendental.

*Brhadaranyaka*, favorite Upanisad of the Mayavadis, states *atmaiva idam agra asit purusavidhah*--"Before creation there was only Brahman in the form of a person. " (*Br. U. I. 4. 1*) *Brahmana* 3 of *adhyaya* II of *Brhadaranyaka* is known as Murta-Amurta Brahmana; here two appearances of Brahman are discussed. *Murta* means corporeal and temporary and *amurta* means incorporeal and eternal. Verses II. 3. 5-6 constitute a description of the *amurta* Brahman. He is called *purusa*, a person. This

person appears golden, or white like a white lotus or wool, or iridescent red, or like a flame, or like a flash of lightning.

*Chandogya Upanisad* I. 6. 6 describes Brahman as *hiranmayah purusah*--"the Golden Person. " He has eyes like a red lotus. He is risen above all sin; one who knows Him rises above all sin. That the Purusa has a form, and is sinless, means that His form is not material. *Adhyaya* IV of this *upanisad* instructs the meditation upon *aksipurusa*, the Person in the eye. He is said there to be the Self (*atma*), immortal (*amrta*), and fearless (*abhaya*). *Etad brahma*: "He is Brahman," the Brahman who is *vamani* (bestower of blessings to all) and who illuminates all the worlds (*bhamani*).

*Sadviya* (knowledge of eternity) is the subject matter of *adhyaya* VI of *Chandogya Upanisad*. Here Uddhalaka Aruni instructs his son Svetaketu about Brahman. He describes that Brahman as *devata*, a Deity possessed of *jnana*, knowledge, and *sakti*, power.

*Mundaka Upanisad adhyaya* II is a glorification of the Purusa. About His abode and He Himself, the *upanisad* sings:

There the sun does not shine  
nor the moon and the stars  
There lightning does not shine  
of the common fire need we speak

Him alone, as He shines, do all things reflect  
this whole world radiates with His light.

The next *adhyaya* of this *upanisad* clearly distinguishes between the Supreme Purusa and the individual soul who is also called *purusa*. The example of two birds in the tree of the body is given. One eats, the other watches.

Stuck on that very same tree  
one person grieves, deluded  
by her who is not the Lord;  
But when he sees the other,  
the contented Lord--and His majesty--  
his grief disappears.

When the seer sees that Person  
the golden-colored, the creator, the Lord,  
as the womb of Brahman  
Then, shaking off the good and the bad,  
the wise man becomes spotless  
and attains the highest identity.

*Sri Isopanisad* 16 proclaims:

*pusann ekarse yama surya prajapatya  
vyuha rasmin samuha tejo  
yat te rupam kalyanatamam tat te pasyami  
yo 'sav asau purusah so 'ham asmi*

O my Lord, O primeval philosopher, maintainer of the universe, O regulating principle, destination of the pure devotees, well-wisher of the progenitors of mankind--please remove the effulgence of Your transcendental rays so that I can see Your form of bliss. You are the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, like unto the sun, as am I.

*Te rupam kalyanatamam* means that the Purusa's form is most auspicious.

*Prasna Upanisad* V. 6-7 distinguishes between Brahman as a Person and the individual soul as a person by referring to the former as *parama purusa*--the Supreme Person. He is *santa*, peaceful; *ajara*, ageless; *amrta*, immortal, and *abhaya*, fearless.

*Svetasvatara Upanisad* presents verses that are quoted by Srila Prabhupada in *Bhagavad-gita As it Is*.

It is stated in the Vedic language (in the *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 1. 12), *bhokta bhogyam preritaram ca matva/sarvam proktam tri vidham-brahmam etat*. There are three Brahman conceptions: *prakrti* is Brahman as the field of activities, and the *jiva* (individual soul) is also Brahman and is trying to control material nature, and the controller of both of them is also Brahman, but He is the factual controller. [*Bg* 13. 3p]

In the same place this *upanisad* describes the *preritara* (controller-Brahman) as *deva* (Supreme God), *isa* (ruler) and *purusa* (Supreme Person).

In the purport to *Bhagavad-gita* 7. 7 we find this, a quotation of *Svetasvatara Upanisad* 3. 8. 9:

*vedaham etam purusam mahantam  
aditya-varnam tamasah parastat  
tam eva vidvan ati mrtyum eti  
nanyah pantha vidyate 'yanaya  
yasmat param naparam asti kincid  
yasman naniyo no jyayo 'sti kincit  
vrksa iva stabdho divi tisthaty ekas  
tenedam purnam purusena sarvam*

"I know that Supreme Personality of Godhead who is transcendental to all material conceptions of darkness. Only he who knows Him can transcend the bonds of birth and death. There is no way for liberation other than this knowledge of that Supreme Person.

There is no truth superior to that Supreme Person, because He is the supermost. He is smaller than the smallest, and He is greater than the greatest. He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies. "

*Mahanarayana Upanisad* II. 93 brings all these indications of the personality of Brahman to an unambiguous conclusion:

*narayana parama brahma tattvam narayanah parah  
narayanah paro jyotih atma narayanah parah*

Narayana is the Supreme Brahman. Narayana is the Supreme Truth. Narayana is the Supreme Light. Narayana is the Paramatma.

*Katha Upanisad* affirms that the Purusa is Lord Visnu, in these verses that are quoted by Srila Prabhupada in his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7. 15. 41:

This is confirmed in the *Katha Upanisad* (1. 3. 3-4,9) as follows:

*atmanam rathinam viddhi  
sariram ratham eva ca  
buddhim tu sarathim viddhi  
manah pragraham eva ca  
indriyani hayan ahur  
visayams tesu gocaran  
so 'dhvanah param apnoti  
tad visnoh paramam padam*

The soul is the occupant of the chariot of the body, of which the driver is the intelligence. The mind is the determination to reach the destination, the senses are the horses, and the sense objects are also included in that activity. Thus one can reach the destination, Visnu, who is paramam padam, the supreme goal of life. In conditioned life the consciousness in the body is the cause of bondage, but the same consciousness, when transformed into Krsna consciousness, becomes the cause for one's returning home, back to Godhead.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Six**

#### Brahman and its Attributes

As we have seen, the Upanisads attribute to Brahman the overarching characteristics of *satyam jnanam anantam*. *Ananda* is a fourth essential attribute. The Upanisads assign further attributes to Brahman according to distinct functions: *jagatkaranatva* (cosmic creativity), *isvaratva* (lordship over all), *antaryamitva* (immanent control), *adharatva* (foundational reality), and so on.

These attributes are discussed within two frames of reference: positive and negative. Terms like *sarvajnah* (all-knowing), *sarvakarmah* (performing all activities), *sarvakamah* (full of desires), *sarvagandhah* (possessing all fragrance), *sarvarasah* (possessing all sweetness) and *satyasankalpah* (whose desires are always fulfilled) are positive affirmations of Brahman's transcendental, personal nature. In the negative frame of reference are terms like *adrseya* (invisible), *asthula* (not gross), *niskriya* (without activities) and *nirguna* (without qualities).

It is important to note that the Upanisads apply such positive and negative attributes to the same one Brahman. The Mayavadi theory is that the positive attributes belong to Saguna Brahman, the negative to a *different* Brahman which is *nirguna* and therefore the "real" Brahman. Unfortunately for this theory, the Upanisads

themselves do not speak of a "real" Brahman that is entirely absent of positive attributes. We saw yesterday that even *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, the one that the Mayavadis hold tightest to themselves, declares the *amurta* Brahman (incorporeal eternal Brahman) to be a person whose form is golden, or white, or iridescent red, like a flame, or like a flash of lightning.

Many other examples could be given. So as not to lengthen this article unnecessarily, I will limit myself to quoting from Srila Prabhupada's *Caitanya-caritamrta* class in Gorakhpur on 13 February 1971.

In the *Svetasvatara Upanisad* there is statement, impersonally, but referring to the person, transcendental person. The *mantra* is like this, *apani-pado javano grahita pasyaty acaksuh sa srnoty akarnah, sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyasti vetta tam ahur agryam purusam mahantam. Purusam. Purusam* means person, but the Vedic *mantra* begins, *apani-pada*: "Person, but has no leg and no hand. "

There are two kinds of statements. That He is person, *purusa, mahanta*, the greatest person, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is a person, but *apani-pada*, but He has no legs and no hands. So how is that? A person has no legs and no hands, and still, He accepts whatever we offer? Just like Krsna says, *tad aham asnami, bhaktya upahrtam asnami*: "Anyone who offers Me anything," *patram puspam phalam toyam*, "with devotion," *bhaktya*. . . The very word is *bhaktya*. That means Krsna is transcendental person, and the Vedic *mantra* confirms.

When the Vedic *mantra* says, *apani-pada*, "no hands, no legs," that is not impersonal. "Person, but His hands and legs are not like us," that is *apani-pada*. Caitanya Mahaprabhu explains that. *Apani-pada sruti varje prakrta pani-carana*: "When the Vedic *mantra* says that 'The Absolute Truth has no legs and no hands,' that means that the Personality of Godhead's hands and legs are not material. " That is Caitanya Mahaprabhu's explanation.

*Apani-pada sruti veda-mantra, varje prakrta pani-carana, na kahe sighra cale kare sarva grahana*. "And although the Vedic *mantra* says that 'The Absolute Truth has no legs, no hands,' still, it confirms, that 'He can accept whatever you offer, and He can walk more speedily than anyone. ' Then He walks. At the same time, He has no legs. And He accepts your offering. He has no hands. "

What does it mean? Apparently it is contradictory. If He has no leg, then how He can walk more speedily than anyone? These are Vedic *mantras*. "Nobody can capture Him. He is walking so speedily. " But if He has no leg, how He is walking? But that, Caitanya Mahaprabhu explains that *varje prakrta pani-carana*: "This means that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has no material body. " In the *Kurma Purana* it is said that the Supreme Personality, the Parabrahman, has no distinction between His body and self. There is no. . . Absolute means there is no duality as we have got duality--I am, the soul, and this body, they are different.

Therefore *sastra* says, *yasyatma-buddhih kunape tri-dhatuke*: "If anyone accepts this body as self. . . " This body is made of three *dhatu*s: *kapha, pitta, vayu*. I am not this. And *Bhagavad-gita* also says, *dehino'smin yatha dehi kaumaram yauvanam jara, tatha dehantara-praptih*. So *dehi*. *Dehi* means possessor of this body, the owner of this body. So owner of this body is different from this body. But in case of

Krsna or Visnu-*tattva*, there is no such difference, the self and the body, no difference. That is confirmed in the *Kurma Purana*.

Unfortunately the Mayavadis, they, either due to their poor fund of knowledge of the sastras or by their whims, they say that "Krsna or Visnu when comes, or the Absolute Truth when He descends, He assumes, He accepts, a material body. " That is not the fact. Krsna says, *sambhavamy atma-mayaya*. It is not that Krsna accepts a material body. No. Krsna has no such distinction, material world. Therefore Krsna says, *avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam*: "Because I present myself, descend Myself as a human being, the *mudhas*, or the rascals, they think of Me or deride at Me. " The Mayavadis, they will never worship the transcendental form of the Lord. They'll not worship. They will worship the imperson. And Krsna has said, *kleso adhikataras tesam avyaktyasakta-cetasam*. Of course, impersonal, personal, is the same Absolute Truth. But if you try to reach the Absolute Truth through His impersonal attachment, then it will be more troublesome.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Seven**

Brahman is the Absolute Truth

The root of the English word absolute comes from the Latin *absolutus*, meaning "the perfect" or "completed. " The term was introduced into Western philosophy in the fifteenth century by Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). The Absolute is the ultimate, underlying and all-inclusive reality that depends upon nothing else for its existence. All other things depend upon it. At the same time, the Absolute is independent of and unrelated to anything else.

Five hundred years ago the Absolute was a new idea to Europeans. But in India, thousands of years earlier, it had been taught in Isopanisad 5:

*tad antar asya sarvasya  
tad u sarvasyasya bahyatah*

He is within everything, and yet He is outside of everything.

This means that Brahman, at one and the same time, is both transcendental and immanent. As the Immanent (*antarasya sarvasya*--"within all of this"), He is the underlying reality upon which all other things have their foundation. As the Transcendent (*sarvasyasya bahyatah*--"external to all of this"), He is independent of and unrelated to anything else.

The Mayavadis propose to separate these two interlocking aspects of the Absolute. The Immanent, they argue, is Saguna Brahman, which--as noted in earlier parts of this series--is at the end of the day not really Brahman at all. The Transcendent they would have as the real Absolute Truth: Nirguna Brahman. But by definition--both in the East and the West--the Absolute Truth absent of immanency is not absolute.

*indriyebhyah parahy-artha arthebhyasca param manah  
manasastu para buddhih buddheh atma mahan parah*

*mahatah param-avyaktam avyaktat purusah parah  
purusan na param kincit sa katha sa paragatih*

The sense objects are higher than the mind (since the senses are disturbed by the presence of sense objects). The mind is higher than the senses (since even when the senses are detached from objects, the mind can conjure up the objects in thought). Higher than the mind is buddhi, intelligence (because without determination, the mind is helpless). *Mahan-atma* is more important than *buddhi*. [Sripad Ramanujacarya takes *mahan-atma* to mean the individual soul; Sripad Madhvacarya takes it to mean Hiranyagarbha--but besides being a name of Garbhodakasayi Visnu, Hiranyagarbha is a name of Brahma, so in that way too it may refer to the *jiva*. ] Greater than *mahan-atma* is *avyakta*, the unmanifest *prakrti*. Greater than *avyakta* is the Supreme Purusa, the Personality of Godhead. Higher than Him, there is nothing. [*Katha Upanisad* I. 3. 10-11]

In these verses the transcendence of the Supreme Purusa is established. Now, these two verses are repeated in only slightly altered form in the second *adhyaya* of the same *upanisad* (II. 3. 7-8).

*indriyebhyah param mano manasah sattvam uttamam  
sattvad adhi mahan atma mahato 'vyaktam uttamam*

*avyaktat tu parah pursuo vyapako 'linga eva ca  
yam jnatva mucyate jantur amrtatvam ca gacchati*

Higher than the senses is the mind, higher than the mind is the mode of goodness. Higher than the mode of goodness is the *mahan-atma*, and higher than that is the unmanifest.

Higher than the unmanifest is the Supreme Purusa who is all-pervading and without a gross or subtle body. Knowing Him, one is liberated and attains immortality.

No doubt the *same* Supreme Purusa is described in each couplet of verses. No doubt He is transcendental to sense objects, senses, mind, intelligence, mode of goodness, individual soul, and the unmanifest. And no doubt the *same* Supreme Purusa is immanent: the word *vyapakah*, seen above, is also found in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (7. 7. 19) translated by Srila Prabhupada as "spreading throughout the body in the form of consciousness. " As the individual soul's consciousness spreads through his own *vyasti* body, so the Supreme Soul's consciousness spreads through the total *samasti* body of the universe.

Here the Mayavadis will jump in to exult, "Yes, this is the correct philosophy! That consciousness spreading through the body of the universe is Saguna Brahman! But because that Brahman accepts a material body, it is not the highest Brahman. " Sadly, that viewpoint is totally contradicted here. *This* Brahman described in *Katha Upanisad* is clearly the highest: "Higher than Him, there is nothing. " Yet He is said to be *vyapakah*, all-pervading. And at the same time--with the *next word* that follows *vyapakah*--He is said to be *alinga*, without a gross or subtle body!

