

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Narayana Gosvami Maharaj

Both, Choice and Chance

[A Morning Walk]

Badger, California: June 14, 2008

[Kamala-kanta dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, in the last two years a few of your disciples have committed suicide. What is their destination? What is their future?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] They do not believe in God. They are like karmis, who must enjoy or suffer the fruits of their material activities. One who believes in Krsna would never do this. Krsna has given us this life for doing bhajana. If a person somehow gets a bona fide guru and good association, but then neglects this opportunity by killing himself, he will receive a more severe reaction and be punished more than a person who commits suicide without having had such contact.

[Sripad Sajjana Maharaja:] What about the case of Chota Haridasa?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] This does not apply in his case.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] Madhuvrata prabhu has a question. When the jivas first come into this world from Karanodakasayi Visnu's glance, they get either a human body or a non-human body.

His question is this: In the human species one performs materialistic activities and has to suffer or enjoy the fruits of his work in the future. Humans perform karmic activities, but other species do not. Other species only suffer the results of their previous karmic actions (the karmic actions they performed when they were previously humans). Does this mean that all jivas first come into this world as human beings, and then, due to their karma, they enter into other species?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] No, this is not the regulation. It depends on Krsna. According to the degree of the jiva's desire to enjoy this world, he gets a suitable body. It depends on this. If he has a great desire to enjoy, he comes to the animal species. If his desire is in the middle, then he will take a human birth. He appears in different species according to the will of Krsna and also according to the gradation of his desire to enjoy.

[Madhuvrata dasa:] He has no karma at that point?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] He has no karma at that point, but he has independence. In addition, all independence is not the same. There is a gradation of independence. Some desire a little independence and others desire total independence.

[Raghunatha Bhatta dasa:] Yesterday you described how the living entities in the tatastha-sakti region fall to this material world. *[Endnote 1] You gave the analogy of the mustard seeds landing on the sharp blade of a knife, and then falling on one side of the knife or the other. You said that the jiva can go either way – he can look either to the

material world or the spiritual world. I am trying to understand if this happens due to our minute independence or by chance that we come here.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Independence was first, and then chance. Without independence, how can the jiva look toward either yogamaya (Krsna's superior internal potency) or mahamaya (His inferior external potency)? So independence is first, and after that, where he falls comes second.

[Vrndavana dasa:] But it is a choice Srila Gurudeva? The jiva is responsible, yes?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes. He has independence, and Krsna never interferes with that. Here is an analogy: In the government, there is a magistrate in each district. If you do something good, for the benefit of the public, you will be rewarded by him. However, if you commit a crime you will be punished. Still, even though some people know they will be punished and even put to death, they commit the crime. There are so many culprits who go to jail, and when they get out of jail they commit the crime again because they like to be in jail. The jivas are like that.

[Govinda dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, in yesterday's morning walk you quoted Srila Rupa Gosvami saying that one should remember and meditate on Radha and Krsna. On the other hand, when Lord Nityananda is preaching He says, "Bhaja gauranga, kaha gauranga, laha gauranga nama re (Worship Gauranga, glorify Gauranga, and chant the name of Gauranga." How can we reconcile this?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should follow Nityananda Prabhu, because He has come to help us further. He is akhanda guru-tattva, the undivided principle of guru.

Whatever we know is due to the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Whatever Srila Rupa Gosvami knew is also coming from Caitanya Mahaprabhu's instructions. One should first meditate on Gauracandra (Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu) as one's Gurudeva, as Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami has stated in his Manah-siksa (verse 2):

na dharmam nadharmam sruti-gana-niruktam kila kuru
vraje radha-krsna-pracura-paricaryam iha tanu
saci-sunum nandisvara-pati-sutatve guru-varam
mukunda-presthatve smara param ajasram nanu manah

["My dear mind, please do not perform the religious activities prescribed in the Vedas, nor the irreligious works forbidden by these scriptures. The ultimate conclusion of the entire Vedic literature is that the Divine Couple, Sri Sri Radha Krsna, is the Supreme object of worship, and that loving service to Them is the most relishable experience of all. Therefore, O mind, engage yourself fully in serving Them with love and devotion. Always meditate upon Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the son of Sri Saci-mata, with the understanding that He is absolutely non-different from Sri Krsna, the son of Maharaja Nanda. Dear mind, also meditate upon Sri Guru who is a dearest devotee of Sri Mukunda Krsna."]

