

A Fact of Wonder

[Respected Harikatha Readers,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Sri Guru and Sri Gauranga.

On the request of Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja, we are in the process of producing a book composed of his lectures regarding the origin of the living entity (jiva-tattva).

Because he also regularly discusses these same points during his world tours, we are sending you each lecture as it becomes ready. The following lecture was given on June 14, 2005 in Badger, California. We hope you enjoy it, and we always appreciate your feedback.

Your aspiring servants, the Harikatha team]

I am explaining to you the commentary of the first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam, as Sri Svarupa Damodara explained it to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. That verse is as follows:

janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah svarat
tene brahma hrda ya adi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah
tejo-vari-mrdam yatha vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mrta
dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi

["O my Lord, Sri Krsna, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Sri Krsna because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him.

"It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmaji, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal.

"I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Sri Krsna, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth."]

This subject is very deep. Still, you should know something of it.

How did this world come to be? The answer is given in this first verse, beginning "janmady asya." There are many meanings to this verse, and Sri Svarupa Damodara is giving the general meaning here.

One Without a Second

In this world, there are unlimited living entities in 8,400,000 species of life. You are not able to count the living entities, nor can you imagine the extent of the varieties of their natures, qualities,

and so on. In the transcendental world, Sri Kṛṣṇa has so many associates. His parents, Nanda Baba and Mother Yasoda, are present there. His cowherd friends, Dama, Sridama, Subala, Madhumangala, and so many others are there, and billions of gopis are there. Still, it is stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam that the Absolute Truth is one without a second. Why has this been told here?

The reason is that nothing, and no one, has any separate or independent existence from that Absolute Truth, Sri Kṛṣṇa. Everything and everyone depends upon Him. In the transcendental world He expands and manifests as His own power (svarupa-sakti), also known as cit-sakti, (His transcendental power) and antaranga-sakti (His internal power.) The living entities come from His jiva-sakti, the marginal energy, situated just between the transcendental and material worlds. Finally, in this material world, maya manifests the so many varieties of inert matter that we see. None of these powers or potencies has any independent existence, and therefore the Absolute Truth is called advaya-jnana, one without a second.

In his book Sri Bhagavata-arka-marici-mala, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura offers his obeisances: “I pray to Sri Svarupa Damodara, the associate of Lord Gauranga, who has inspired me to write about this topic, and in that regard to make a garland of verses from Srimad-Bhagavatam.” Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura stated that Sri Svarupa Damodara personally explained to him the first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam. He explained how Sri Kṛṣṇa is one without a second, and how His power is also one-without-a-second. Although one, His power is known by various terms, such as antaranga-sakti (the internal potency), hladini-sakti (the pleasure potency) and cit-sakti (the transcendental potency). There are different names for that potency, but there is ultimately only one potency.

Tatastha-sakti (the living entities situated on the marginal line, between the material and spiritual and material worlds) and maya-sakti (this inert world) are not different from the spiritual cit-sakti, in the sense that they have no independent existence from it. When the internal spiritual potency manifests the millions of infinitesimal jivas, then, according to its function, it is called tatastha-sakti. When the shadow of that same internal potency manifests this material world and its varieties of inert matter, then, according to its function, it is called bahiranga-sakti (the external energy) or maya-sakti (the deluding material energy), or maya. The marginal energy (the living entities) comes in contact with the maya-sakti, the external energy, and manifests as the world of the living entities. Maya-sakti has manifested this inert world, with its varieties of bodies, minds, natures and so many other things.

In this world we are in maya and there is a prominence of maya, so we consider that maya-sakti is here. Ultimately maya is svarupa-sakti or antaranga-sakti (whose embodiment is Srimati Radhika), because maya is a power, or sakti. However, if we say that maya-sakti refers to Srimati Radhika, there will be some misunderstanding.

Does this mean there are many saktis or energies? No, there is only one energy, but it has many names. This energy is named differently, according to its different functions. Moreover, there is no duality in sakti (the power) and saktiman (the powerful, or the possessor of the power). In other words, Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa and His power are non-different. They are non-dual. They are one.

The word 'anvayad' in this first verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam means 'direct', and it indicates that these potencies manifest directly from Sri Krsna. The word 'itaratas', meaning 'indirect', indicates the existence of a very strange thing – a fact of wonder: The jiva is part and parcel of Krsna. He is spiritual, or conscious. How is it possible that he can be bound by maya, which is inert? Consciousness is superior to dull matter. Although it is not possible for him to be bound by the inferior material energy, it never-the-less takes place. This is a fact of wonder.

By the influence of Sri Krsna's deluding potency, even great demigods like Brahma and Sankara can become bewildered. No one can measure the depth of power of Sri Krsna's energy. Maya has covered the soul with its gross and subtle body. Though we are not this body, now we think, "I am this body." This situation is a fact of wonder, and it is due to the influence of Krsna's potency.

How has this occurred? When Sri Krsna created the jivas, He gave them a very valuable thing called independence. He told them, "If you properly use this independence, you will come to Me, and serve Me, and be happy. If you misuse it, however, I will give you punishment." We should try not to misuse our independence. We did so, and now we are in the prison of this world.