In the third *adhyaya* of *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, Yajnavalkya Muni discusses Brahman with nine sages. He describes the Immanent thusly:

*yah pranena praniti  
sa ta atma sarvantarah  
yo apanena apaniti  
sa ta atma sarvantarah  
yo vyanena vyaniti  
sa ta atma sarvanatarah  
ya undanena udaniti  
sa ta atma sarvantarah  
esa ta atma sarvantarah*

That which causes one to breathe out with the out-breath--He is the Self of yours that is within all. That which causes one to breath in with the in-breath--He is the Self of yours that is within all. That which causes one to breathe across with the inter-breath--He is the Self of yours that is within all. That which causes one to breathe up with the up-breath--he is the Self of yours which is within all. The Self that is within all is the Self of yours.

The sage to whom Yajnavalkya speaks these verses, Usasta Cakrayana, requests further clarification about this Brahman so described. Yajnavalkya answers:

*na drster-drastaram pasyeh  
na sruter srotaram srunuyah  
na mater mantaram manvithah  
na vijnater vijaniyah  
esa ta atma sarvantarah  
ato anyat artam*

You can't see the Seer who does the seeing; you can't hear the Hearer who does the hearing; you can't think of the Thinker who does the thinking; and you can't perceive the Perceiver who does the perceiving.

And so these verses establish the Transcendent Who is beyond all mundane power of knowledge. Can there be any doubt that the Immanent and the Transcendent are the same Absolute Truth? Yajnavalkya Muni is telling Usasta Cakrayana that the Absolute is simultaneously one with everything and yet different from it; and that the Truth of this is inconceivable.

The same point is made in *Kenopanisad* I. 5-9.

*yad vaca anabhyuditam yena vag abhyudyate  
tadeva brahma tvam viddhi nedam yadidam upasate  
yan manasa na manute yena ahuh mano matam  
yac-caksuhsa na pasyati yena caksumsi pasyati  
yat srotrena na srunoti yena srotram idam srutam  
yat pranena praniti yena pranah praniyate  
tadeva brahma tvamviddhi nedam yad idam upasate*

That which is not expressed by speech but that by which speech is expressed--that, know for sure, is Brahman, and not that which people worship. That which cannot be apprehended by the mind, but by which mind is apprehended; that which cannot be perceived by the eye, but by which the eye perceives; that which cannot be heard by the ear, but by which the hearing is made possible; that which is not breathed by life

but by which life breathes--that, know for sure, is Brahman and not that which people worship.

Many other proofs could be shown, but by now it is clear that the Upanisads teach the Absolute Truth to be transcendental and immanent, simultaneously and inconceivably one and different: *acintya-abhedabheda-tattva*.

Commenting on *Sri Isopanisad* 5, which I referred to in the beginning of this essay, Srila Prabhupada writes:

In this connection the words *saguna* (with qualities) and *nirguna* (without qualities), words occurring often in revealed scriptures, are very important. The word *saguna* does not imply that the Lord becomes subject to the laws of material nature when He appears, although He has perceivable qualities and appears in material form. For Him there is no difference between the material and spiritual energies because He is the source of all energies. As the controller of all energies, He cannot at any time be under their influence as we are. The material energy works according to His direction; therefore He can use that energy for His purpose without ever being influenced by any of the qualities of that energy. Nor does the Lord become a formless entity at any time, for ultimately He is the eternal form, the primeval Lord. His impersonal aspect, or Brahman effulgence, is but the glow of His personal rays, just as the sun's rays are the glow of the sun-god.

. . . . .

In *Brahma-samhita* it is said that Govinda, the primeval Lord, enters everything by His plenary portion. He enters the universe as well as all the atoms of the universe. He is outside of everything in His *virat* form, and He is within everything as *antaryami*. As *antaryami* He witnesses everything that is going on, and He awards us the results of our actions as *karma-phala*. We ourselves may forget what we have done in previous lives, but because the Lord witnesses our actions, the results of our actions are always there, and we have to undergo the reactions nonetheless.

The fact is that there is nothing but God within and without. Everything is manifested by His different energies, just as heat and light emanate from fire, and in this way there is a oneness amongst the diverse energies. Although there is oneness, the Lord in His personal form still enjoys all that is enjoyable to the senses of the minuscule part and parcel living entities.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Eight**

Brahman is Not a Demigod

*Adhyaya* II of *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* begins with a discussion between a *brahmana* named Gargya Drpta-Balaki and the King of Kasi, Ajatasatru. The *brahmana* proposes to give the *ksatriya* a lesson on Brahman. However, it turns out that the king is the truly Brahman-realized soul. Gargya argues that the person in the sun is Brahman; the king refutes him, concluding, "I venerate him only as the most eminent of all beings." In the same way, the two converse about the personalities of the moon, lightning, outer space, wind, fire, water, a mirror, the

sound of walking, the four quarters, the shadow, and the individual *atma*. In each case the king proves to the *brahmana* that Brahman is different. In the end Gargya requests that Ajatasatru accept him as his disciple; politely the king points out that it is not traditional for a *ksatriya* to be *guru* of a *brahmana*. Still, Ajatasatru agrees to reveal the secret of Brahman. He says:

*sa yatha unanabhih tantuna uccaret yatha agneh ksudra visphulinagh vyuccaranti evam eva asmat atmanah sarve pranah sarve lokah sarve devah sarvani bhutani vyuccaranti tasyopanisad satyasya satyam iti prana vai satyam tesam esa satyam*

As a spider sends forth its thread, as tiny sparks spring forth from a fire, so indeed from the *atman* [which means Paramatma, as the individual *atma* was earlier rejected by Ajatasatru as Brahman] comes forth all *pranas* [which means *jivas*], all worlds (*sarve lokah*), all demigods (*sarve devah*), and all living entities (*sarvani bhutani*). The secret name of that Paramatma is *satyasya satyam* (the Truth of truths). Truth means the *jivas* (i. e. the *pranas*). The Truth of that truth is Paramatma.

It is clear that all *jivas*, all *devas* and all living entities are emanations of Brahman but are yet different from Brahman.

In *adhyaya* III, Chapter 6 of the same *upanisad*, Gargi, a female Vedic sage of acute intelligence asks Yajnavalkya Muni that if the element earth is woven from the element water, then what is water woven from. [Here Acarya Madhva comments that the elements and *lokas* (worlds) that Gargi asks about in this passage are designations of the *devatas* that control them. ] Yajnavalkya replies that water is woven from air. Gargi then wants to know what air is woven from. "From the worlds in the *antariksa* or outer space" [meaning such subtle worlds as those on which the *yaksas* and *raksasas* dwell]. She asks out of what are the *antariksalokas* woven; he answers "From the *gandharvalokas*. " In this way their talk progresses through the worlds of the sun, moon, stars, demigods, the worlds of Indra and the worlds Prajapati (*catur-mukha* Brahma). All these, concludes Yajnavalkya, are woven from the worlds of Brahman.

In the ninth chapter of the same *adhyaya*, Vidagdha Sakalya asks Yajnavalkya how many gods there are. The initial answer is three hundred and three, and three thousand and three. But upon further questioning Yajnavalkya asserts there is only one God; the others of various numbers (thirty-three, three, two, one and a half) are powers of the one God. This one God is Brahman.

*Adhyaya* VII of *Chandogya Upanisad* relates a discussion between Narada and Sanat Kumara. Narada informs Sanatkumara that he has studied

the four Vedas  
the histories, which comprise the fifth Veda  
the ancestral rites  
mathematics  
fortune telling  
the art of locating treasures  
the dialogues  
the monologues  
the knowledge of the demigods

the knowledge of ritual  
the knowledge of ghostly entities  
the knowledge of government  
the knowledge of heavenly bodies  
the knowledge of the celestial serpents.

But Narada concludes that he is still suffering due to ignorance.

Sanat Kumara proposes a series of meditations by which Narada will come to know Brahman. The first meditation is upon *nama*--the names that Narada studied in all those scriptures he mentioned. From *nama* he should rise to meditation upon *vak*, speech; then to *manas*, mind; then *sankalpa*, will; *citta*, consciousness; *dhyana*, deep contemplation; *vijnana*, realization; *bala*, strength; *anna*, food; *apa*, water; *tejas*, fire; *akasa*, ether; *smara*, memory; *asa*, hope; and finally *prana*, the life of the individual self. According to Madhvacharya, all these represent various *devatas*. Sanat Kumara connects each of them to a particular success in *karma* and *jnana*. The last, *prana*, he says, makes a man an *ativadi*, one with great power of speech. Then Sanat Kumar raises the question of the appropriate subject that an *ativadi* should speak about: *esa tu va ativadati yah satyena ativadati*:

But in reality one is an *ativadi* who speaks Satya greatly.

Narada declares that he would like to become that kind of *ativadi*.

Sanat Kumar replies that Narada should meditate upon Satya. But to meditate upon Satya, he must gain realization of Satya. And for that he must be constantly mindful of Satya. To be constantly mindful of Satya he must have faith in Satya. To have faith in Satya he must be firmly fixed in Satya. To be firmly fixed in Satya he must perform his prescribed duties nicely. To perform his duties nicely he should know what real bliss is (*sukham tu eva vijijnasitavyam*).

*Sukha* (bliss) is *bhuma* (the Greatest), says Sanat Kumar:

*yo vai bhuma tat sukham  
nalpe sukhamasti  
bhumaiva sukham  
bhuma tu eva vijinasitavya iti*

*Bhuma*, that which is infinitely great and possesses infinite attributes, is bliss. There is no bliss in anything small or trivial. One must desire to know *bhuma*.

Satya--the Supreme Truth--is a name of Krsna. His nature is infinitely blissful. The successes offered by various *devatas* are limited and trivial; hence there is no bliss in them. The *devatas* cannot be equated with the absolutely blissful Truth, the Supreme Brahman, Sri Krsna.

*arjuna uvaca  
param brahma param dhama  
pavitram paramam bhavan  
purusam sasvatam divyam  
adi-devam ajam vibhum ahus tvam rsayah sarve*

*devarsir naradas tatha  
asito devalo vyasah  
svayam caiva bravisi me*

Arjuna said: You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the Absolute Truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest. All the great sages such as Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa confirm this truth about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me. [Bg 10. 12-13]

That the bliss of Brahman extends beyond that of the *devatas* is confirmed in the Brahnavalli of the *Taittiriya Upanisad*, which has been discussed before in this series. The Brahnavalli begins with this Vedic quotation:

The fear of it makes the wind blow. The fear of it makes the sun rise. The fear of it makes them run-- fire and moon, and death, the fifth.

Wind, sun, fire, moon and death--these five are great Vedic demigods who perform their duties out of fear of the Supreme Brahman. Thus do the Upanisads distinguish between the Supreme Lord and His powerful servants who manage material phenomena.

From several other of the fourteen *upanisads* under discussion, further proofs could be offered. But the case is established beyond reasonable argument just from the *Brhadaranyaka*, *Chandogya* and *Taittiriya Upanisads*.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Nine**

#### *The Jivatma*

When terms *jiva* or *jivatma* appear in the *upanisads*, they unambiguously mean the individual soul. The term *atma* means either the *jiva* or Paramatma. *Jivati iti jivah*: the *jiva* is that which lives or sustains life. *Apnoter atter, atater va*: *atma* means that which obtains, eats, enjoys, and pervades all. *Jivatma* pervades the body, Paramatma pervades the universe. The word *purusa* may refer to either *jiva* or Paramatma. *Puri sete iti purisayah*: that which dwells in the citadel of the heart is *purusa*. *Cetana* and *cit* (consciousness) apply to both also. *Sariratma* (the self encased in a physical body) is a synonym for *jivatma*.

About the individual self encased in the physical body, *Chandogya* VIII. 1. 5 states:

*nasya jaraya jiryati na vadhenasya hanyate etat sarvam brahmapuram asmin kamah  
samahitah esa atma apahata papma vijiro vimrtyuh visoko vijighitso apipasah  
satyakamah satyasankalpah*

The body ages, this *atma* does not; the body dies, this *atma* does not. It is eternal. In it, all auspiciousness is contained. It is the self that is free from evil, free from old age, free from death, free from grief, free from hunger, free from thirst, whose desires come true and whose thoughts come true.

In the same *upanisad*, VIII. 12. 1, it is said:

In truth, this body is mortal. It is held by death. It is the abode of the self, which is immortal and incorporeal. This self is the victim of pleasure and pain. There is no cessation of pleasure and pain as long as the self is associated with the body. But when the self is totally dissociated from the body caused by *karma*, it is not touched by pleasure and pain.

Concerning the eternal, conscious nature of the *jiva*, Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gita As it Is* 2. 20:

In the *Katha Upanisad* (1. 2. 18) we also find a similar passage, which reads:

*na jayate mriyate va vipascin  
nayam kutascin na babhuva kascit  
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano  
na hanyate hanyamane sarire*

The meaning and purport of this verse is the same as in the *Bhagavad-gita*, but here in this verse there is one special word, *vipascit*, which means learned or with knowledge.

The soul is full of knowledge, or full always with consciousness. Therefore, consciousness is the symptom of the soul.

Sage Yajnavalkya, speaking in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* IV. 3. 7, says *yo 'yam vijnanamayah pranesu hrady antarjyotih purusah*: "The *purusa* (individual soul dwelling in the heart) consists of knowledge. He is in the midst of the subtle senses (*pranas*). He is the light within the heart. "

The existence of the *jiva* is rooted in Brahman. *Mundakopanisad* II. 1. 1:

*yatha sudiptat pavakad visphulingah sahasrasah prabhavante sarupah  
tatha aksarat vividhah soumya bhavah prajayante tatra caivapi yanti*

As from a blazing fire sparks similar to it arise in thousands, even so many kinds of beings are born from the *aksara* (the infallible Brahman). They return to it again.

Srila Prabhupada's purport to *Bhagavatad-gita As it Is* 2. 17 offers two quotations from *Svetasvatara Upanisad* concerning the size of the *jiva*:

*balagra-sata-bhagasya  
satadha kalpitasya ca  
bhago jivah sa vijneyah  
sa canantyaaya kalpate*

"When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul. "

*kesagra-sata-bhagasya  
satamsah sadrsatmakah  
jivah suksma-svarupo 'yam  
sankhyatito hi cit-kanah*

"There are innumerable particles of spiritual atoms, which are measured as one ten-thousandth of the upper portion of the hair. "

Therefore, the individual particle of spirit soul is a spiritual atom smaller than the material atoms, and such atoms are innumerable. This very small spiritual spark is the basic principle of the material body, and the influence of such a spiritual spark is spread all over the body as the influence of the active principle of some medicine spreads throughout the body. This current of the spirit soul is felt all over the body as consciousness, and that is the proof of the presence of the soul.

In an earlier part of this series, we have seen Srila Prabhupada's quotation (found in the purport to *Bg* 13. 3) of *Svetasvatara Upanisad* in which the *jiva* is described as *bhokta* (the enjoyer). This *jiva* tries to enjoy *bhogya*, the objects of the senses that are presented by *maya*. The Lord, who is *preritara* (the controller), regulates the relationship between enjoyer-souls and the enjoyable sense objects. The same *upanisad* declares the *jivatma* to be responsible for his actions under the three modes of nature (*gunanvayo yah phalakarma karta*). Thus he is *upabhokta*, the enjoyer or sufferer of the consequences of his actions (*karma*). *Karmanugany anukramena dehi sthanesu rupany abhisamprapadyate*: the *jiva* successively assumes forms in various conditions of life according to his karmic activities.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Ten**

#### The Relation between *Jivatma* and Brahman

The Vedas, like the *Mundaka Upanisad*, as well as the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, compare the soul and the Supersoul to two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird (Krsna) is simply watching His friend. Of these two birds--although they are the same in quality--one is captivated by the fruits of the material tree, while the other is simply witnessing the activities of His friend. Krsna is the witnessing bird, and Arjuna is the eating bird. Although they are friends, one is still the master and the other is the servant. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the atomic soul is the cause of one's changing his position from one tree to another, or from one body to another. The *jiva* soul is struggling very hard on the tree of the material body, but as soon as he agrees to accept the other bird as the supreme spiritual master--as Arjuna agreed to do by voluntary surrender unto Krsna for instruction--the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentations. Both the *Mundaka Upanisad* (3. 1. 2) and *Svetasvatara Upanisad* (4. 7) confirm this:

*samane vrkse puruso nimagno  
'nisaya socati muhyamanah  
justam yada pasyaty anyam isam  
asya mahimanam iti vita-sokah*

"Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord and knows His glories--at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties. " (*Bhagavad-gita As it Is*, 2. 22p)

*Svetasvatara Upanisad* I. 9 states:

*jnajnau dvau ajau isanisau aja hy eka bhoktr-bhogyartha yukta  
anantascatma visvarupo hy akarta trayam yada vindate brahman etat*

There are two unborn ones, one who is omniscient, the other who is ignorant. One is all-powerful, the other powerless. There is yet another (*maya*), also unborn, which is involved with the enjoyer-soul and his sense objects. The infinite Paramatma who is the Self of the universe is the nondoer. When one realizes correctly the distinctions between these three, he is liberated.