We should think that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is jagad-guru (the guru of the entire universe) and that He has come to distribute a very costly thing which has never been

distributed before. As guru, he taught Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Tapana Misra, Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Sri Raya Ramananda, and so many others. We should follow the same instructions He gave to them. He told them to chant Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna and always remember Krsna. By following His orders, both sides will be reconciled.

[Devanananda dasa:] This is my brother from South Carolina. He is in law school.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja (to the brother):] Very good. Become a pure devotee, and be happy forever.

[Mahibharata dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, before Mahaprabhu's appearance five-hundred years ago, He manifested His form to many devotees, like Sri Ramanuja and Sri Visnusvami. At those times, did He appear as a sannyasi or did He appear in His Navadvipa form?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] He appeared in His Navadvipa form. This is His eternal form, just as Sri Krsna's eternal form is His rasa-filled, human-like form of Sri Vrajendra-nandana, the son of Nanda Maharaja in Vrndavana. In that form Krsna plays a flute and carries a stick. In this eternal form, and His other forms, He comes to this world and manifests various sweet pastimes.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's form in Navadvipa is His eternal form. Various personalities, like Sri Ramanuja, Brahma, Indra, Markandeya Rsi, the saurabhi cow in Godruma, and Suvarna Sena Maharaja saw that very Caitanya Mahaprabhu performing kirtana of Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna.

[Venu-gopala dasa:] In Jaiva-dharma it is said that when Krsna situates Himself in the tatastha-sakti, He manifests the jiva. What does this mean?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] At that time He is only with His tatastha-sakti. This means that He has somehow hidden His cit-sakti (transcendental potency), His hladini-sakti (spiritual pleasure potency), and all other saktis (potencies). When all other saktis are hidden, then the jiva manifests.

jivera `svarupa' haya-krsnera `nitya-dasa'
krsnera `tatastha-sakti' `bhedabheda-prakasa'

["It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Krsna because he is the marginal energy of Krsna and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord, like a molecular particle of sunshine or fire. Krsna has three varieties of energy." (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 20.108)]

The head of tatastha-sakti is Baladeva Prabhu. This means that Karanodakasayi Visnu (who manifests the innumerable jivas) has also manifested from Maha-Sankarsana (Lord Narayana), and Maha-Sankarsana manifests from Baladeva.

[Mahabuddhi dasa:] Are the jivas who manifested from Karanodakasayi Visnu significantly different from those who directly manifest from Maha-Sankarsana, or Baladeva?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] The qualities are the same.

[Mahabuddhi dasa:] Except that those who emanate from Baladeva and Maha-Sankarsana have the eternal shelter of cit (svarupa)-sakti?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes.

[Venu-gopal dasa:] Regarding the phrase “Krsna situates Himself in tatastha-sakti,” does that refer to Maha-Visnu (Karanodakasayi Visnu) or to the jivas? *[See endnote 2]

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] Not to the jivas. Gurudeva said that Baladeva Prabhu is the head (the origin or root) of tatastha-sakti, and He manifested as Sankarsana and Karanodakasayi Visnu.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Srila Gurudeva, Vedic culture was previously practiced throughout the world. So before Mohammed there was Vedic culture. What is Mohammed’s position?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Do you know the story of Sagara Maharaja? He had many sons, and one son was named Asamanjasa. From his boyhood, Asamanjasa was very wicked, so much so that he used to kill other boys by drowning them. Sagara Maharaja exiled him and told him, “You are no longer in our family line. You should go from here.” Asamanjasa then went to the forest. There he began to grow a mustache and beard, and he engaged in all activities that were opposite to Indian culture. From him, Yavana came. *[See endnote 3]