There are twenty-eight principles in the manifestation of this world (such as the false ego, the intelligence, the mind, material nature, the five gross elements, the five perceptive sense organs, the five working sense organs, and the five sense objects) and none of them have any separate existence from the Lord. The jiva does not know how this world was created and how he was covered by maya. Krsna knows everything, however. He knows everything that even Brahma, Sankara and others like them do not know.

Krsna is served by His svarupa-sakti, Srimati Radhika, and therefore He is complete. It is stated in Sri Isopanisad: "The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced from the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance."

He is always complete, infinite, and quite independent. No one can control Him. As stated in this first verse, He has mercifully inspired the original Vedic scholar (adi-kavi), Lord Brahma. It may also be said that the word adi-kavi refers to Sri Sukadeva Gosvami or Srila Rupa Gosvami, but here it refers to Brahma. In his form as Lord Narayana, Sri Krsna instructed Brahma in the four 'nutshell' verses (Catur-sloki) of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Thus, by the Lord's mercy, Brahma realized the glories of the Lord and then manifested the Vedas with its unlimited knowledge. Even very learned persons become bewildered in regard to this Vedic knowledge. They cannot understand it.

Three Worlds

The word tri-sarga in this verse means that there are three kinds of creation: cit-sarga (the transcendental realm), jiva-sarga (the realm of the living entities) and jada-sarga (the material

realm, the realm of inert matter). Cit-sarga is the transcendental world, beginning from Vaikuntha and going up to Goloka Vrndavana. There in Vrndavana, Nanda Baba, Mother Yasoda, the cowherd boys, the gopis, the trees, creepers, rivers, mountains, and everything else are transcendental. They are full with eternity, unending bliss, and unfathomable knowledge.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives an analogy to help us understand the transcendental world. In this world there is no example of that realm of transcendence. Still, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is giving a hint by the following analogy.

Have you seen fire? I have not seen fire. By striking a match, flames and some dark smoke are seen. Is the smoke fire, or is the wood fire, or are the flames fire? What is fire? Fire is a sakti, power. You cannot see it. By striking matches or rubbing two stones or two pieces of wood together, fire will manifest. It is generally not seen, but sometimes, when there is a cause for it to be seen, it is seen. When there is an appropriate or special cause or reason, it manifests.

Similarly, the Lord's spiritual potency is transcendental. His spiritual abode, Goloka Vrndavana, is always present in the transcendental realm. As in this world there is sometimes a manifestation of fire, so Lord Krsna, Lord Ramacandra, and Lord Nrsimhadeva come here from time to time. Krsna especially comes to show favor to His devotees. He comes and performs many activities to please His devotees. The example of fire is given to show that although we generally cannot see the transcendental world or transcendental personalities, at certain times and for certain reasons, they manifest here.

Regarding jiva-sarga, the world of the living entities, the example of water is given in this verse. The living entities are compared to water. If an environment is too cold, the water will freeze and become hard ice. If you throw that ice, it may injure someone or fracture someone's bones. Otherwise, if you are very thirsty, you can suck it and find it very sweet. When it is hard, its nature is covered; but when it is in its own nature, it is liquid.

Similarly, the jiva is the eternal servant of Krsna. By nature or constitution, he is always serving Krsna and is happy in that service. However, when he misuses the independence given to him by Krsna, maya throws him very far away from Krsna and gives him two bodies – gross and subtle. Then he thinks, "I am this body, and the happiness and suffering of this body is mine." Actually, when we will advance somewhat in spiritual life, we will see that there is no bondage and no liberation from that bondage. We are always liberated, but we think that we are bound. Without the mercy of Krsna – and first the mercy of Guru – we cannot come out of this bodily conception of bondage.

Regarding the three types of creation, first the analogy of fire was given, then the analogy of water, and now the analogy of earth will be given. Jada-sarga means the creation of this material world, and the analogy of earth is given to understand it.

In this material world there is earth, and if you make a pot from that earth, you can carry water in it. However, if that pot has not been first placed in fire (baked in a kiln), it will melt and break and the water will gush out. The pot is raw until the potter bakes it in the kiln, at which time it becomes reddish and it can hold water. Actually that pot is nothing but earth. So many things in

this world manifest from earth. Although there are also fire and water and all the other elements in this world, they are less. Earth is prominent. Almost everything is made of earth.

You can make a variety of products with a variety of functions, but these products are still earth. Gold, copper, coal, and diamonds are all actually manifestations of the element earth. This analogy is given as an expression of maya-sakti, the maya creation. Although all those products of earth are perishable, by the influence of Sri Krsna's acintya-sakti (His inconceivable power) they appear to be permanent truth.

His Own Existence

By His power, Sri Krsna is manifesting everything in the transcendental world, in the world of jivas, and also here in this world – but He maintains His own separate or independent existence. He is very lovely and very sweet. He has an beautiful form in Goloka Vrndavana. Satyam param dimahi – That Supreme Absolute Truth Sri Krsna, along with His svarupa-sakti (embodied in Srimati Radhika) and kaya-vyuha of that sakti (Radhika's bodily expansions, the gopis), is eternally present; and sometimes He manifests in this world. Srila Vyasadeva, the author of this Srimad-Bhagavatam verse, is offering obeisances to that Absolute Truth.

Though this subject is very deep, you should try to hear. When you take a bath, most of the water disappears from the body and goes down the drain. However, something stays on the body, and that will be enough for you.