Similarly, in *Mundakopanisad* III. 1. 1-2 we find:

*dva suparna sayuja sakhaya samanam vrksam parisavjate  
tayor anyah pippalam svadvatti anasnan anyo abhicakasiti*

*samane vrkse puruso nimagno anisaya socati muhyamanah  
justam yada pasyati anyam isam asya mahimanam iti vita sokah*

Two birds who are always united cling to the same tree. Of these one eats the sweet fruit and the other looks on without eating. On the same tree [of the body], a person is immersed in the sorrows of the world [only because of associating with that body]. When that *jiva* sees the other there with him, the worshipable Lord and His glory, he is freed from his sorrow.

From *Bhagavad-gita As it Is* 2. 12p:

In the Vedas, in the *Katha Upanisad* as well as in the *Svetasvatara Upanisad*, it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the maintainer of innumerable living entities, in terms of their different situations according to individual work and reaction of work. That Supreme Personality of Godhead is also, by His plenary portions, alive in the heart of every living entity. Only saintly persons who can see, within and without, the same Supreme Lord can actually attain to perfect and eternal peace.

*nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam  
eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman  
tam atma-stham ye 'nupasyanti dhiras  
tesam santih sasvati netaresam  
(Katha Upanisad 2. 2. 13)*

The verse from *Svetasvarata Upanisad* that Srila Prabhupada refers to above is as follows:

*nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman  
tat karanam samkhya yogadhigamyam jnatva devam mucyate sarva papaih*

The one eternal Sentient Being [as Srila Ramanujacarya points Him out, *eko nityo cetanah*] grants the desires of many eternal sentient beings. When, through analytical knowledge, one comes to know Him as God, the cause, he is freed from all sin.

*Katha Upanisad* further distinguishes between *jivatma* and Paramatma thus:

They call these two shadow (*chaya*) and light (*atapa*), these two who have entered-- the one in the cave of the heart, the other into the highest region beyond. . . (*Ka. U. 1. 3. 1*)

Similarly, *Aitareya Upanisad* III. 1. 3 asks *koyam atmeti vayam upasmahe? katarah sa atma?*, "Who is He whom we worship as the Paramatma? Which one is that Paramatma?" The question presupposes more than one *atma*; if the Mayavadi theory that there is only one soul (Brahman), not many souls (*jivatmas*) under the control of one Paramatma, was correct, then why would this question be asked?

This *upanisad* is very clear about the answer to that question:

*sa jato bhutany abhivyaikhyat kim ihanyam vivadisad iti  
sa etameva purusam brahma tatmam apasyat imad adarsam iti*

Having entered into the body as *jiva*, he [the individual self] comprehended the material elements. He came to perceive that very Purusa as the all-pervading Brahman. The *jiva* said: "I have seen this. " (*Ait. U I. 3. 13*)

Earlier in this series a declaration of *Chandogya Upanisad* was noted that Brahman enters the material nature along with the *jiva*: *anena jivenatmana anupravisya*. A similar statement is found in *Taittiriya Upanisad* (*tat srstva tadeva anupravisyat*). Let us look at this statement in its context.

The Brahnavalli of *Taittiriya Upanisad* opens with an explanation of Brahman in five features. These are *annamaya* (food as self), *pranamaya* (breath--i. e. bodily movement--as self), *manomaya* (thought as self), *vijnanamaya* (discrimination between matter and spirit as self) and *anandamaya* (bliss as self). About the last two, the *upanisad* states:

*tasyaisa eva sarira atma yah purvasya tasmad  
va etasmat vijnanamayat anyontara atma anandamayah*

He who is the self of the preceding one (*vijnanamaya*) is verily the self constituted of bliss (*anandamaya*).

In a long passage beginning with the words *sa akamayata bahu syam prajayeyeti*, the *upanisad* states that He, the *anandamaya* Brahman, desired to become many. Thus He created all this, whatever is that is. Having created it, He entered into it (*tat srstva tadeva anupravisyat*). That which He entered is comprised of the conscious and the unconscious, the defined and the undefined, the founded and the unfounded, the non-inert and the inert, the true and the untrue.

From Ramanujacarya's commentary on *Vedanta-sutra (anandamaya-abhyasat)* we learn that the *jivatma* is the *sarira* (body) of Paramatma. The *vijanamaya* self is the *jiva*, and the self of that self--the *anandamaya* self--is Paramatma.

There are passages in the Upanisads that assert nondifference between *jivatma* and Paramatma. *Chandogya* VI. 8. 7 expresses a statement that Sankaracarya has taken to be the *maha-vakya* (which means *maha-mantra*; see *Cc Adi* 7. 130) of all Vedanta literature: *tat tvam asi svetaketo*--"Svetaketu, you are that [Brahman]. " From *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* comes another statement oft-quoted by Mayavadis: *aham brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). The same *upanisad* declares *idam sarvam yad ayam atma*, "All this is *atma*. " *Mandukya Upanisad* asserts *sarvam hy etad brahma ayam atma brahma*: "All this is verily Brahman; this *atma* is Brahman. " *Chandogya* equates the universe, and all the *jivas* in it, with Brahman: *sarvam khalv idam brahma*. *Brahmaivedam visvam*, says *Mundakopanisad*: "Brahman is verily the universe. " "The Purusa is everything," states *Svetasvatara Upanisad (purusa eva idam sarvam)*.

In his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4. 28. 63, Srila Prabhupada nicely sums up the Vaisnava understanding of these "nondifference" statements of the Vedic literature.

Vaisnava philosophers conclude that the living entity is simply a small sample of the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Qualitatively, God and the living entities are one, but quantitatively the living entities are small fragments of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Lord is full, powerful and opulent. In the previous verse, the Lord says, "My dear friend, you and I are not different. " This nondifference refers to qualitative oneness, for it was not necessary for the Paramatma, the Supreme personality, to remind the conditioned soul that he is not one in quantity. The self-realized soul never thinks that he and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are one in every respect. Although he and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are one in quality, the living entity is prone to forget his spiritual identity, whereas the Supreme Personality never forgets. This is the difference between *lipta* and *alipta*. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternally *alipta*, uncontaminated by the external energy. The conditioned soul, however, being in contact with material nature, forgets his real identity; therefore when he sees himself in the conditioned state, he identifies himself with the body.

It its fullest understanding, the nondifference between *atma* and Paramatma is of the nature of intimate, inseparable personal relationship, not of impersonal monism. As has been noted in this series several times, Mayavadis suppose *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* to represent the purest account of impersonal monism to be found in any of the Upanisads. Yet in III. 7. 32 of that *upanisad* we find:

*ya atmani tisthan atmanah antarah  
yam atma na veda yasya atma sariram  
yo atmanam antaro yamayati sa ta  
tava atma antaryami amrtah*

He who dwells in the *atman* [the individual self], yet is within [inside and still distinct from] that self, whom that self does not know, whose body is that self, who controls that self from within, he is your Self [the Self of your self], the Inner Controller, the Immortal.

## What the Upanisads Teach Part Eleven

### The Different States of the *Jivatma*

When the tip of a hair is split into a hundred parts, and one of those is split further into a hundred parts--the individual soul (*jiva*), on the one hand, is the size of one such part, and, on the other, it partakes of infinity.

It is neither a woman nor a man, nor even a hermaphrodite; it is ruled over by whichever body it obtains.

The birth and growth of the body takes place through the offerings of intention, touch, and sight, and by means of food, drink, and impregnation; whereas the embodied self assumes successively in different situations the physical appearances that correspond to its actions.

The embodied self assumes numerous physical appearances, both large and small, in accordance with its qualities. One sees also another cause of their union [i. e. the union of body and self] in accordance with the qualities and actions of the body.

He who is without beginning or end, in the midst of disorder; who is the creator of the universe displaying various forms; who, alone, encompasses the universe--when someone recognizes Him as God, he is freed from bondage. [*Svetasvatara Upanisad* V. 9-13]

"The embodied self assumes numerous physical appearances, both large and small, in accordance with its qualities. " In *adhyaya* IV, the same *upanisad* refers to those qualities in this verse:

*ajam ekam lohitasukla krsnam bahvih prajah srjamanam sarupah  
ajo hy eko jusamanonusete jahaty enam bhukta bhogyam ajonyah*

This one (*prakrti*) is unborn. She is red, white and black. She gives birth to many creatures similar to herself [i. e. colored by her three hues]. The soul is without birth. One such unborn soul lies with her to enjoy her; another unborn soul, having finished such enjoyment, gives her up.

The Sanskrit word for "unborn" is *aja*, which also means "goat. " The verse can be read as comparing *maya* to a she-goat with a red, white and black pelt, and the conditioned soul who comes to enjoy her to a he-goat. Their offspring are colored red, white, and black. These colors represent the three modes of material nature.

*Aitareya Upanisad* I. 3. 12 speaks of three dwellings of the soul, beginning with *nananda*, the heaven of pleasure. *Mundakopanisad* II. 1. 3-9 tells of living entities born as *devas* (demigods), *manusyas* (human beings), and *pasavo vayamsi* (beasts, birds, etc). And so the universe is divided into three worlds--heaven, earth, and hell-

-by the three modes of nature. These states are experienced by the *jivatma* under the spell of the modes of material nature.

*Prasnopanisad* explains that the soul is unified with the work of the body by means of *prana*, the life force: *ara iva ratha nabhau prane sarvam pratisthitam*--"as spokes are centered at the hub of a wheel, so all bodily activities [e. g. duties prescribed by the Vedas, *yajnas*, *varnasrama-dharma* etc. ] are established in *prana*. " (*Pr. U II. 6*) We saw above that *Svetasvatara Upanisad* declares there is "another cause to their union--He who is without beginning or end. . . He who, alone, encompasses the universe. . . " *Prasnopanisad* details how the Paramatma brings about the union of body and soul by means of *prana*.

*atmana esa prano jayate yathaisa puruse chayaitasminn etad atatam  
manokrtena ayaty asmin sarire*

The vital force is born of Paramatma. As a shadow follows a man, so *prana* follows the soul, entering by a path created by the mind [i. e. by the desires of the soul].

This is *Prasnopanisad III. 3*. Verses 6 and 7 of the same *adhyaya* shed light on how the soul and its shadow, *prana*, follow the path created by the mind. *Hrdy hy esa atma*--"the soul resides in the heart," and from this heart radiate a hundred and one *nadis* or channels of *prana*. The soul, following its desires as they are subtly manifest in the mind and grossly manifest in sensory activities, departs the body by way of these *nadis*. If he has done good deeds he goes to a good world. Bad deeds bring him to a bad world. If he has done both good and bad deeds, he goes to the world of men. *Katha Upanisad II. 3. 16* says that one *nadi*, the *susumna* which runs up to the crown of the head, leads the soul to immortality.

*Adhyaya IV* of *Prasnopanisad* tells of the states of wakefulness, dream and dreamless sleep, which are the effects of the three modes upon the mind. *Bhadaranyaka Upanisad IV. 3. 9* describes these three states also. *Mundakopanisad* describes a fourth state, *turiya*, beyond the modes of material nature.

About the gross body, *Taittiriya Upanisad II. 1* explains that it is produced of *anna*, food. Food is produced by the oceans (in the form of rain). The oceans arose from the earth; the element earth arose from water; water arose from fire; fire arose from air; air arose from ether; and ether arose from Brahman. Hence the body consists of all these elements.

## **What the Upanisads Teach Part Twelve**

### Transmigration of the Soul

We have already met in recent installments of this series the basic concepts for understanding the transmigration of the soul as it is taught in the *upanisads*. While in conditioned life, the eternal *jivatma* tries to enjoy material nature, which consists of three modes. That soul is responsible for his actions (*karma*), and so has to enjoy or suffer the reactions of his *karma* by taking birth in different grades of material bodies. As long as he does not give up *maya*, the *jivatma* is faced with three possible general destinations at the time of death: heaven (birth among *devatas*), earth (birth among human beings), and hell (birth among lower forms of life). If he

renounces *maya*, the soul is freed from repeated birth and death altogether. In this installment, we shall look in more detail at what the *upanisads* teach about the fate of the conditioned soul after death. The question of liberation will be taken up in a later installment.

*Katha Upanisad* relates a discussion between Yamaraja, the judge of men's souls, and Naciketas, the son of a *brahmana* named Vajasravas. Yamaraja teaches Naciketas that the soul is a passenger in the chariot of the body. The intelligence is the driver, the mind is the reins, and the horses are the senses. When the intelligence is weak, the mind is not controlled, and when the mind is uncontrolled, the senses behave badly. The soul in this condition is called impure (*asucih*) and so cannot achieve the ultimate destination of immortality; he must mount the wheel of repeated birth and death. The supreme destination beyond birth and death is clearly pointed out by Yamaraja in *Katha I. 3. 9: sodhvanah param apoti tad visnoh paramam padam*--it is the transcendental abode of Lord Visnu.

In describing the process of transmigration, Yajnavalkya, speaking to King Janaka in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, gives an example that is also taught by Narada to King Pracinibarhi in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4. 29. 26-27. I will quote the *Bhagavatam*:

The caterpillar transports itself from one leaf to another by capturing one leaf before giving up the other. Similarly, according to his previous work, the living entity must capture another body before giving up the one he has. This is because the mind is the reservoir of all kinds of desires.

Srila Prabhupada explains in the purport:

The conclusion is that the next body is already determined by superior control. The living entity immediately gives up the present body and enters another. Sometimes in the present body the living entity feels that many of his desires and imaginations are not fulfilled. Those who are overly attracted to their life situation are forced to remain in a ghostly body and are not allowed to accept another gross body. Even in the body of a ghost, they create disturbances for neighbors and relatives. The mind is the prime cause of such a situation. According to one's mind, different types of bodies are generated, and one is forced to accept them.

In another passage Yajnavalkya says, *sadhukari sadhurbhavati papakari papo bhavati punyah punyena karmana bhavati papah papina*--"he who does virtuous acts is born as a *sadhu*; he who does sinful acts is born as a sinner. " *Chandogya Upanisad* V. 10. 7 gives a similar account.

*tadya iha ramaniyacarana abhyaso ha yat te ramaiyam  
yonim apadyera brahmanayonim va ksatriyayonim va  
vaisyayonim yatha ya iha kapuyacarana abhyaso ha yat  
te kapuyam yonim apadyeran svayonim va sukarayonim  
va candalayonim va*

Therefore, they who here are of pleasant conduct, for them there is the prospect of arriving in a pleasant birth: a *brahmana* birth, a *ksatriya* birth or a *vaisya* birth. They who here are of stinking conduct (*kapuyacara*), for them there is the prospect of

arriving in a stinking birth: a dog birth, a hog birth or a *candala* (dog-eater, i. e. barbarian) birth.