When we follow Ekadasi, the yavanas refuse to follow Ekadasi. The only similarity between us and them is that we walk on our feet and they do as well. If they could walk on their hands, they would.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Srila Thakura Bhaktivinoda and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja have said that Mohammed was a good devotee, but that he did not tell everything because of time, place, and circumstance. Is this true?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] We should obey the words of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Isn’t this just to catch people and bring them in?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] We should follow what they have told. Jesus was also empowered to preach to a certain section of the world population in order to help them develop their faith in God. He preached that God is our father and maintainer, we should pray to God, take His shelter, and develop our transcendental relationship with Him.

You should respect all of them.

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] Srila Gurudeva, yesterday in your class you said that our sampradaya, the disciplic line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, has a specialty that is not present in the other Vaisnava sampradayas. You said that the teaching in the other

Vaisnava sampradayas is that the jiva is actually part and parcel of Krsna directly, but in our sampradaya the teaching is that the jiva is a manifestation of Krsna's sakti, or potency.

I had thought that all four Vaisnava sampradayas accept that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has sakti, and that the jiva is one of His saktis.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] They know this and they have written this, but they have not accepted the philosophy of sakti-parinamavada (the understanding that all manifestations are transformations of God's energies or potencies). Only Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted this philosophy.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] Mahaprabhu accepted sakti-parinamavada, and prior to Mahaprabhu all Vaisnava acaryas accepted vastu-parinamavada (the idea that God Himself has transformed to manifest the spiritual world and the jivas and this material world).

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Madhvacarya accepted the theory called vastu-parinamavada. This means that the jiva and this material world are compared to two separate adjectives qualifying a noun, which in this analogy is brahma (the Absolute Truth). One is His external body, and one is His internal body – like the mind, intelligence, and false ego. This analogy is given to understand how reality is one, but with specialities.

So they have not accepted sakti-parinamavada, but they have accepted that Krsna has sakti and Visnu has sakti. The philosophies of Visnusvami and Nimbadiya (Nimbarka) and all other Vaisnava acaryas are similar in the sense that they have also accepted the philosophy of vastu-parinamavada. By their philosophy, Krsna Himself, His own form, may be transformed. Lord Caitanya said: "No." He preached sakti-parinamavada.

[Dhira-krsna dasa:] If the jiva's position is cit (conscious, transcendental), how is it that he is coming via the tatastha-sakti – since the tatastha-sakti is inferior to the cit-sakti?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] The jiva is cit-sakti. The theory of tatastha-sakti has been told only as an example. In fact, there is no tatastha as a specific area between the spiritual and material worlds. Tatastha as a line between two worlds is imaginary.

Tatastha sakti is also cit-sakti because the tatastha-sakti is also cit (conscious); not inert.

*[See Endnote 4]

[Candra-sekhara dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, regarding those jivas who look towards Krsna and the spiritual world from the tatastha-sakti, where does their sukrti (spiritual pious credits) and samskara (impressions on the heart, created by previous sukrtis) come from to make such a choice?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] At that time there is neither sukrti nor samskara.

[Candra-sekhara dasa:] Nothing?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Nothing. Nothing.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] That question was raised before. Srila Gurudeva said that the very act of their looking toward the Vaikuntha planets is their sadhana, sukrti, and samskara. They used their independence properly.

[Candra-sekhara dasa:] How can the jiva look toward Krsna or be attracted to Krsna without sukrti and samskara?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Oh, this is chance.

[Jiva Priya dasa:] Gurudeva, how is chance possible, since everything is the desire of Krsna?

[Brajanath dasa:] Chance is also the desire of Krsna.

[Sripad Sajjana Maharaja:] Krsna desires this pastime with the jivas, to rectify them and to bring them back to Him. Yes?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should read thoroughly Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Jaiva Dharma, and try to follow its teachings. You should know that you cannot reconcile all these things. *[See endnote 4] Do bhajana, and when you become advanced in bhakti, at that time all doubts and questions will be solved automatically. Try to increase your bhajana.

