

All Glories to Sri Sri Gourrai Hari!

The True Nature and Function of the Living Entity

("Jiber Swarūp & Swadharma")

1. (A discussion of Relations) (Sambandha Prakaran)

*paṅguṁ laṅghayate śāilam, mūkam avartayate śrutim
yat kṛpā tam aham vande, kṛṣṇa-caitanyaḥ īśwaram*

"I worship that Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya, Who is the Supreme Controller and by Whose mercy even the lame can cross mountains and the dumb can recite the scriptures."

Every living being desires to attain happiness and be free from distresses. In the world of the jīvas (living entities), there are no more familiar words than "happiness" and "unhappiness". Every living being is active; whether that activity is mental, verbal or physical, he is unable to remain inactive for even a fraction of a second. Every activity is born of necessity as no one performs any activity without some purpose. Even though action and its purposes may

take on a superficial appearance of many varieties, fundamentally it and its goals flow in only one direction. Whether it be *jihāsā*, the desire to avoid distress and those things which cause it, or *abhipṣā*, the desire to find happiness and those things which are its causes, all activities have the nature of acceptance and rejection. The purposes of every action are rejection or the termination of afflictions and acceptance or the attainment of happiness. Therefore the prime necessity felt by every living being is the termination of his sufferings and the attainment of some kind of beatitude. This necessity can also be called "the urge of the soul of self."

No one does any work out of the needs of another. Even though superficially it may appear that some work is being done for another's sake, still in actual fact that activity is also, in the final analysis, self-directed. In the functional world all those activities which are labelled as altruistic are ultimately self-centred. One engages in activities on behalf of others only to the extent that he sees the other's welfare to be of personal benefit. Therefore we will be able to understand that so-called altruism in another form of egocentricity.

The natural or innate tendency of every living being is that "I will be happy" and, "May I be free from distresses." Everyone desires happiness or ecstasy from the tiniest one-celled creature upto the highest of the demigods, Brahma. Despite our differences

of nature, in whatever way we may desire for it, we all have the desire that "I will be happy" and we all make a full effort to attain such happiness. But, "Who am I?" "What is my true identity?"—for the most part we are unable to answer these questions. Not knowing what his actual form, identity is or how can anyone possibly be able to grasp what is "my need" or "my nature"?

Ordinarily we have taken our bodies to be the "I". The typical *jīva* takes the material substances of the body and senses to be the self. Therefore if a person's body is fat or thin we generally hear him make statements such as "I am fat" or "I am thin". If his eyes should be blind or his ears deaf, then he says, "I am blind" or "I am deaf" all these type of statements reveal that the speaker identifies his body as the self. If it should be true that the material body and senses are the "I", then the satisfaction of that body and senses should result in the enjoyment of the complete happiness that we have always yearned for, of that there is no doubt. On the other hand, if it should be false and the "I" be something beyond the gross body and thus if there should be an error at the very root of our understanding of what that "I" actually is, then for unlimited lifetimes, birth after birth, one may go on absorbing himself in arranging for the gratification of one's body and senses without ever being able to bring about even the least amount of satisfaction for that "I" element. Undoubtedly this statement will be acceptable to all.

A person possessed by ghosts remains both hungry and emaciated even though he constantly may be eating the most nourishing of foodstuffs, although the desire to eat, the act of eating and the foodstuffs themselves are all being engaged to fulfil his personal needs, there are forcefully redirected and are displayed for the satisfaction and nourishment of the ghostly parasite. Similarly, at the very root of our understanding of what the self is we make an error, then there should be no reason whatsoever to doubt that all our efforts at self-satisfaction will always be redirected to fulfil the needs of others.