What, essentially, is stinking conduct?

*tasmad apy adyehadadanam asraddadhanam  
ayajamanam ahur asurovatety*

Therefore, those who even today are uncharitable, who are faithless, who perform no sacrifice, are called demonlike. (*Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 8. 5)

The *Kausitaki Upanisad* I. 2-3 depicts the paths of upward and downward *karma* in this way:

*hovaca ye vai ke casmal lokat prayati  
candramasau eva te sarva gacchanti  
tesam pranaih purvapaksa apyayate  
tan aparapakse na prajanayati  
etad vai svargasya lokasya dvaram  
yas candramas tam yah pratyana tam  
atisrjate 'tha ya enam na pratyaha  
tam iha vrstir bhutva varstai sa iha kito  
va patango va sakunir va sardulo va simho va  
matsyo va parasva va puruso va 'nyo vaitesu  
sthanesu pratyajayate yathakarma yathavidyam. . .  
sa etam devayanam panthanamapy agnilokam agacchati  
sa vayulokam sa adityalokam sa varunalokam sa  
indralokam sa prajapatilokam sa brahmalokam. . .*

He [Citra Gangayani] said [to his disciple Aruni]: those who depart from this world go to the moon. He [Candra, the moon deity] thrives in the earlier phase on their *prana* [life force]. In the later phase he does not produce. This is indeed the gate of *svargaloka* [heaven], that is, the moon. Those who answer him [Candra] pass by, and those who do not answer him become rain. They fall down here [to earth] and are born again in one condition or another, as a worm or a moth or a bird or a tiger or a lion or a fish or a snake or a man according to *karma* and according to knowledge. . . . He travels on this *deva-yana* path to Agniloka, to Vayuloka, to Adityaloka, to Varunaloka, to Indraloka, to Prajapatiloka, to Brahmaloka. . .

Some interpret this to mean that all souls, regardless of their *karma*, approach the moon after death. *Vedanta-sutra* 3. 1. 12-17 bring this passage of *Kausitaki Upanisad* under examination. The conclusion, supported by all *acaryas* of Vedanta including Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana, is that only souls who have performed pious deeds in accordance with the Vedic scriptures rise to the moon. The impious enter the *tritiya-sthanam*, a third realm apart from the *pitr-yana* (the path of the forefathers, which rises to the moon but goes no farther, eventually returning those who follow it back to earth) and the *deva-yana* (the path of the *devas*, which extends beyond the moon, ultimately to Brahmaloka). The *tritiya-sthanam* is the world of lower creatures who, in previous human lives, were very sinful.

In *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad adhyaya* VI, Jaivali Pravahana tells Gautama that the souls who follow the *pitr-yana* enter the moon after having passed through the

smoke (i. e. the realm of a demigod named Dhuma), the night (the realm of Ratri), the dark fortnight (the realm of Apaksyamana-paksa), the six months of Dakṣiṇayana, and Pitr-loka. Having at last reached the moon, these souls become the objects of enjoyment of the higher demigods. When their pious deeds are exhausted, Jaivali says *athena evakasam abhinispadyate*--"these souls become one with the element *akasa* and come down through the ethereal space [which separates the moon from the earth]. " They enter the air and then the rain. In this way they fall to earth, where they become *anna* (food). When that food is eaten by a man, it is transformed into semen by which a woman becomes pregnant. In this way the souls are born again in the human form. Jaivali concludes, *ta evameva anupariyantante atha ya etau pathanau na viduh te kita patangah yadidam dandasukam*--"But those who do not know the two paths (*deva-yana* and *pitr-yana*) are born as insects, moths and as creatures that bite. . . "

Now, it would be wrong to conclude that the *upanisads* simply encourage the spirit soul to avoid sinful *karma* and perform pious *karma*. *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 4. 1 dismisses both piety (*sukṛta*) and impiety (*duskrta*) as evil (*papamana*). The *atma* or spiritual self, this verse explains, is distinct from any material condition--day, night, old age, death, suffering, and even good deeds and bad. All of these are inauspicious when viewed from the transcendental position (*naitam setumahoratre tarato na jara na mṛtyurna soko na sukṛtam na duskrtam papamanah*). *Prasnopanisad* I. 9 advises one on the spiritual path to renounce *istapurta*--Vedic sacrifices (*ista*) and charitable work (*purta*)--for it is by *istapurta* that the soul remains bound to the cycle of birth and death.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Thirteen**

#### The Universe (*Jagat*)

Words used often in the *upanisads* for the cosmic creation are *jagat*, *loka*, *visva*, *prapanca*, *tamas* and *prakṛti*. The pronoun *idam* (this) is another very common signifier for the universe.

*isavyasyam idam sarvam  
yat kinca jagatyam jagat  
tena tyaktena bhunjitha  
ma grdhah kasya svid dhanam*

Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong. (*Sri Isopanisad*, *mantra* 1)

With utmost clarity, this verse states that the universe and everything in it is a display of the Supreme Lord's *sakti* or power.

*ya eko avarno bahudo saktiyogat varnan anekan nihitartho dadhati  
vicaiti cante visvam adau sa devah sa no buddhya subhaya samyunaktu*

The one Brahman denoted by the letter "a" (*akara*) creates the many *varnas* [the manifold universe] by His power (*saktiyogat*) without any selfish purpose. At the time of dissolution, the Lord destroys the universe. (*Svetasvatara Upanisad* IV. 1)

The same power by which the universe is created and destroyed keeps the *jiva* in bondage.

*chandamsi yajnah kratavo vratani bhutam bhavyam yacca veda vadanti  
asman mayi srjate visvam etat tasmims canyo mayaya sanniruddhah*

The Vedas, the sacrifices, the rituals, the vows, the past, the future, and what the Vedas declare, all this the Mayina (the wielder of the power known as *maya*) creates out of this; in it, the other (*jiva*) is bound by *maya*. (*Sv. U.* IV. 9)

Now, *maya* means illusion as well as power. Is the universe just a grand illusion? The *upanisads* do not teach such a doctrine. This question will be pursued in greater detail in the next installment; today we are focusing on the universe as the creation of the Lord. Certainly within the limits of the present topic there is no scope for dismissing the cosmos as some kind of Chimera.

Remembering from the first installment how the *upanisads* define Brahman, it makes little sense to argue, as the Mayavadis do, that the universe--which grew up by the power of Brahman--is a mere mirage or figment of the imagination. The *upanisads* urge the soul to put his complete attention and effort into the alleviation of his material bondage. It makes little sense to argue that the state of bondage--which requires so much dedication to overcome--is just the *jiva's* hallucination or fantasy.

The philosophy of cosmic creation taught in the *upanisads* is *parinama-vada*, the doctrine of transformation. Here is a natural illustration of that teaching: a planted seed, which is one thing, the cause, grows into a tree, which is another thing, the effect. Though cause and effect are no doubt two different things, they are no doubt connected by energy (defined as the capacity for power and vitality). Hence the cause is evident in the effect--the tree produces more seeds, which in turn become the cause of more trees. All this happens by *parinama*--transformation of energy. The Mayavadi version of creation, on the other hand, is called *vivarta-vada*, the theory of illusion. Srila Prabhupada gives this light on the difference between the two doctrines.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura comments that if one does not clearly understand the meaning of *parinama-vada*, or transformation of energy, one is sure to misunderstand the truth regarding this material cosmic manifestation and the living entities. In the *Chandogya Upanisad* it is said, *san-mujah saumyemah prajah sadayatanah sat-pratisthah* (*Cha. U.* 6. 8. 4). The material world and the living entities are separate beings, and they are eternally true, not false. Sankaracarya, however, unnecessarily fearing that by *parinama-vada* (transformation of energy) Brahman would be transformed (*vikari*), has imagined both the material world and the living entities to be false and to have no individuality. (*Cc Adi* 7. 122p)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains, "In the *Vedanta-sutra* of Srila Vyasadeva it is definitely stated that all cosmic manifestations result from transformations of various energies of the Lord. Sankaracarya, however, not accepting the energy of the Lord, thinks that it is the Lord who is transformed. He has taken many clear statements

from the Vedic literature and twisted them to try to prove that if the Lord, or the Absolute Truth, were transformed, His oneness would be disturbed. Thus he has accused Srila Vyasadeva of being mistaken. In developing his philosophy of monism, therefore, he has established *vivarta-vada*, or the Mayavada theory of illusion. " (CC *Adi* 7. 121p)

The Gaudiya Vaisnava understanding of *parinama-vada* is one of *sakti-parinama*, not *brahma-parinama*. In other words, it is Brahman's energy (*sakti*) that transforms to give rise to cosmic creation. Brahman Himself, the Lord, is not transformed. He does not Himself become the creation. His personal energy expands from Him to transform herself into the universe as a service to Him. Sankaracarya's fear, mentioned by Srila Prabhupada above--i. e. if *parinama-vada* is accepted, "Brahman would be transformed (*vikari*)"--does not disturb *sakti-parinama-vada*.

Only from the standpoint of *parinama-vada* can we find a logical explanation for such statements as *sadeva saumya idam agra asid ekameva advitiam*, in *Chandogya*; *atma va idam eka eva agra asit*, in *Aitareya*; and *brahma va idam agra asit ekameva*, in *Brhadaranyaka*. These passages declare that before creation, the universe existed in an unmanifest state, without name and form, along with the Lord (Sat, Paramatma, Brahman).

This may sound mysterious, but the mystery is dispelled in *Sri Brahma-samhita*. Here is a quotation of *B-s* 5. 47 and its translation, found in the purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 2. 10. 3:

*yah karanarnava jale bhajati sma yoga-  
nidram ananta jagadanda-saroma-kupah  
adhara-saktim avalambya param sva-murtim  
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*

The first *purusa* incarnation of Govinda, Lord Krsna, known as the Maha-Visnu, goes into a *yoga-nidra* mystic sleep, and the innumerable universes are situated in potency in each and every hair hole of His transcendental body.

The example I gave before to illustrate the *parinama* doctrine was that of a seed that transforms into a tree. Here the same example is given, but in an original, metaphysical context. Before creation, each and every universe exists as a seed of potential within one of the pores of the spiritual body of Lord Maha-Visnu. After *maha-pralaya* (the dissolution of the creation), the universes resume their potential state. The essential point is, that as the energy of the Lord, the universes always exist--although sometimes they are unmanifest, exhibiting no name and form.

*Atmaiva idam agra asit purusavidhah*: "In the beginning (prior to creation), this universe was Paramatma in the form of a person. " (*Br. U.* I. 4. 1) *Taddhedam tarhy ayvaktam asit tan-namarupabhyam eva vyakryata*: "At that time (prior to creation) this universe was undifferentiated and it became differentiated with names and forms. " (*Br. U.* I. 4. 7)

The above translation of *Brahma-samhita* 5. 47 is given by Srila Prabhupada as a purport to this verse:

The elementary creation of sixteen items of matter--namely the five elements [fire, water, land, air and sky], sound, form, taste, smell, touch, and the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin and mind--is known as *sarga*, whereas subsequent resultant interaction of the modes of material nature is called *visarga*.

Two verses earlier, Srila Sukadeva Gosvami explained that *sarga* and *visarga* are the first two of ten topics of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. In his purport to *Bhagavatam* 3. 10. 7, Srila Prabhupada nicely elucidates the difference between *sarga* and *visarga*:

The material world and the living entities were all already generated in seedling forms by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Brahma was to disseminate the same seedlings all over the universe. The real creation is therefore called *sarga*, and, later on, the manifestation by Brahma is called *visarga*.

In the purport to *Bhagavatam* 2. 10. 3, Srila Prabhupada further explains:

[*Sarga*] pertains to the sixteen elementary manifestations of earth, water, etc. , with material ego composed of material intelligence and mind. The subsequent creation [*visarga*] is a result of the reactions of the above-mentioned sixteen energies of the first *purusa*, the Maha-Visnu incarnation of Govinda, as later explained by Brahma. .

One of Krsna's many names is Sodasa-kala Purna (see Srila Prabhupada's *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture on 13 February 1971 at Gorakhpur). This name means the Lord is the complete repose of sixteen. The term *sodasa* refers to sixteen energies, elements, *tattvas*, or principles. It is found repeatedly throughout *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (see, for example *Bhag.* 1. 3. 1, 2. 4. 23, 2. 10. 3, 4. 29. 74, 5. 11. 5, 6. 1. 51, etc. ).

A section of *Chandogya Upanisad* is entitled Sodasa-kala Brahavidya. It consists of the instructions of a bull, a fire, a swan and a diver-bird to Satyakama Jabala. Later the same instructions were repeated to Satyakama by his *guru*, Haridrumata Gautama. Acarya Madhva comments that Sodasa-kala Brahavidya presents the *catur-vyuha* (the fourfold expansion of Krsna-Narayana as Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha) along with the energies of these Deities. Indeed, the entire detailed process of creation that is taught in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* can be nicely summarized as the *lila* of the *catur-vyuha*. This *lila* is the Lord's play with His sixteen creative potencies. From out of this *lila* the gross material universe manifests.

*te dhyana yoganugata apasyam devatama saktim svagunair-nirudham  
yah karanani nikhilani tani kalatma yuktani adhitisthatyekah*

The sages on the path of meditation saw the *devatma-sakti*, the potency of the Lord's own Self. This potency is made up of self-existent qualities. The one Lord rules over these qualities, which act as causal agents such as time, the gross and subtle body, and the rest. (*Svetasvatara Upanisad* I. 3)

The *lila* of the Lord with His *devatma-sakti* involves Him sending the sixteen qualities of that *sakti* forth from Himself. In *Vedanta-sutra* 2. 1. 28, Srila Vyasadeva calls this

*vicitra-sakti*, Brahman's power of variation by which He expands the universe from Himself without changing His own *svarupa* (*atmani caivam vicitrasca hi*). Then Brahman enters into the universe along with the *jivas* to give it name and form (*nama-rupa-vyakarana*). We have seen in earlier installments of this series that *Chandogya* and *Taittiriya Upanisads* are quite specific about this entrance of the Lord into creation along with His parts and parcels. This pastime is termed *anupravisya*.

This two-fold *lila*, *vicitra* and *anupravisya*, is nicely summed up in Srila Prabhupada's purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6. 9. 27:

The *Naradiya Purana* says:

*avikaro 'pi paramah  
praktis tu vikarini  
anupravisya govindah  
praktis cabhidhiyate*

Both the *prakrti* and *purusa*, which are inferior and superior energies, are emanations from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As explained in *Bhagavad-gita* (*gam avisya*), the Lord enters the *prakrti*, and then the *prakrti* creates different manifestations. The *prakrti* is not independent or beyond His energies. Vasudeva, Lord Sri Krsna, is the original cause of everything.

Now: if the only source of the universe is the Absolute Truth, Brahman, if the universe as potential is eternal, and if Brahman enters the universe at the time of its gross manifestation as the cosmic creation, then how does *maya* (illusion) come about? That discussion is the topic of the next installment.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Fourteen**

The Universe, Brahman and Maya

*Bṛhadaranyaka Upanisad* IV. 4. 19 states:

*manasaiva anudrastvyam neha nanasti kincana  
mrtyoh sa mrtyum apnoti ya iha naneva pasyati*

Brahman is to be perceived by the mind purified by knowledge of Truth. This Brahman is not diverse. He who sees diversity in this Brahman goes from death to death.

In the same *upanisad* (II. 4. 14) we find:

*yatra hi dvaitamiya bhavati taditara itaram pasyati. . .  
yatra tu asya sarvam atmaivabhut. . . tat kena kam pasyet*

In duality, one sees another. Where everything has become the Self, then by what and by whom should one see?