[Vidura dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, is there any resemblance or similarity between the personality of someone in this material world and that person's soul and personality in the spiritual world? In other words, is there any similarity between our material conditioned personality and our spiritual personality?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] There is no difference between the body and soul in the spiritual world. As with Krsna – His mind, body, and soul are all one thing. He can hear from His feet and He can walk with His eyes. The liberated jiva is also like that.

[Brajanath dasa:] If I understand correctly, he is asking if there is any similarity between our conditioned personality and our soul.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] No. We now have a different soul, mind, body, and senses. In this world there are twenty-eight categories including the eleven senses, the sense objects, and other elements, and they are all different with respect to one another. On the other hand, in the spiritual world all the aspects of a person are one. The jiva in the spiritual world has senses, mind, body, and soul – and they are all one thing.

[Devotee:] But Gurudeva, don't all the gopis in Vrndavana possess different characteristics and different personalities?

[Brajanath dasa:] Prabhu is asking: doesn't everyone in the spiritual world have different individual moods and characters?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] There are so many billions of varieties of moods. Each gopi represents one mood, and Krsna enjoys each of those moods. Without all the

varieties of gopis, rasa would not be performed and the specialty of Radhika would not be shown.

radhara-svarupa, krsna-prema-kalpalata
sakhi-gana haya tara pallava-puspa-pata

[“By nature, Srimati Radharani is just like a creeper of love of Godhead, and the gopis are the twigs, flowers, and leaves of that creeper.”]

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Where is Padmanabha Maharaja? And others? Krsna (in Bhagavad-gita) has spoken of four kinds of knowledge: guhya (confidential), guhyatara (more confidential), guhyatamam (still more confidential), and sarva-guhyatamam (most confidential).

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Guhya is knowledge of the atma.

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should quote slokas (Sanskrit verses) when you speak.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] There are so many.

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Give one.

[Damodara Maharaja:]

dehino 'smin yatha dehe
kaumaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantara-praptir
dhiras tatra na muhyati

[“As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change.” (Bhagavad-gita, 2.13)]

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] This body is not the soul. This is guhya, confidential knowledge. And what is general knowledge? In the Bhagavad-gita, Arjuna lamented, “I will kill them. They will die. We are this body. I cannot fight for this kingdom.” This is general knowledge. Greater than this knowledge is the understanding that no one can kill the soul.

And second?

[Prema-prayojana dasa:] Guhyatara is knowledge that the Supreme Lord is situated in the hearts of all living entities and causing them to wander in this material world as if situated on a machine made of material energy. Krsna is telling Arjuna, “Arjuna, you should surrender unto Him. Sri Krsna said, “tam eva – surrender unto Him,” because He wants to separate the knowledge of Paramatma from knowledge of His form of Bhagavan (the Supreme Personality of Godhead).

isvarah sarva-bhutanam
hrd-dese 'rjuna tisthati
bhramayan sarva-bhutani
yantrarudhani mayaya

[“The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy.” (Bhagavad-gita, 18.61)]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] The knowledge of Paramatma is guhyatara. And third?

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:]

aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattah sarvam pravartate
iti matva bhajante mam
budha bhava-samanvitah

[“I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts.” (Bhagavad-gita, 10.8)]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Krsna says, “I am superior to the jivas and also superior to brahma (the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth.” In the 11th and 13th chapters it is therefore said that He is Purusottama (the Supreme Personality of Godhead). This is the third: purusottama-jnana (guhyatamam).

And fourth?

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] Sarva-guhyatamam, the most confidential knowledge – all living entities should surrender to Him fully.

man-mana bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi satyam te
pratijane priyo 'si me

[“Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.” (Bhagavad-gita, 18.65)]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] What is the real tattva (deep truth) in this verse? Purusottama cannot play such sweet pastimes as Krsna performs. By the words man-mana bhava, Krsna refers to Himself as that One who performed sweet pastimes in Vrndavana, Mathura, and in Dvaraka. He reminds Arjuna, “I am that Krsna.” He is indicating, “You should remember those sweet pastimes of My boyhood in Vraja.” This is most confidential.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Which verse is that in the Gita?