Commenting on the first quotation in his *Sariraka-bhasya*, Sripad Sankaracarya writes, *avidyadhyaropana vyatiriktena nasti paramarthato dvaitm asti. . . asati nanatve nanatvam adhyaropayati avidyaya*--"Other than Brahman, the manifold universe does not really exist. Due to *avidya*, Brahman appears illusorily as the manifold universe. "

For stalwart Vaisnava Vedantists like Ramanuja and Madhva, *neha nanasti kincana* in the first quotation means there is no other reality than Brahman. To think a thing is "diverse" from that reality--in other words, to think something exists apart from God, in its own right--is illusion.

In III. 8. 8 of the same *upanisad*, Yajnavalkya tells Gargi that the infallible Brahman (*aksara*) has no material qualities. He says it is *asthulam* (not gross) and *ananu* (not subtle), *ahrasvam* (not short) and *adhirgham* (not long), and so on through a list of twenty-five negations of mundane characteristics. Thus Brahman, the only reality, is not to be perceived through the sensory portals of the impure, ignorance-clouded mind. *Manasaiva anudrastyam*, begins the quotation at the start of this installment: "It is to be perceived by the mind purified by knowledge of Truth. "

Accepting this, it is a *non sequitur* (i. e. it does not follow logically) to arrive at Sankara's conclusion that the universe does not exist. In the very next verse of *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*, III. 8. 9, Yajnavalkya declares to Gargi:

*tasya va aksarasya prasasane gargi suryacandramasau vidhrtau tisthatah. . .*

Truly, at the command of Aksara Brahman, Gargi, the sun and the moon are held in their positions, heaven and earth are held in their positions, the moments, hours, days and nights, fortnights, months, and seasons stay in their positions.

If, as Sankaracarya claims, the universe is not real, then why is the command of the infallible Brahman involved in holding it together? Actually, Brahman is known as Aksara *because* He holds the universe together. In *Vedanta-sutra* Srila Vyasadeva states, *aksaram ambarantadhrteh*--"Aksara is Brahman because the *upanisads* say He supports the whole universe from the gross element of earth to the subtle element of ether. " Vyasa further states, *sa ca prasasanat*--"Aksara supports all that exists by His supreme command. "

As long the mind and its attendant senses are darkened by ignorance, one knows only mundane sense impressions. Mundane sense impressions--grossness, fineness, length, shortness and so on--are not (to borrow Kant's phrase) *Ding-an-Sich*, "the thing in itself. " They do not constitute Brahman Himself nor even the universe that is the energy of Brahman. They are simply the limited, imperfect data that our organs of perception make available to the limited, imperfect mind.

The ignorance that darkens the mind and the senses is certainly diversity, *but it is diversity as defined by the Vaisnava acaryas*. The impressions the senses present to the mind of an ignorant soul are diverse from Brahman, the source of the universe. *Brahma-vidya*, Vedic knowledge, grants the soul scripturally-opened eyes (*sastra-caksusa*) to see beyond the screen of those impressions to the Absolute Truth, the transcendent and immanent all-powerful Personality of Godhead--*and thus to see the real purpose of sense impressions as creations of the Lord and His energy*. That purpose is devotional sacrifice. This is the method (*vidhi*) ordained in the scriptures

by which human beings "make sacred" (in Latin, *sacer facere*, the phrase from which the English word "sacrifice" is derived) the objects of their sense perception.

In comparison to this explanation of how ignorance is banished by Vedic knowledge, Sankaracarya's version is, philosophically speaking, quite primitive. Human ignorance manifests as the diverse qualities of our sense impressions: the different sounds, feelings, forms and colors, tastes and smells that are projected into the mind from "outside. " But this is Sankara's point: there is no outside. There is only the Self. In Western philosophy, the conception that 1) there is only one self, and 2) this self is me alone, and 3) everything outside me is a creation of my mind, is called solipsism (from Latin *solus*, alone, and *ipse*, self). For two simple reasons, solipsism is considered an inadequate philosophy. While asserting that my consciousness is the only substance of the universe, it fails to explain why I cannot change the universe at will, simply by thought. While asserting that the only reality is that I myself exist, it cannot explain why I am dependent for my life, learning and happiness upon a world full of living entities that refuse to acknowledge this reality. Sankara's solipsism argues that "I" (the Self, Brahman) keep myself in *maya* by concocting diversity in my mind. When "I" negate all such diversity, "I" see that the universe does not really exist, and thus "I" arrive at oneness--my Self alone. That is liberation.

Equipped with this understanding, we now turn to the second quotation that started off this installment. Here the question is raised: if all is the Self, then by what and by whom should one see another? Sankaracarya's take is that Brahman is pure subject. Since Brahman is all there is, there is no object to Brahman's perception. Perception, then, is meaningless. Hence when the Self that is Brahman is at last realized, no relation to anything else remains. The sense of a relation to another beyond that Self is illusion.

The problem with Sankara's interpretation is the same as before. He presupposes "perception, relationship, and the other" to be illusory without exception. He does not factor in the difference between "perception, relationship, and the other" registered within an ignorant living entity's limited and imperfect field of knowledge, and "perception, relationship, and the other" outside that field in the realm of the metaphysical ("beyond physics").

Still, it may be argued that the verse clearly says *yatra tu asya sarvam atmaivabhut-*-"When everything becomes the Self. " That must mean that everything becomes pure subject.

According to the *upanisads*, everything is pure subject, as we see in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* III. 7. 23 (and in similar passages elsewhere, some of which have been quoted here in earlier installments). These passages make clear that "perception, relationship, and the other" are included within the pure subject, the Lord. Because He sees all that is to be seen, an ultimate standard of reality exists that we can share in. That standard lies outside the power of the material senses.

*adrsto drasta asruteh srotra amanto manta avijnato vijnata  
na 'nyatosti drasta nanyato 'sti srota nanyato 'sti manta nanyato 'sti vijnata  
esa tu atma antaryamy amrtah ato anyad artam*

He is not seen with the eyes but He sees all. He is not heard with the ears but He hears everything. He is not comprehended by the mind but He comprehends everything. He is not perceived by meditation but He perceives everything. There is no other seer but He. There is no other hearer but He. There is no other cognizer but He. He is your Self who controls everything from within. He is immortal; all that seems apart from Him is suffering.

Srimad-Bhagavatam 11. 24. 20 confirms that the universe exists only due to the perception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

As long as the Supreme Personality of Godhead continues to glance upon nature, the material world continues to exist, perpetually manifesting through procreation the great and variegated flow of universal creation.

To share in the reality of the Lord's perception of the universe is to be Krsna conscious.

Krsna consciousness means constantly associating with the Supreme Personality of Godhead in such a mental state that the devotee can observe the cosmic manifestation exactly as the Supreme Personality of Godhead does. (*Bhag.* 4. 29. 69)

In an earlier installment we have met the statement of *Katha Upanisad* II. 2. 13 that among eternal souls, the Lord is the supreme eternal soul, and among sentient beings, the Lord is the supreme sentient being. Yes, He is the original pure subject whose consciousness encompasses everything (*sarvam atmaivabhut*, in the words of *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*). But that does not mean that there are no other subjects. Nor does it mean that these other subjects cannot be as pure as the original pure subject. Nor does it mean these other subjects cannot perceive reality as the original pure subject does. In their sentient perceptions, all other subjects are always dependent upon the original sentient being. But because some have diverted their perceptions from His standard, they suffer. The solution to suffering is not to extinguish perception, to break all relations, and to negate the other. The solution is to perceive divinely, as does the Lord; to relate divinely, as does the Lord; and in this way to know there is no other than the Lord and His energy.

Still one may quibble, "But *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* asks, *yatra tu asya sarvam atmaivabhut. . . tat kena kam pasyet*--'Where everything has become the Self, then by what and by whom should one see?'" The answer is: by the grace of that Self, one should see. It a fact established in *Brhadaranyaka* and other *upanisads* that it is only by the grace of that Self, the Paramatma, that the individual *atma* can see anything at all. "Where everything has become the Self" means "Where everything is seen as Paramatma sees. " Seeing as Paramatma sees does not change the fact that we see by His grace. It means we are taking full advantage of His grace.

Let us move on.

As a spider sends forth and draws in its thread; as herbs sprout from the earth; as head and body hair grow from a living person; so from the Aksara arises the universe. (*Mundaka Upanisad* I. 1. 7)

Commenting on this, Sankaracarya writes in *Sariraka-bhasya: karanantaram anapeksya svayameva srjate*--"Brahman is the sole cause and does not require any other causal agent. " It is due to this point of doctrine that Mayavadi philosophy is bedeviled by the question

### **Where did *maya* come from?**

If Brahman is the sole cause and takes no assistance from any other agent, then, argues Mayavada, *maya* only appears to be the energy of Brahman. But in truth Brahman is originally one without a second. So did Brahman create *maya*? Mayavada answers no. Is *maya* a *tattva* (ontological truth) independent of Brahman? Mayavada answers no. Then what is *maya*? Mayavada answers that it is *anirvacaniya*, which literally means "inexpressible"--something not to be discussed. But lest it be taken as a fancy "Shut up!", the Mayavadis offer that *anirvacaniya* indicates that *maya* is neither real nor unreal but different from both; and that it is without any cause at all.

We will come back to this curious notion of the Mayavadis. For now, let us see what the *upanisads* have to say about *maya*. Of the 14 *upanisads* that Srila Vyasadeva refers to in his *Vedanta-sutra*, only *Svetasvatara Upanisad* employs the word *maya*.

*mayam tu prakrtim vidyat mayinam tu mahesvaram*

Know then that *prakrti* is *maya* and the wielder of *maya* is the great Lord. (*Sv. U. IV. 10*)

From two other words here--*prakrtim* and *mayinam*--it is quite clear that this line intends the word *maya* to mean "power" more than to mean "illusion. " The word *prakrti* is formed from *pra* (complete) and *krti* (one able to create). Hence *prakrti* means an entity with vast creative potential. The word *mayinam* is a grammatical form of the name Mayina, which according to Srila Prabhupada means "the Supreme Lord who possesses great mystic power" (see *Bhag. 7. 8. 23* in the context of the word *harinorumayina*). The conclusion is that *Svetasvatara Upanisad* equates *maya* with *prakrti* and declares the great Lord (*mahesvaram*) to be the wielder of that *maya*. And so He is called Mayina. From the language of this verse a hint of illusion can be teased out. Srila Prabhupada also translates *mayinam* as referring to jugglers and magicians (see *Bhag 3. 6. 39* and the purport). The *Bhagavatam* even uses the word to indicate the demons (7. 10. 53). Jugglers, magicians and demons are all skilled in illusion. But this only affirms that illusion has its basis in power; jugglers, magicians and demons exhibit powers that astonish the common man.

The demon Maya Danava is called *mayina* in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7. 10. 51. Here Srila Prabhupada translates the word as "possessing technical knowledge. " Arthur C. Clarke, author of *2001--A Space Odyssey* and the inventor of the telecommunications satellite, is often quoted as saying, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. " Magic means the conjuration of illusion; but we cannot argue that such illusion just floated up out of nowhere. There is a technique at the back of it. When one comes to know that technique, the illusion of the magic is banished. One can then appreciate the skill of the magician/technician without being bewildered by him.

What exactly is the illusion of *maya*? *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 3. 2 states, *anrtena hi pratyudhah*--"they do not find Brahman, as it is hidden by untruth (*anrta*). " Now,

*rta* (truth) is defined by *Katha Upanisad* I. 3. 1 in this way: *rtam pibantau sukratasya loke*--"the fruits of pious deeds. " Sankaracarya has confirmed this in his *Sariraka-bhasya* with the words *rtam karma phalam*. Bringing this gloss back to the *Chandogya* verse, we see that *anrta* is a synonym for *papa* or sin. In a previous installment it was noted that *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 4. 1 clubs together both *sukrta* (pious deeds) and *duskrtta* (impious deeds) under the heading of *papmana*, sinfulness. Why? Because the transcendental nature of *atma* and Paramatma has nothing to do with the material dualities of good and evil.

The engagement of Brahman, the Mayina, with His *prakrti* bewilders those who are sinful--which means those who pursue the good and bad fruits of *karma*. Attachment to these fruits is *anrta*, not the true purpose of the creation. Neither is the true purpose of creation to be found in artificial renunciation, by which one tries to liberate himself from fruitive reactions. Both *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *tyaga* (renunciation) of *karma phala* are symptomatic of a fallen soul's obsession for the temporary sense objects. This obsession, or ignorance, covers the living entity's knowledge of Brahman. That covered state is what is meant by "being in *maya*. "

This is all wonderfully summed up by Srila Prabhupada in his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1. 3. 37.

There are two classes of materialists, namely the fruitive workers and the empiric philosophers. The fruitive workers have practically no information of the Absolute Truth, and the mental speculators, after being frustrated in fruitive activities, turn their faces towards the Absolute Truth and try to know Him by mental speculation. And for all these men, the Absolute Truth is a mystery, as the jugglery of the magician is a mystery to children. Being deceived by the jugglery of the Supreme Being, the nondevotees, who may be very dexterous in fruitive work and mental speculation, are always in ignorance. With such limited knowledge, they are unable to penetrate into the mysterious region of transcendence. The mental speculators are a little more progressive than the gross materialists or the fruitive workers, but because they are also within the grip of illusion, they take it for granted that anything which has form, a name and activities is but a product of material energy. For them the Supreme Spirit is formless, nameless and inactive. And because such mental speculators equalize the transcendental name and form of the Lord with mundane names and form, they are in fact in ignorance. With such a poor fund of knowledge, there is no access to the real nature of the Supreme Being.

On that note, we return to the Mayavadi explanation of *maya*. In his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4. 24. 17, Srila Prabhupada writes as follows.

. . . it is stated in the *Padma Purana* that Lord Siva appeared as a *brahmana* in the age of Kali to preach the Mayavada philosophy, which is nothing but a type of Buddhist philosophy. It is stated in *Padma Purana*:

*mayavadam asac-chastram  
pracchannam bauddham ucyate  
mayaiva vihitam devi  
kalau brahmana-murtina*

Lord Siva, speaking to Parvati-devi, foretold that he would spread the Mayavada philosophy in the guise of a *sannyasi brahmana* just to eradicate Buddhist

philosophy. This *sannyasi* was Sripada Sankaracarya. In order to overcome the effects of Buddhist philosophy and spread Vedanta philosophy, Sripada Sankaracarya had to make some compromise with the Buddhist philosophy, and as such he preached the philosophy of monism, for it was required at that time. Otherwise there was no need for his preaching Mayavada philosophy. At the present moment there is no need for Mayavada philosophy or Buddhist philosophy, and Lord Caitanya rejected both of them. This Krsna consciousness movement is spreading the philosophy of Lord Caitanya and rejecting the philosophy of both classes of Mayavadi. Strictly speaking, both Buddhist philosophy and Sankara's philosophy are but different types of Mayavada dealing on the platform of material existence. Neither of these philosophies has spiritual significance. There is spiritual significance only after one accepts the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gita*, which culminates in surrendering unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In the first purport cited, Srila Prabhupada informs us that fruitive workers and empiric philosophers (i. e. philosophers whose "bottom line" is the data of the senses) are two kinds of materialists. In the second purport he explains that Buddhism and Sankara's Vedanta philosophy deal on the platform of material existence. Neither has spiritual significance.

Buddhism and Mayavadi Vedanta are empiric. The word empiric comes from the Greek *empeirikos*, "experienced." Mayavadis, Buddhists and all such mental speculators have experienced fruitive activities and are frustrated by them. But rather than transcending sense impressions, they cling to them by trying to negate them. Their logic is: "Name, form, variety, relationship, activity, personality, desire, contact of the senses with their objects--our experience is that all these lead to misery. Liberation from misery must entail an existence absent of name, form, variety, relationship, activity, personality, desire, senses, and sense objects."

Yet name, form, variety and the rest persistently continue to bind human consciousness. Why? Mayavadi Vedantists and Buddhists propose *maya* as the answer. What is *maya*? The explanations of *maya* they give I have drawn from a book that Srila Prabhupada said is "very authoritative", *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* by Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta.

On pages 145-6, in their summary of Buddhist *sunyavada* philosophy, these scholars write:

Things appear to exist, but when we try to understand the real nature of their existence the intellect is baffled. It cannot be called either real or unreal, or both real and unreal, or neither real nor unreal. . . . *Sunyata* or voidness is the name for this indeterminable, indescribable, real nature of things. . . . The conditionality of things which makes their own nature (*svabhava*) unascertainable, either as real or unreal, etc. , may be also regarded as a kind of relativity. Every character of a thing is conditioned by something else and therefore its existence is relative to that condition. *Sunya-vada* can, therefore, also be interpreted as a theory of relativity which declares that no thing, no phenomena experienced, has a fixed, absolute, independent character of its own (*svabhava*) and, therefore, no description of any phenomenon can be said to be unconditionally true.

This clearly shows that *sunyavada* deals on the material platform of existence. Nothing is certain on that platform. Meanings and explanations are not to be trusted.

The whole idea here is that one should not attach oneself to the world of appearances, as it is *sunya* or empty. *Sunya*, in this philosophy, is another way of saying *maya*.

The scholars continue:

But when *nirvana* is attained and the conditions of sense-experience and the appearance of phenomena are controlled, what would be the nature of the resultant experience? To this we cannot apply the conditional characters true of phenomena. The Madhyamikas [i. e. the sect of Buddhists that subscribes to *sunyavada*], therefore, hold that there is a transcendental reality (noumenon) behind the phenomenal one and it is free from change, conditionality and all other phenomenal characters. . . . The truth of the lower order is only a stepping-stone to the attainment of the higher. The nature of the *nirvana* experience which takes one beyond ordinary experience cannot be described. Nagarjuna [the founder of the Madhyamika sect], therefore, describes *nirvana* with a series of negatives, thus: "That which is not known (ordinarily), not acquired anew, not destroyed, not eternal, not suppressed, not generated is called *nirvana*."

The *sunyavadis* allow that there is an ultimate truth (noumenon) behind the ever-changing illusion of phenomena. But just as we saw with Immanuel Kant (in In2-MeC of 25 December), the *sunyavadis* allow *no link to speak of* between phenomenon and noumenon. The developments in German intellectual life in the century after Kant illustrate that the doctrine of the complete severance of human experience from reality-in-itself represents a downward turn in the progress of knowledge and culture. It is atheism cloaked as piety. At the end of their chapter on *sunyavada*, Chatterjee and Datta have this to say about Mayavadi Vedanta:

It may be noted here that in its conception of twofold truth, its denial of the phenomenal world, its negative description of the transcendental, and its conception of *nirvana* as the attainment of unity with the transcendental self, the Madhyamika approaches very close to Advaita Vedanta as . . . elaborated by Gaudapada and Sankaracarya.

On page 372, the two scholars take special note of an essential difference between the Mayavadi Vedanta of Sankaracarya and the Vaisnava Vedanta of Ramanujacarya. This difference pertains to *maya*.

The difference between Ramanuja and Sankara, then, is that while, according to Ramanuja, the matter or *prakrti* which is an integral part of God really undergoes modification, Sankara holds that God does not undergo any real change, change is only apparent, not real.

And so the Vaisnavas, citing *Padma Purana*, say that Mayavada Vedanta is *pracchanam bauddham*, covered Buddhism. Both *sunyavadis* and Mayavadis speculate that change belongs to phenomena, while transcendence is changeless. "Changeless" in this conception is freighted with negative connotations: no name, no form, no variety, no relationship, no activity, no personality, no desire, no senses, no sense objects. Hence transcendence, in any practical sense, is unreachable by those who live in the world of change.

But the doctrine of the *upanisads* is, as summarized by Vyasadeva in *Vedanta-sutra, sastra-yonitvat*--"Brahman is to be reached through the *sastras*" (V-s 1. 1. 3); *tarkapratishthanat*--"Brahman is neither established nor refuted by logical argument" (V-s 2. 1. 11); and *srutes tu sabda-mulatvat*--"Brahman is not conceivable to an ordinary man; He can be understood only by the Vedic sound. " (V-s 2. 1. 27) Now, in this connection *Mundakopanisad* I. 1. 4 teaches, *dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma brahmavido vadanti para ca apara ca*--"Two kinds of knowledge (*vidya*) are to be known as, indeed, the knowers of Brahman declare: the higher (*para*) as well as the lower (*apara*). " Srila Prabhupada comments in the purport to *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya* 19. 17:

As far as Vedic literature is concerned, *Vedanta-sutra* is accepted as the *para vidya*. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is an explanation of that *para vidya*. Those who aspire for liberation (*mukti* or *moksa*) and introduce themselves as *vaidentika* are also equal to those groups aspiring to improve religion (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*) and sense gratification (*kama*). *Dharma, artha, kama* and *moksa* are called *caturvarga*. They are all within the system of inferior material knowledge. Any literature giving information about the spiritual world, spiritual life, spiritual identity and the spirit soul is called *para vidya*.

Persons engaged in *dharma, artha* and *kama* are seeking to obtain the objects of sense gratification under Vedic injunction. Persons engaged in *mukti* or *moksa* are seeking to rid themselves of those objects, also under Vedic injunction. The first are *bhogis*, the second are *tyagis*, and both are obsessed with sense impressions either positively or negatively. For *bhogis* and *tyagis* the unobstructed truth of the Lord, His *sakti*, the *atma*, and the transcendental relationship of these three, remains unrealized. This is because *bhogis* and *tyagis* persist in struggling with the duality of enjoying and renouncing their sense impressions--impressions that amount to a screen of ignorance that hides Brahman from their vision. The *bhogis* and *tyagis* are in *maya*, not because of their sense impressions *per se*, but because of their ignorant struggle with those impressions in their effort to gratify or stultify their lust. But if they sincerely accept the direction of the Vedic scriptures, they will be lead out of *maya* into *para-vidya*, knowledge of transcendence.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Fifteen**

#### Sadhana in the Upanisads

The *tyagis*--a class that includes the *jnanis*, the *yogis*, and the *sannyasis* and the more renounced and introspective *smarta-brahmanas* of Sankaracarya's *advaita-vedanta* tradition--think that the goal of life is to be obtained by the utter extirpation of desire (*kama*). And indeed, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* VI. 4. 7 does state that immortality in Brahman can be achieved only when all material desire is overcome--*sarve pramucyante kamah*. At the same time, the *upanisads* warn that mental speculation and word-jugglery is not the means to that goal.

*nayamatma pravacanena labhyo  
na medhaya na bahuna srutena*

*yamevaisa vrnute tena labhyas  
tasyaisa atma vivrnute tanum svam*

This verse, from *Katha Upanisad* II. 23 and *Mundakopanisad* III. 2. 3, makes clear that the Supreme Lord is not attainable through *pravacan*, philosophical erudition; nor through *medha*, intellectualism; nor through *bahu-sruti*, the study of many scriptures. It is He alone who decides to whom He will reveal His transcendental form.

Does this mean that the *upanisads* leave perfection in spiritual life up to the mercy of the Lord? The answer is a qualified yes. *Acaryadd-haiva vidya vidita saddhistam prapti*, states *Chandogya Upanisad*; and again the same *upanisad* instructs, *acaryavan puruso veda*. This means that transcendental knowledge is to be gotten from the *acarya*, the bona fide spiritual master. *Tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet*, according to *Mundaka* I. 2. 12: one must approach the *guru* in order to realize the Absolute Truth. Yes, the mercy of the Lord is needed to achieve perfection, but that mercy is availed to the aspirant in the form of the spiritual master. Taking shelter at his lotus feet entails dedicated effort. *Vidvan punya-pape vidhuya niranjanah paramam samyam upaiti*, *Mundakopanisad* III. 1. 3 explains: one must become *vidvan*, learned; one must be *punya-pape vidhuya*, washed clean of the duality of piety and sinfulness; one must achieve the pristine purity of the Lord Himself.

The means by which the disciple accomplishes this is summed up by Yajnavalkya Muni in *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* II. 4. 5: *atma va are drastavyah srotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyah*--"The Supreme Self is 1) to be seen (*drastavyah*), 2) to be heard (*srotavyah*), 3) to be thoughtfully considered (*mantavyah*), and 4) to be meditated upon (*nididhyasitavyah*). Hence, the senses, mind and intelligence are to be engaged in the Supreme Self under the direction of the spiritual master.

It turns out that meditation entails *upasana*, worship. In the section of *Chandogya Upanisad* known as Sandilya Vidya (*adhyaya* III), we find this important statement: *tajjalan iti santa upasita* (*Ch. U. III. 14. 1*). The word *tajjalan* is considered by Vedantists to be key to the proper understanding of *brahma-vidya*. It indicates that Brahman (*tat*) is the origin of creation (*ja*), the maintainer of creation (*la*), and the destroyer of creation (*an*). The word *upasita* is an injunction that this Brahman is to be worshiped. In his commentary on *Vedanta-sutra* 2. 3. 31, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana cites a statement from the Vedas, *atmanam eva lokam upasita*, "one should worship the Supreme Lord," to prove that worship is actually an activity of the soul, not the body. Hence *upasana* is a process of meditation or *vidya*, transcendental knowledge.

This is another point of contention between Vaisnavas and Mayavadis. Looking at pages 390 and 391 of *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* by Satischandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, we find this description of the Mayavadi understanding of worship, and of the scriptural statements that Brahman is worshipable.

God as the object of worship is based essentially on a belief in the distinction between the worshipping self and the God worshipped. The reality of the limited self like that of a worldly object is based on ignorance--on the failure to realize that God is the only reality. Besides, God is worshipped because God is thought of as the

creator and controller of the world. So worship and the God worshipped are bound up with our lower standpoint (*vyavaharika-drsti*) from which the world appears as real and God appears as endowed with the many qualities in relation to the world. It is the Saguna Brahman or Isvara who can be regarded as an object of worship.

Brahman from the higher or transcendental point of view (*paramarthika-drsti*) cannot be described by qualities which relate to the world or the ego. Brahman in this aspect is devoid of all distinctions, external as well as internal (*sajatiya, vijatiya, and svagata bhedas*). Here, therefore, Sankara differs from Ramanuja who, we shall see, believes that God is possessed with at least internal distinctions (*svagata bheda*), because within Him there are the really distinct conscious and unconscious realities. Brahman, in this absolutely transcendent aspect, says Sankara, cannot be described at all and it is, therefore, called indeterminate or characterless or *nirguna*. The description of Brahman even as infinite, real, consciousness, though more accurate than accidental descriptions of Brahman, cannot directly convey the idea of Brahman. It only serves to direct the mind towards Brahman by denying it of its finiteness, unreality and unconsciousness.

Buddhism is imbedded here. Buddhism does not accept the Vedic sound to be the bridge between the world of phenomena and the world of noumena. Noumena, in Buddhist terminology, belongs to *avyakrta vastuni*, subject matter that cannot be expressed in words. *Avyakrta vastuni* appears in Mayavadi Vedanta under the name *anirvacaniya*. Sankara thus denies that Brahman as *Ding-an-Sich* (the thing in itself) is obtainable from the Vedic *abda*.

Harking back to points I made in In2-Mec on December 11, 14, and 20, Mayavadi philosophy relegates *abda* to alpha consciousness, i. e. the plane of merely thinking *about*, not the beta plane of thinking *with*. We may consider this in the light of two terms from Western philosophy: mediate knowledge and immediate knowledge. Mediate knowledge is filtered to you through a medium. It is, again, information *about* a thing, as when a friend calls you on the phone to tell you about something wonderful he just experienced. No doubt you do learn something *about* his experience, but what you learn through the medium of a phone call is not quite the same as the immediate experience. The phone call gives you enough information to make you wish you were *with* your friend while he was having his experience. Look again at the previous quotation: "It only serves to direct the mind towards Brahman. . . "

The duality of the mediate and immediate has relevance to experience that is *laukika* (ordinary; wholly within the realm of limited, imperfect sense perception). But as was noted in yesterday's installment, the Vedanta philosophy taught by Srila Vyasadeva in his *brahma-sutras* asserts that in transcendental or *alaukika* experience, *abda* is the "transparent via medium" (to use a favorite phrase of Srila Prabhupada's) by which one enters into immediate contact with the Lord: *srutes tu abda-mulatvat*--"Brahman is not conceivable to an ordinary man; He can be understood only by the Vedic sound. " (V-s 2. 1. 27)

Thus Mayavadi philosophy is non-Vedic at its root. Sankaracarya conceived it as a preaching strategy for capturing the attention of people under the sway of Buddhism, a doctrine that lacks faith in Vedic *abda*. This is the secret of Mayavadi philosophy's broad appeal even today. On page 375 of their book, Datta and Chatterjee note:

Those who do not believe in any revealed scriptures or in any mystic intuition, but try to understand the real nature of the world in the light of common experience and reasoning based thereon, will also value these arguments [of Sankaracarya], if only for their great logical and philosophical merit.

The operative words here are "in the light of common experience and reasoning based thereon." This is the light that Mayavadi philosophy throws on the *brahma-vidya*, the transcendental knowledge of the *upanisads*. In common experience, words do not immediately present their objects. Speaking the word "water", for example, will not fill our mouths with that liquid and thus quench our thirst. Such is the prejudice of Mayavadi philosophy toward the Vedic sound vibration.

On the other hand, Vaisnavas like Sripad Ramanujacarya teach that Brahman, the Absolute Truth, is of the nature of internal distinctions of spiritual qualities. These distinctions are expressed externally as the qualities of this material creation. For example, the *sodasa-kala*--five *jnanendriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, five *tanmatras*, and the mind--are originally aspects of Sri Krsna's own personal nature. His nature is *antaranga*, internal, consisting of the transcendental qualities of *sat-cid-ananda* (eternity, knowledge and bliss).

Vedic sound has two levels of transmission, we learned yesterday in a quotation from the *Mundakopanisad*. These are *apara* and *para*. By the first, a material representation of the *sodasa-kala* is conveyed. That "re-presentation" is our material experience of the world. The *apara-vidya* of the Vedas teaches human beings how to correctly interact with that experience so that we do not fall down into complete *avidya*, the ignorant condition of animal life. The *para-vidya* reveals the original transcendental nature of the 16 principles of ear, skin, eye, tongue, nose, hand, leg, stomach, genital, anus, sound, touch, visible form, taste, smell, and the mind with its attendant intelligence and ego. Mayavadis do not understand the difference between *apara* and *para-vidya*. They consign any Vedic statement of name, form, quality, activity and relationship to the category of *apara*. Then what is left? Of Vedic statements, even those of the *upanisads*, nothing. Thus Mayavadi philosophy enshrouds the Vedic bridge from the world of *apara-prakrti* to the *paravyoma*, the spiritual sky, in a fog of mystery.