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] Man mana bhava...

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Regarding this verse, I have previously told the pastime of a gopi who had recently moved to Nandagaon. She had heard about Krsna and she wanted to see Him. One day, Krsna was playing His flute and coming with millions of cows and calves and cowherd friends. He knew: "A new girl has come and she wants to see Me. Her mother-in-law did not allow her to leave the house." Her mother-in-law had told her, "Don't go, otherwise a black snake will bite you." That gopi had replied, "Then why are you going? I must go, even if you expel me from your house." She went out, Krsna touched her chin with His flute, and she became mad.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] General knowledge is that we are not this body, and confidential knowledge is that we are the soul, and more confidential knowledge is paramatma-tattva, and most confidential knowledge is purusottama-tattva, and super-most confidential knowledge is aprakṛta-tattva (Sri Krsna in Vraja).

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Purusottama means Narayana?

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes, Narayana in Vaikuntha.

I have explained all these tattvas (established philosophical truths) in the introduction to the Gita. This is the idea of Srla Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

[Sripad Damodara Maharaja:] Krsna gives many levels of knowledge in the Gita.

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] He has told everything, but in a brief and a hidden way. Therefore, it is said that the primary book is Gita and the graduate study is Srimad-Bhagavatam.

[Mahabuddhi dasa:] How can we lower devotees attain empowerment to serve you and please Guru?

[Srla Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] If you are sincere, extremely sincere, topmost sincere, all spiritual power and all spiritual truths will manifest in your heart. As our sincerity increases, Krsna and Gurudeva give all these in reciprocation.

Try to take your life and soul in your hands (be prepared to give your life) to serve Gurudeva, thinking, "I do not belong to my mind. I am Krsna's." Then, automatically, everything will come.

We know all these things, and we want to serve, but maya is very powerful. She always seeks a loophole in our devotion. Even if a loophole is as small as a hair, she will enter. In Caitanya-caritamṛta it has been said that bhakti is like a creeper. If you give water to the creeper of bhakti, it will grow up to Goloka Vrndavana. However, if there are weeds, they will also get water. These weeds will take the water and the main creeper will be choked.

What does this mean? If there is any ambition for recognition, or desire for fame, or any slight desire to enjoy this world while you are performing bhakti, your bhakti will be stopped and your desire will bear fruit – “I will enjoy this and that, with a wife and children.” Even if, in the eyes of others, someone is performing bhajana and telling hari-katha more beautifully than Krsna and Gurudeva – even if he is very learned and all devotees are praising him and giving him high esteem – still, it may actually be that his bhakti is dry. That is why these desires come. Even knowing everything, he is powerless because he is unable to overcome his material desires.

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] Because of desire for recognition?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] It is due to the desire for recognition, and also the desire to enjoy here and there in this world with ladies. These desires increase. By performing the activities of bhakti such as hearing Krsna’s glories (sravanam), chanting Krsna’s names and glories (kirtanam), and remembering Krsna (smaranam) – and at the same time thinking proudly, “I am doing bhakti” – that desire to enjoy increases, not bhakti.

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] Regarding this point about sincerity, you said that sincerity is the main factor. Can we say that if any devotee is still maintaining any attachment in this world that his sincerity is not complete?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes, yes. It can be said in this way.

[Devotee:] But Srila Gurudeva, you have also instructed that if we confess this within our hearts to guru, then guru can reverse this situation.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] But he should be sincere and obey guru. Without obeying guru, this is not possible. Even if Guru tells him to jump in fire, he should be ready to jump in fire. In this way he should be sincere.

[Vinaya dasa:] Yesterday you told the story of Ramacandra Kaviraja. You said that he left his newly married wife. You said we should follow this instruction, and at other times you said that once one is married he should not divorce. How do we reconcile this?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] I speak according to one’s qualification. For those who can not follow my order to be renounced from family life, I say, “You can marry, but you cannot divorce.”