The original Vedanta philosophy teaches that the *apara-prakrti* is the result of *parinama*, a transformation of the internal potency: *atmakrteh parinamat* (V-s 1. 4. 26). The *upanisads* teach that Brahman is *ubhaya-lingatva*, both *savisesa* (with spiritual qualities) and *nirvisesa* (without mundane qualities). *Ubhaya* means "both"; Vyasa deals with this in *Vedanta-sutras* 3. 2. 11-21, the section known as *ubhaya-lingadhikarana*. The word *bheda* (difference) appears in four different *sutras* to stress that the living entity is not identical to the Supreme Lord: *bheda-vyapadesat ca* (V-s 1. 1. 7), *bheda vyapadesat anyah* (V-s 1. 1. 21), *bheda vyapadesa* (V-s 1. 3. 5), and *bheda-sruteh* (V-s 2. 4. 18). Yet the Lord and the living entities share the transcendental nature of eternality (*nityo nityanam*) and sentient awareness (*cetanas cetanam*). The *jiva* is *karta*, a doer of activities with his knowing and acting senses, and his mind: *esa hi drasta sprasta srota ghrata rasayita manta boddha karta vijnanatma purusah sa pare aksara atmani sampratisthate*--"The *jivatma* is verily the seer, toucher, smeller, taster, thinker, knower, doer, the individual *purusa* who is of the nature of pure knowledge; he becomes established in the transcendental undecaying nature of the Supreme Self." (*Prasnopanisad* IV. 9) *Vedanta-sutra* 1. 3. 12 states that the Lord is the object of these faculties of the *jiva*

that begin with seeing power: *iksatikarma vyapadesat sah*--"He (Brahman) is the object of vision. "

The above paragraph presents ingredients with which one can build the unshakable conviction that *upasana* or worship is essential to *brahma-vidya*. Although the soul has fallen into the *apara-prakrti*, his original nature is like that of the Lord's. Yet at the same time the Lord and the soul are not identical. Hence even in transcendence there remains a relationship between the soul and the Lord. In his transcendental identity the soul has a mind, senses and sense objects, as does the Lord. Hence the soul engages in relationship with Him through these 16 features of their shared eternal personal nature. That engagement is *upasana*.

*Chandogya Upanisad* (III. 18,1 and 3) conveys these statements: *mano brahmeti upasita* and *ya evam veda*. The meaning is that Brahman is to be worshiped as the Total Mind, and thus He is to be known. This amounts to an equation of *upasana* (worship) and *vedana* (Vedic knowledge). The same equation is found in *Ch. U. IV. 1. 4* and *VI. 2. 2*, with the statements *yastadveda yat sa veda* and *tvam upasate*. The Vedantic equation of worship and knowledge is confirmed by both Ramanajacarya and Sankaracarya! Ramanuja: *vidyupasyayoh vyatirekena upakrama upasamhara darsanat (Sri-bhasya on V-s 1. 1. 1)*. Sankaracarya: *vidyupastyosca vedantesu avyatirekena prayogo drsyate (Sariraka-bhasya on V-s 4. 1. 1)*.

The activities of worship of the Lord are to include all human *karmas*. This is the clear call of *Isopanisad 2*:

*kurvann eveha karmani  
jjivisec chatam samah  
evam tvayi nanyatheto 'sti  
na karma lipyate nare*

One may aspire to live for hundreds of years if he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the law of *karma*. There is no alternative to this way for man.

"Working in that way" refers to the first verse of the *upanisad*, which instructs the human being to take what the Lord has given him as his lawful quota, and to leave aside grasping at more than necessary. Living in this way, always conscious of the *isavasya* principle that everything is controlled and owned by the Lord, a person earns no karmic reactions to his work in this world. He may live hundreds of years in the body; still he will not be touched by matter.

Srila Prabhupada used to tell a story of a saintly person who offered blessings to different people he met on his way. He blessed a *brahmacari*, *ma jiva muni-putraka*, "May you die immediately"; and he blessed a prince, *raja-putra ciram jiva*, "May you live forever. " The idea is that a *brahmacari* takes trouble to restrain his senses from their objects in order to attain a higher goal after this life. So the saintly man's blessing was, "Then die immediately and rise to your desired goal. " A prince, on the other hand, is eager to enjoy his senses to the fullest this life. Doing so, he accumulates many sinful reactions. Thus his next life is not promising. So the saintly man's blessing was, "Then live forever. Enjoy without fear of hell. " But when he met a devotee of the Lord, the saintly person said, *jivo va maro va sadhoh*--"My dear devotee, you may live or die, it doesn't matter. " Though it makes the same point as

this story, *Isopanisad* offers no blessings to *tyagis* or *bhogis*: "There is no alternative to this way for man. " In all that one does, one should be a worshiper of the Lord and thus sacrifice (*sacer facere*) everything for His sake. One should shun artificial renunciation--which means accepting less than the Lord offers in this life with a view to increasing one's quota in the next life. One should shun unrestricted sense gratification--which means taking more than the Lord allows. One's aim should not be personal satisfaction in this life or the next, but the satisfaction of the Lord.

The *sadhana* that engenders *brahma-vidya* (knowledge of Brahman) is, according to the *upanisads*, a method of seeing the Lord, hearing the Lord, thoughtfully considering Him, meditating upon Him, worshiping Him, and performing all activities for Him. It is given the name *adhyatma-yoga* in *Katha Upanisad* (I. 2. 12): *adhyatma-yogadhigamena devam matva dhiro harsa-sokau jahati*--"the wise man leaves behind both joy and sorrow by realizing God through *adhyatma-yoga*. " *Adhyatma* means "transcendental. " In *Bhagavad-gita* 10. 32 Sri Krsna tells Arjuna that He is *adhyatma-vidya*, the culmination of all Vedic knowledge in realization of the transcendental nature of the individual self and the Supreme Self. In explaining this *adhyatma-yoga*, *Katha Upanisad* offers an example upon which Srila Prabhupada expounds in his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7. 15. 41:

For a bewildered person in the materialistic way of life, the body, the mind and the senses, which are engaged in sense gratification, are the cause of bondage to repeated birth, death, old age and disease. But for one who is advanced in spiritual knowledge, the same body, senses and mind are the cause of liberation. This is confirmed in the *Katha Upanisad* (1. 3. 3-4,9) as follows:

*atmanam rathinam viddhi  
sariram ratham eva ca  
buddhim tu sarathim viddhi  
manah pragraham eva ca  
indriyani hayan ahur  
visayams tesu gocaran  
so 'dhvanah param apnoti  
tad visnoh paramam padam*

The soul is the occupant of the chariot of the body, of which the driver is the intelligence. The mind is the determination to reach the destination, the senses are the horses, and the sense objects are also included in that activity. Thus one can reach the destination, Visnu, who is *paramam padam*, the supreme goal of life. In conditioned life the consciousness in the body is the cause of bondage, but the same consciousness, when transformed into Krsna consciousness, becomes the cause for one's returning home, back to Godhead.

The human body, therefore, may be used in two ways--for going to the darkest regions of ignorance or for going forward, back home, back to Godhead.

It seems unnecessary to make a wordy argument that this *adhyatma-yoga* of the *Katha Upanisad* is *bhakti-yoga* and not some other type of *yoga*. What other *yoga* could *adhyatma-yoga* be? This is a *yoga* that involves senses, mind and intelligence as well as the soul. The example of riding in a chariot demands of us an understanding that *adhyatma-yoga* involves activity, going from one place to another, not self-restrained quietude and staying in the same place. The unequivocal

conclusion is that if the soul can properly engage the body, senses, mind and intelligence, these very instruments will conduct the soul not to another birth in this material world, nor even to the impersonal Self that Sankaracarya aims his followers at, but to *tad visnoh paramam padam*--the transcendental abode of the Personality of Godhead Sri Visnu.

### **What the Upanisads Teach Part Sixteen**

#### Supreme Goal of Life (*Parama Purusartha*)

In Vedanta, the topic of *parama purusartha* has four subheadings.

- 1) *Moksa* (liberation).
- 2) *Utkranti* (the exit of the liberated soul from the body).
- 3) *Arciradi-marga* (the passage of the *jiva* to the realm of Brahman).
- 4) *Brahma-svarupa* (the form of the soul in Brahman).

#### *Moksa*

As you can well imagine, there are many statements about *moksa* in the *upanisads*. Here are a few key ones.

*Tarati sokam atmavit*: "The knower of Paramatma overcomes sorrow. " (*Ch. U.* )

*Mrtyum atyeti*: "By knowing Brahman, one passes over death. " (*Sv. U.* )

*Jnatva devam sarva papaih mucyate*: "By knowing God, one is freed from all sins. " (*Sv. U.* )

*Vidvan punya-pape vidhuya niranjanah paramam samyam upaiti*: "The knower of Brahman shakes off good and evil and is freed from all sins. He attains transcendental equality with the Lord. " (*Mu. U.* )

*Avidyaya mrtyum tirtva vidyayamrtam asnute*: "The liberated soul transcends the path of ignorance and death and attains immortality by the path of transcendental knowledge. " (*Isa U.* )

*Sa khalu evam vartayan yavadayusam brahmalokam abhisampadyate na ca punaravartate*: "He who has executed the prescribed spiritual discipline all through his life, attains the world of Brahman (*brahmaloka*) from whence he does not return again to this material world. " (*Ch. U.* )

*Yo veda. . . so asnute sarvan kaman sah brahmana*: "He who knows Brahman enjoys in the supreme abode all auspicious qualities along with Brahman. " (*Tai. U.* )

In Gaudiya Vaisnava Vedanta, two stages of *moksa* are understood. One is called *jivan-mukti*, liberation before death, while the soul is still animating the physical body. In his *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* (1. 2. 187) Srila Rupa Gosvami describes this as follows:

*iha yasya harer dasye  
karmana manasa gira  
nikhilasv apy avasthasu  
jivan-muktah sa ucyate*

A person acting in Krsna consciousness (or, in other words, in the service of Krsna) with his body, mind, intelligence and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities.

In his purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 5. 4. 5, Srila Prabhupada writes:

We should act in such a way in this life that after giving up this body, we will become liberated from the bondage of repeated birth and death. This is called *jivan-mukti*. Srila Viraraghava Acarya states that in the *Chandogya Upanisad* there are eight symptoms of a *jivan-mukta*, a person who is already liberated even when living in this body. The first symptom of one so liberated is that he is freed from all sinful activity (*apahata-papa*). As long as one is under the clutches of maya in the material energy, one has to engage in sinful activity. *Bhagavad-gita* describes such people as *duskrtinah*, which indicates that they are always engaged in sinful activity. One who is liberated in this life does not commit any sinful activities. Sinful activity involves illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling. Another symptom of a liberated person is *vijara*, which indicates that he is not subjected to the miseries of old age. Another symptom is *vimrtyu*. A liberated person prepares himself in such a way that he does not take on any more material bodies, which are destined to die. In other words he does not fall down again to repeat birth and death. Another symptom is *visoka*, which indicates that he is callous to material distress and happiness. Another is *vijighatsa*, which indicates that he no longer desires material enjoyment. Another symptom is *apipata*, which means that he has no desire other than to engage in the devotional service of Krsna, his dearest and most pursuable Lord. A further symptom is *satya-kama*, which indicates that all his desires are directed to the Supreme Truth, Krsna. He does not want anything else. He is *satya-sankalpa*. Whatever he desires is fulfilled by the grace of Krsna. First of all, he does not desire anything for his material benefit, and secondly if he desires anything at all, he simply desires to serve the Supreme Lord. That desire is fulfilled by the Lord's grace. That is called *satya-sankalpa*.

The second stage of *moksa* is *videha-mukti*, liberation after the demise of the physical body. Concerning this, *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 12. 1 states, *na vai sasariraysa satah priyapriyayoh apahatirasti asariram va santam na priyapriye sprsatah*--"one who has a body is in the grip of joy and sorrow, and there is no freedom from joy and sorrow for one who has a body. Joy and sorrow, however, does not affect one who has no body. " Furthermore the same *upanisad* (VIII. 13. 11) says: *asva iva romani vidhuya papam candra iva rahoh mukhat pramucya dhutva sariram akrtam krtatma brahmalokam abhisambhavami*--"shaking off evil as a horse shakes off his hairs, shaking off the body as the moon frees itself from the mouth of Rahu, I, a perfected self, obtain the realm of Brahman. "

From the above one might conclude that the *jivan-mukta*, though aloof from materialistic activities, is walled off by his physical body from immediate entry into Brahman. That he may gain full realization of his *brahma-svarupa*, death must deliver him from the body. In *Chandogya Upanisad adhyaya* IV chapter 14, Uddhalaka Aruni gives his son Svetaketu an example of a man who is kidnapped

from Gandhara (present-day Kandahar in Afghanistan) and abandoned, bound and blindfolded, in a deserted region. Fortunately someone finds him, unties him and removes the blindfold. He points the man from Gandhara in the direction of his home city. The man thankfully moves off in that direction, confirming at each village that he is headed back home. As he travels his eagerness to return increases with every step. Aruni comments, "In exactly the same way, in this world when a man has a *guru* he knows, 'There is a delay for me here only until I am freed; but then I will arrive!'"

We should not conclude, however, that it is so for every saintly person who is physically manifest in this world. In Brhadaranyaka Upanisad IV. 4. 6-7, sage Yajnavalkya speaks to Janaka Maharaja about immediate entry into *brahma-svarupa* even while one is within the body.

*yo akamo niskama  
aptakama atmakamah  
na tasya prana utkramanti  
brahmaiva san brahmapyeti*

A man who does not desire--who is without desires, who is freed from desires, whose desires are fulfilled, whose only desire is the Self--his vital functions (*pranas*) do not depart from him. Brahman he is, and to Brahman he goes.

*yada sarve pramucyante  
kama ye asya hrdi sritah  
atha martyo amrto bhavati  
atra brahma samasnute*

When they are all banished, those desires lurking in one's heart, then a mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman in this world.

This is not as mysterious as it may seem, if we consider these words of Srila Prabhupada spoken on the occasion of the Deity installation in Los Angeles on 16 July 1969:

In this way, if you always feel Krsna conscious, then you are fire. The same example, keeping with the fire. And if you think it is a brass-made doll, I mean to say, idol. . . *Ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathaiva bhajamy aham*. If you think this is a brass-made idol, then it will remain a brass-made idol to you forever. But if you elevate yourself to higher platform of Krsna consciousness, then Krsna, this Krsna, will talk with you. This Krsna will talk with you.

There is a Vamsidas Babaji Maharaja, he was talking with his Deity. And Krsna. . . Just like Madana-mohana, He was talking with Sanatana Gosvami. Madana-mohana. . . Sanatana Gosvami at that time had no temple; he was hanging his Deity on the tree. So Madana-mohana was talking with him, "Sanatana, you are bringing all these dry chapatis, and it is stale, and you don't give Me even little salt. How can I eat?" Sanatana Gosvami said, "Sir, where shall I go? Whatever I get I offer You. You kindly accept. I cannot move, old man. " You see. So Krsna had to eat that. (chuckles)

"If you always feel Krsna conscious, then you are fire. " In the purport to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4. 3. 23, Srila Prabhupada explains, "For example, when iron is put into a fire, it becomes warm, and when red-hot, although it is iron, it acts like fire. Similarly, when copper is surcharged with electricity, its action as copper stops; it acts as electricity. *Bhagavad-gita* (14. 26) also confirms that anyone who engages in unadulterated devotional service to the Lord is at once elevated to the position of pure Brahman. "

Thus great liberated devotees like Sanatana Gosvami had immediate personal exchange with the Deity, even to the point of conversing with Him. This was because Sanatana Gosvami's only desire was to serve the Lord: "Whatever I get I offer you. You kindly accept. " Thus Yajnavalkya Muni says, "When they are all banished, those desires lurking in one's heart, then a mortal becomes immortal and attains Brahman in this world. "

*Parinama-vada* necessitates our acceptance of the Lord's complete power of transformation over His *sakti*. His *sakti* is one energy, like electricity, but under the order of the Lord it may act as spirit, or as spirit's opposite, matter, just as electricity may cook food in a stove or oppositely freeze food in a freezer. We saw in an earlier installment a quotation from Srila Prabhupada *Isopanisad* purport that for Krsna there is no difference between spirit and matter. Thus His *arca* form as the Deity is no less Himself than His *cinmaya-ananda-svarupa* in Divya-Vrndaban. If a devotee here in the material world "always feels Krsna conscious" in service to the Deity, then he is in the same fire of *brahma-svarupa* as the eternal servants of the Lord in Divya-Vrndaban. By the grace of the Lord that devotee's spiritual senses are awakened to fully engage in loving pastimes even within the so-called material world. If we accept, as we must if we subscribe to *parinama-vada*, that the Lord can transform spirit into matter and thus create this material world, then we must accept the converse: that he can transform matter into spirit.