[The morning walk is now completed. Srila Narayana Maharaja and the disciples who have been walking with him arrive at his residence, where some of his other disciples are waiting:]

[Caru-candrika dasi:] You went on such a long walk.

[Brajanath dasa:] A long talk.

[Caru-candrika dasi:] In Jaiva Dharma, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that the jiva’s going through material existence is Krsna’s pastime. Even though suffering is happening in the mind, still the jiva is suffering. It seems that is this very cruel of Krsna.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should read Jaiva Dharma thoroughly. This is one of the sweet pastimes of Krsna.

[Caru-candrika dasi:] But the jiva does not think, “Sweet pastime.” He is thinking, “Suffering.” And it is not by choice, because you said yesterday that the jivas misuse of independence is like mustard seeds on the blade of a knife falling on one side of the blade or the other by chance. So how can we reconcile this? How is ‘chance’ Krsna’s pastime? *[See endnote 5]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Krsna has given independence to all jivas. He does not want to control. So the jiva looks here and there. Because he has eyes he must look somewhere.

So if by chance he looks towards the transcendental world, he is attracted to yogamaya; and if he looks toward mahamaya, he is attracted to this world. [When a person with no proper knowledge makes a choice, he may make the right choice by chance. Similarly, the conditioned jivas have never had knowledge of the spiritual realm and the Supreme Lord.]

[Devotee:] But it is not conscious choice because the jiva doesn’t have experience of Krsna and spiritual world.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] He has no experience, but Krsna has given him independence, and by that independence he looks where he wants to go.

[*Endnote 1:

“All the qualities of the unalloyed soul are above the eightfold qualities such as egotism, etc., pertaining to Krsna’s acit (inert material) potency. Hence the jiva potency, though very small in magnitude, is still superior to the acit potency or Maya. This potency has another name, viz., tatastha or marginal potency, being located on the line demarcating the spheres of the spiritual and mundane potencies.” (Sri Brahma-samhita 5.21, purport by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

“The marginal line between the material manifestation and the spiritual manifestation is the Viraja River, and beyond the Viraja, which is a transcendental current flowing from the perspiration of the body of the Lord, there is the three-fourths manifestation of God’s creation (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.9.10).”

“When jivas, begotten of the marginal potency (tatastha-sakti), forget the service of Krsna, they are confined in the mundane prison house, the citadel of Durga. The wheel of karma is the instrument of punishment at this place (Sri Brahma-samhita 5.44 purport).”

“Just like in the seaside, the shore, the beach; sometimes you see it is covered by water and sometimes it is land; similarly, when we are covered by maya, that is our jiva-bhuta stage, and when there is no more covering, that is the brahma-bhuta stage.” (Lecture by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, Bombay, March 30, 1971)

“Tata means the beach. Sometimes the beach is covered with water, and sometimes it is land. That is called tatastha.” (Lecture by Srila Prabhupada, New York, July 15, 1976)

[*Endnote 2:

“Sri Krsna, establishing Himself (as the predominating Deity) in each of His potencies, manifests His form according to the nature of that potency. When He establishes Himself in the cit-sakti, He manifests His eternal form as Sri Krsna and also as Narayana, the Lord on Vaikuntha. When He establishes Himself (as the predominating Deity) in jiva-sakti, He manifests His form as His vilasa-murti (pastime expansion) of Vraja, Baladeva. When He is established (as the predominating Deity) in maya-sakti, He manifests the three Visnu forms: Karanodakasayi, Ksirodakasayi and Garbhodakasayi.