#### *Utkranti*

In *Chandogya Upanisad* VI. 15. 2, Uddhalaka Aruni tells Svetaketu that when a person leaves the body, *vak manasi sampadyate*--his speech merges into the mind; his mind merges into *prana*, the life force; the *prana* merges into *tejas*, the fiery energy of creation; and *tejas* merges into the transcendental Godhead (*parasyam devatayam*). The point of departure from the body for a liberated soul is the *susumna-* or *brahma-nadi*, a subtle channel that passes out through the top of the head.

*Utkranti* is the topic of *Vedanta-sutra* Chapter 4, *pada* 2. Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana comments that according to *Bhahadaranyaya Upanisad*, speech, mind and *prana* enter the individual spirit soul. But this does not contradict the version of *Chandogya*:

In this way the *sruti-sastra* explains that the life-breath and the senses enters the individual spirit soul. This statement does not contradict the other statement of the *sruti-sastra* that the life-breath enters the element fire, for it may be said that after the life-breath enters the soul the two of them proceed to enter the element fire. This is like saying that the Yamuna, joining with the Ganges, proceeds to enter the ocean.

Srila Baladeva states furthermore:

In the beginning, the enlightened soul and the unenlightened soul depart from the material body in the same way. However, when they reach the *nadis* (subtle pathways emanating from the heart), their paths diverge. The enlightened soul passes through one of the hundred *nadis*, but the enlightened soul passes through a different *nadi*. This is described in *Chandogya Upanisad* (VIII. 6. 6):

*satam caika ca hrdayasya nadyas tasam murdhanam abhinihsrtaika  
tayordhvam ayann amatatvam eti visvag anya utkramane bhavanti*

101 *nadis* lead away from the heart. One passes through the head and leads to immortality. The others lead to a variety of destinations.

This is also described in *Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad* (VI. 4. 2). The soul endowed with transcendental knowledge departs from the material body through the passage passing through the top of the head. The unenlightened souls depart through the other passages.

Lord Govindadeva's *bhasyakara* brings us to the door of the next subtopic, *arciradi-marga*, with this comment:

In the *Yajnavalkya-smṛti* (3. 167) it is said:

*urdhvam ekah sthitas tesam  
yo bhittva surya-mandalam  
brahmalokam atikramya  
tena yati param gatim*

Among all of them, one great soul travels upward. He breaks through the circle of the sun. He passes beyond the planet of Brahma. He enters the supreme destination.

In the *sruti-sastra* also it is said that the enlightened soul passes through the *nadis* at the top of the head and thus leaves the material body. In this way it is proved that the enlightened soul certainly does leave his material body.

#### *Arciradi-marga*

This subtopic has already been touched upon in a previous installment. It was explained that there are two paths by which a soul may rise upward after death, the *pitryana* and the *devayana*. The *pitryana* was presented in some detail. The *devayana*, on the other hand, is the *arciradi-marga*, the path of the sun's rays. *Arcis* means flame. It signifies the first of a series of higher cosmic realms through which the soul passes on his way to *brahma-svarupa*. According to *Brhadaranyaka* and *Chandogya Upanisads*, *ahas* (day) is the next realm. This is followed by *suklapaksa* (the bright fortnight), *uttarayana* (the bright half of the year when the sun travels northward), *samvatsara* (the year), *vayu* (air), *aditya* (sun), *candra* (moon), *vidyut* (lightning), and Varuna, Indra and *caturmukha* Prajapati Brahma. And so the souls who follow the *arcirada-marga* at last arrive at Brahma-loka, the planet of the demigod of creation. Baladeva Vidyabhusana explains what happens next.

When the material creation up to the world of four-faced Brahma is destroyed, they go with the ruler of the material world, the four-faced Brahma, from that created world to the Supreme Brahman, who is different from the four-faced Brahma.

Srila Vyasadeva notes in *Vedanta-sutra* 4. 3. 4, *ativahikah tallingat*, that *arcis*, *ahas* and the rest are divine personalities who assist the soul along the *arciradi-marga*. The two paths of *pitryana* and *devayana* or *arciradi-marga* are summarized by Lord Krsna in *Bhagavad-gita* 8. 23-26.

O best of the Bharatas, I shall now explain to you the different times at which, passing away from this world, the *yogi* does or does not come back.

Those who know the Supreme Brahman attain the Supreme by passing away from the world during the influence of the fiery god, in the light, at an auspicious moment of the day, during the fortnight of the waxing moon, or during the six months when the sun travels in the north.

The mystic who passes away from this world during the smoke, the night, the fortnight of the waning moon, or the six months when the sun passes to the south reaches the moon planet but again comes back.

According to Vedic opinion, there are two ways of passing from this world, one in light and one in darkness. When one passes in light, he does not come back. But when one passes in darkness, he returns.

It would seem from these *Gita* verses and from the *upanisads* that Lord Krsna refers to here that time is an important deciding factor in the attainment of liberation. Apparently, anyone who dies during the night or during the six months when the sun passes in the south must return to this material world.

In *Govinda-bhasya* Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana makes this comment:

The *yogis*, that is, they who are devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, do not take these descriptions of the passing of the moon, the light, and other points in time very seriously. They merely make a mental note of them (*smaryate*). The *sutra* explains, *ete smarte* (they are remembered). The Supreme Lord explains in *Bhagavad-gita* (8. 27):

*naite srti partha janan  
yogi muhyate kascana*

Although the devotees know these two paths, O Arjuna, they are never bewildered.

The conclusion is that a person situated in transcendental knowledge need not be concerned about the specific time of his death. The mention of specific times is not prominent in this passage from *Bhagavad-gita* (8. 23-26). The passage begins with the mention of fire, which has nothing to do with time. In fact, the different factors mentioned in this passage are all *ativahika-devatas* (demigods that carry the soul from the body). The author of the *sutras* will explain this in *sutra* 4. 3. 2. It is also said:

*diva ca sukla-paksas ca  
uttarayanam eva ca  
mumursatam prasastani  
viparitam tu garhitam*

The best times for they who are about to die are the daytime, the bright fortnight, and the six months when the sun travels in the north. The other times are not good.

This verse describes the condition of the souls not enlightened with transcendental knowledge. They who are enlightened with transcendental knowledge always attain Lord Hari. The time when they leave their material bodies is not relevant.

Baladeva says further:

The general situation is that the souls enlightened with transcendental knowledge are carried to the spiritual world by the *ativahika* demigods. However, those *nirapeksa* devotees (devotees who are not affected by anything material and who are fixed in the service of the Lord) who are especially distressed in separation from the Lord are carried there by the Supreme Lord Himself, for the Lord becomes impatient and cannot tolerate any delay in bringing them back to Him. This is a special situation. The *sruti-sastra* reveals the truth of this situation in *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* (1. 22 and 24). The Supreme Lord Himself also explains (*Bhagavad-gita* 7. 6 and 7):

*ye tu sarvani karmani  
mayi sannyasya mat-parah  
ananyenaiva yogena  
mam dhyayanta upasate*

*tesam aham samuddharta  
mrtyu-samsara-sagarat  
bhavami na cirat partha  
mayy avesita-cetasam*

But those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Partha, for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.

The word *ca* (also) in this *sutra* means that for the liberated souls there are two paths, one where the material body is cast off, and the other where contact with the material body is maintained. It is not possible to say that the *nirapeksa* devotees follow the path that begins in light. Also, in the *Varaha Purana* the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself says:

*nayami paramam sthanam  
arcir-adi-gatim vina  
garuda-skandham aropya  
yatheccham anivaritah*

My devotees need not follow the path beginning in light. Riding on Garuda's shoulders, I personally take them to My supreme abode.

In this way the truth has been explained.

*Brahma-svarupa*

*yatodakam suddhe suddham  
asiktam tadrgeva bhavanti  
evam muner-vijanata  
atma bhavati gautama  
(Katha Upanisad II. 1. 15)*

As pure water poured into pure water becomes the very same, so the self of the seer who is endowed with knowledge becomes alike with the Supreme Self.

This verse might seem to be one that makes impersonalists very glad. They might question why the word "alike" is used in the translation instead of "one. " But the word *tadrk* means similarity. *Tadrgeva bhavanti* means, therefore, "becomes alike" or "becomes similar. "

*yatha nadyah syandamanah samudra  
astam gaccanti nama rupe vihaya  
tatha vidvan nama rupad vimuktah  
paratparam purusam apaiti divyam*

Just as the rivers flowing down become indistinguishable when they enter the ocean, casting off their names and forms, even so the knower of Brahman, being free from name and form, attains the Supreme Person who is higher than the high.  
(*Mundakopanisad* III. 2. 8)

Here again impersonalists may find cause to rejoice: "Yes! This proves that *brahma-svarupa* means *sayuja-mukti* only--merging into and becoming one with Brahman!" But the impersonalists should not forget that in this same *upanisad*, the Lord and the individual soul are described as *dvasuparna sayuja sakhaya*, two friendly birds in the same tree. As we see in this quotation, the word *sayuja* is not to be taken as "merging. " It actually means "meeting," as Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana explains in *Govinda-bhasya*:

That the word *sayujya* means "meeting" is seen in the following passage of the *Maha-Narayana Upanisad* (25. 1):

*ya evam vidvan udag-ayane pramiyate devanam eva mahimanam  
gatvadityasya sayujyam gacchati*

The soul that dies during the six months when the sun travels in the north attains the glory of the gods. He approaches the sun and attains *sayujya* with it.

*Salokya* and the other kinds of liberation are different varieties of *sayujya*. It is not that when they feel the sentiment of separation from the Lord the liberated devotees are not also, at that same moment, meeting with the Lord. This is so because the

Lord is always manifested in their thoughts and continues to touch them with His glories.

The example (of the rivers entering the ocean) given above should not be taken to mean that the liberated souls become identical with the Lord. When water from one place enters water of another place, the two waters do not actually merge and become identical. They remain separate. This is seen in the fact the the volume of water in the ocean increases as the rivers flow into it.

*Brhadaranyaka, Chandogya, Prasna and Kausitaka Upanisads* speak of *brahmaloka* as the final destination of the liberated soul. *Brahmaloka* means "spiritual planet" or "world of Brahman. " The *Katha Upanisad*, as we have seen in earlier installments, is very clear that this world of Brahman is the *param-padam* of Sri Visnu.

*Vedanta-sutra* 3. 3. 36 begins an *adhikarana* (a section of *sutras*) about the *divya-puri* (divine city) within Brahman. This divine city is mentioned in *Mundakopanisad* II. 2. 7. *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 1. 5 speaks of a *brahmapura*. These *upanisads* are expounding upon a statement found in *Atharva Veda* (X. 2. 29. 33): *puram brahma a vivesa aparajitam*.

Thus we see that the understanding of Brahman as a world, as a place, as an abode, is well-supported in the *sruti* texts. What is more, *Chandogya Upanisad* VIII. 12. 3 gives a detailed description of this abode. The *mukta* enters this abode by way of *param-jyoti* (transcendental light, i. e. the *brahmajyoti*) and finds transcendental variety within.

*evam evaisa samprasado 'smac charirat samuttaya param jyotir  
upasampadya svena rupen abhinispadyate sa uttama purusah sa tatra  
paryeti jaksan kridan ramamanah sribhir va yanair va jnatibhir  
sa nopajanam smarann idam sariram*

Arising from his last body, and having approached the transcendental light (*param-jyoti*), the liberated soul is restored to his own form. In that state he is the exalted person (*uttama-purusa*). The *mukta* moves about there laughing, playing, and rejoicing, with women, with carriages, with other *muktas* of his own period or of the past *kalpas*. So great is his ecstasy that he does not remember even the person standing near him, nor even his own body.

In his purport to *Bhagavad-gita* 15. 18, Srila Prabhupada translated the first part of this verse differently.

The following verse appears in the Vedas (*Chandogya Upanisad* 8. 1 2-3): *tavad esa samprasado 'mac charirat samutthaya param jyoti-rupam sampadya svena rupenabhinispadyate sa uttamah purusah*. "The Supersoul coming out of the body enters the impersonal *brahmajyoti*; then in His form He remains in His spiritual identity. That Supreme is called the Supreme Personality. "

Lord Visnu is *purusa*, as explained in *Satvata Tantra* 1. 36:

*virad-dehe yad avasad  
bhagavan pura-samjnake*

*atah purusa-namanam  
avapa purusah parah*

Because He resides (*usa*) in the home (*pur*) of the *virata-deha* (cosmic body of the universal form), the Supreme Lord is called *purusa*.

Similarly the *jivatma* is *purusa* because he resides in the home of the human body. By His grace, Lord Visnu expands into every heart as the Supersoul to maintain the individual soul in his body (*eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman*). When it is time for the living entity to leave that body, the Supersoul goes with him. But He is always the master of material nature which appears within the rays of his spiritual effulgence (*yasya prabha prabhavato jagadanda-koti*, from *Brahma-samhita* 5. 40). His luminous form dispelling the darkness of ignorance, the Lord is the all-powerful personification of eternity, knowledge and bliss. The conditioned soul, on the other hand, is but a tiny, spiritually undeveloped spark that hovers within the Lord's bodily rays. The *jiva's* misguided urge is to leave that light and take shelter of darkness. The Lord kindly grants the soul's desire by revealing to him his next body, created by the agent of darkness, *maya*.

When the soul is freed from his obsession with darkness, he rises out of the last body into the light and prays:

*hiranmayena patrena  
satyasyapihitam mukham  
tat tvam pusann apavrn  
satya-dharmaya drstaye*

O my Lord, sustainer of all that lives, Your real face is covered by Your dazzling effulgence. Please remove that covering and exhibit Yourself to Your pure devotee. (*Sri Isopanisad* 15)

Passing through the light of Krsna's effulgence, the soul enters the spiritual world and attains a transcendental form like the Lord's own.

*Yo veda. . . so asnute sarvan kaman sah brahmana*

He who knows Brahman enjoys in the supreme abode all auspicious qualities along with Brahman. (*Taittiriya Upanisad* II. 1)

*yato vaco nivartante aprapya manasa sah  
anando brahmano vidvan na bibheti kutascaneti*

He who knows the bliss of Brahman, from which words and mind turn away unable to reach it, is not afraid of anything. (*Ta. U. II. 9*)

*anando brahmeti vyajanat anandadhyeva khalu imani bhutani jayante  
anandena jatani jivanti anandam prayanti abhisamvisanti*

He realized that bliss is Brahman; for from bliss, verily these things are born. They live by bliss. And when departing, they enter into bliss. (*Ta. U. III. 7*)

*raso vai sah  
rasam hy evayam labdhanandi bhavati  
ko hy evanyat kah pranyat  
yad esa akasa anando na syat  
esa hy esanandayati*

The supreme truth is *rasa*. The *jiva* becomes blissful on attaining this *rasa*. Who would work with the body and *prana* (sensory powers) if this blissful form did not exist? He gives bliss to all. (*Ta. U. II. 7*)