“In His Krsna form in Vraja, He manifests all the spiritual exchanges to the superlative degree. In His Baladeva form He manifests nitya-mukta-parsada-jivas, the Lord’s eternally liberated associates, who render eight types of service to Krsna, the origin of all other expansions. Again, as Sankarsana in the Vaikuntha region, He manifests eight types of servants to render eight kinds of services as eternally liberated associates of Lord Narayana. Maha-Visnu, an incarnation of Sankarsana, situates Himself in the jiva-sakti, and in His form as Paramatma He manifests the jivas who have the potential to be involved in the material world.” (Jaiva-dharma, by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Chapter 15)

[*Endnote 3:

Yavana is a person and also a race. When considered as a race, the term was first used for Turks, and later for Muslims and any Europeans or barbarians. -ed]

[*Endnote 4:

Srila Narayana Maharaja is indicating that the discussion about tatastha-sakti and the origin of the jiva is sakha-candra-nyaya – the logic of the moon on the branch of a tree. In regard to the description of tatastha-sakti being sakha-candra-nyaya, In Jaiva-dharma, chapter 15, Sri Raghunatha Dasa Babaji states the limitations of the description:

“Whatever we say or describe in the material world is under the jurisdiction of material time and space. When we say, “The jivas were created,” “The spiritual world was manifested,” or “There is no influence of maya in creating the form of the jivas,” material time is bound to influence our language and statements. This is inevitable in our conditioned state, so we cannot remove the influence of material time from our descriptions of the atomic jiva and spiritual objects. The conception of past, present and future always enters them in some way or another.

“Still, those who can discriminate properly can understand the application of the eternal present when they comprehend the purport of the descriptions of the spiritual world. Be very careful in this matter. Give up the inevitable baseness, the aspect of the description that is fit to be rejected, and have spiritual realization.” (p. 360)

“I advise you not to inquire about this philosophical subject from anyone, but to realize it yourself. I have just given you an indication (abhāsa).” (p.361)]

[*Endnote 5:

“Vrajanatha: Master, I understand that this marginal position is situated in the junction of the spiritual and material worlds. Why is it that some jivas go from there to the material world, while others go to the spiritual world?

“Babaji: Kṛṣṇa’s qualities are also present in the jivas, but only in a minute quantity. Kṛṣṇa is supremely independent, so the desire to be independent is eternally present in the jivas as well. When the jiva uses his independence correctly, he remains disposed towards Kṛṣṇa, but when he misuses it, he becomes indifferent to Him. It is just this indifference that gives rise to the desire in the jiva’s heart to enjoy māya.

“Because of the desire to enjoy māya, he develops the false ego that he can enjoy material sense gratification, and then the five types of ignorance – tamah (not knowing anything about the spirit soul), mohā (the illusion of the bodily concept of life), mahāmoha (madness for material enjoyment), tamisra (forgetfulness of one’s constitutional position due to anger or envy) and andha-tamisra (considering death to be the ultimate end) – cover his pure, atomic nature. Our liberation or subjugation simply depends on whether we use our minute independence properly, or misuse it.

“Vrajanatha: Lord Kṛṣṇa is overflowing with mercy, so why did He make the jiva so weak that he became entangled in māya?

“Babaji: It is true that He is overflowing with mercy, but He is also overflowing with desire to perform pastimes. Desiring various pastimes to be enacted in different situations, Çrī Kṛṣṇa made the jivas eligible for all conditions, from the marginal state to the highest state of the gopi’s love for Kṛṣṇa, called mahābhava. To facilitate the jiva’s progressing practically and steadfastly towards becoming qualified for His service, He has also created the lower levels of material existence – beginning from the lowest inert matter up to false ego – which is the cause of unlimited obstruction in attaining supreme bliss.

“Having fallen from their constitutional position, the jivas who are entangled in māya are indifferent to Kṛṣṇa and engrossed in personal sense gratification. However, Sri Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of mercy. The more the jiva becomes fallen, the more Kṛṣṇa provides him with opportunities to attain the highest spiritual perfection. He brings this about by appearing before him along with His spiritual abode and eternal associates. Those jivas who take advantage of this merciful opportunity and sincerely endeavor to attain the higher position gradually reach the spiritual world and attain a state similar to that of Sri Hari’s eternal associates.

“Vrajanatha: Why must the jivas suffer for the sake of the Lord’s pastimes?

“Sri Raghunatha dasa Babaji: The jivas possess some independence. This is actually a sign of God’s special mercy upon them. Inert objects are very insignificant and worthless,

because they have no such independent desire. The jiva has attained sovereignty of the inert world only because of this independent desire.

“Misery and happiness are conditions of the mind. Thus, what we may consider misery is happiness for one engrossed in it. Since all varieties of material sense gratification finally result in nothing but misery, a materialistic person only achieves suffering.

“When that suffering becomes excessive, it gives rise to a search for happiness. From that desire discrimination arises, and from discrimination, the tendency for inquiry is born. As a result of this, one attains sat-sanga, the association of saintly devotees, whereupon sraddha (faith in serving Krsna) develops. When sraddha is born, the jiva ascends to a higher stage, namely the path of devotional service to the Lord.

“Gold is purified by heating and hammering. Being indifferent to Krsna, the jiva has become impure through engaging in mundane sense gratification. Therefore, he must be purified by being beaten with the hammers of misery on the anvil of this material world. By this process, the misery of the jivas averse to Krsna finally culminates in happiness. Suffering is therefore just a sign of God’s mercy. That is why far-sighted people see the suffering of jivas in Lord Krsna’s pastimes as auspicious, though the near-sighted can only see it as an inauspicious source of misery.

“**Vrajanatha:** The jiva’s suffering in his conditioned state is ultimately auspicious, but at the same time it is very painful. Since Krsna is omnipotent, couldn’t He think of a less troublesome path?

“**Babaji:** Lord Krsna’s pastimes are extremely wonderful and of many varieties; and this is also one of them. If He is independent and almighty, and performs all kinds of pastimes, why should this be the only pastime that He neglects? No pastime can be rejected if there is to be full variety. Besides, the participants in other types of pastimes also must accept some sort of suffering.

“Sri Krsna is the Supreme Enjoyer and the active agent. All ingredients and paraphernalia are controlled by His desire and subject to His activities. It is natural to experience some suffering when one is controlled by the desire of the agent. However, if that suffering brings pleasure in the end, it is not true suffering. How can you call it suffering? The so-called suffering one undergoes in order to nourish and support Krsna’s pastimes is actually a source of delight.

“The jiva’s independent desire has caused him to abandon the pleasure of serving Krsna, and instead accept suffering in maya. This is the jiva’s fault, not Krsna’s.

“**Vrajanatha:** What harm would there have been if the jiva had not been given independent desire? Krsna is omniscient, and He gave this independence to the jivas, even though He knew that they would suffer on account of it. So isn’t He responsible for the jiva’s suffering?

“**Babaji:** Independence is a precious jewel, in the absence of which inert objects are insignificant and worthless. If the jiva had not received independence, he would also have become as insignificant and worthless as the material objects.

“The jiva is an atomic, spiritual entity, so he must certainly have all the qualities of spiritual entities. The only difference is that God, who is the complete spiritual Entity, possesses all these qualities in full, whereas the jiva only has them to a very minute degree. Independence is a distinctive quality of the spiritual object, and an object’s inherent quality cannot be separated from the object itself. Consequently, the jiva also has this quality of independence, but only to a very minute degree because he is atomic. It is only because of this independence that the jiva is the supreme object in the material world, and the lord of creation.

“The independent jiva is a beloved servant of Krsna, and thus Krsna is kind and compassionate towards him. Seeing the jiva’s misfortune as he misuses his independence and becomes attached to maya, Krsna chases after him, weeping, and He appears in the material world to deliver him. Sri Krsna, the ocean of compassion, His heart melting with mercy for the jivas, manifests His inconceivable pastimes in the material world, considering that His appearance will enable the jiva to see those nectarean pastimes.

“However, the jiva does not understand the truth about Krsna’s pastimes, even after being showered by so much mercy. Lord Krsna then descends in Sri Navadvipa in the form of guru. He personally describes the supreme process of chanting His name and glorifying His form, qualities and pastimes. He personally instructs and inspires the jivas to take to this path by practicing it Himself. How can you accuse Krsna of being at fault in any way, when He is so merciful? His mercy is unlimited, but our misfortune is lamentable.” (Jaiva-dharma, chapter 16)