The "I" is known as the *ātmā* or soul. The individual *ātmā* can also be called the *jīva* or *jīvātmā*. The "I" and the soul are one and the same. Can the body be the *ātmā*? Or is the *atma* beyond the body; something entirely independent of it? To understand the answers to these questions is called "self-realization". All the Vedic scriptures and the literatures which follow the Vedic conclusions are based solidly on the firm foundation of self-knowledge. Seeking for knowledge of the self is the root of the religious quest. Just as one cannot learn a language thoroughly without knowledge of the alphabet, similarly no one's activities, either material or spiritual can be utilized for actual satisfaction of the self until he knows what his real identity is. Who am I? Without knowing the answer to this question, whatever arrangements are

made for the satisfaction of my inner demands will all be rendered useless. From the beginning to the end, everything will simply be erroneous, i.e. all activities meant for personal gratification will almost definitely be used for someone else's satisfaction. In the process of solving a mathematical problem, if a mistake is made at the very beginning of the process, even if all the rest of the calculations are made without error, still the final result will be wrong. So too, right at the beginning of solving the problem of life, if one starts by making a mistake in understanding what his self-identity is, then everything afterwards will also be transformed into a colossal error.

Simply due to this one error at the beginning, there is no measure as to how many suffering *jīvas* have had to shed tears while standing on the shores of the river of futility while trying to balance the equation of life. And as long as they don't correct that one basic error they will have to come back, again and again, to that point of frustration. Without first determining "Who am I" it is impossible to know "What do I need?" or "What should I do?" The first thing to know in the religious quest is what is the true nature and function of the living being or *jīva*. Thus, the reverend Sanatan Goswami, even though himself the greatest of the self-realized, out of a desire to have the process of religious understanding shown to the ignorant living beings, feigned ignorance and asked the Lord the following questions : "ke āmi?

keno āmāy jāre tāpo-troy? ihā nāhi jāni āmi kemone hit hoy.”—“Who am I? Why do the manifold miseries of life cause me to suffer always? Not knowing these things, how is there any possibility of my welfare?” (CC Madhya 20-96) “sādhyā-sādhono tattwa puchite nāhi jāni, kripā kori sob tattwa kohoto āpani.”—“I don’t know the process of inquiry into the process for knowing the goal of life, you please be merciful and of your own accord reveal everything to me.” (CC M 20-97) “Who am I?” If one wants to know the nature of the soul completely then the question of his relationship with the supreme arises automatically. This is called *sambandha-jnāna* or the knowledge of relationships. Without this knowledge of relationship or self identification how can one possibly know what is the ultimate goal of life or *prayojan*? And without knowing the goal of life how is it possible to go about achieving it? Therefore Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī progressively inquired from the Lord with all humility as to the nature of *sambandha* (the indentity of the living being and his relationship with the Supreme Lord and nature etc.), *prayojan* (the ultimate goal of life) and *abhidheya* (the process for achieving that goal).

Who, in actual fact, am I? That we don’t know. If the body and senses, which we ordinarily take to be the self were actually so, then we wouldn’t say one moment, “I am thin” or “I am fat” and “I am blind” or “I am deaf” and then, the very next moment, say

“My hand, my foot, my body, my eyes” and in this way distinguish the self from the body and senses.

The soul and things relating to the soul are distinguishable items. My wealth, crops, clothes and ornaments are not “I” but mine” or things related to me. In the same way, we say “my body, my senses” meaning that they are things separate and distinguishable from the self. From this we can get an appropriate idea of the soul as being and entirely separate element or item.

Since time immemorial we living beings are being tormented by ignorance. To fulfill the needs of the false “I” we have wasted countless priceless lives. Ignorance has played no joke greater than this on the living being. If anyone wants to free himself from this great deception of Māyā (illusion personified) then first he has to search out behind the refuse piles of the material body and senses and find out where, in what nook or cranny the real “I” is hiding himself. In some unknown recess, behind the impenetrable stone fortifications built up by Māyā the constant pitiable lament of the jivātmā can be heard all night and day. His voice is so muffled and unclear that at first it is not very easy to distinguish him from his surroundings in the least. When the day’s cacophony dies out, in the deeping stillness of night, the plaintive song of the mountain waterfall can be heard progressively more and more clearly; so similarly, when the mind and senses, usually so agitated by the qualities of pas-

sion and ignorance become a little quietened and there is a touch of the quality of goodness, then in that peaceful moment, and only in that moment, it is possible to hear the poignant cry of the jīva, so long afflicted by the feeling of alienation. Even though it is not possible to hear the jīva's song of suffering directly as he sits enchained by Māyā shackles due to her coverings of passion and ignorance—still the agitation and dissatisfaction of the jīvas all over the universe, which is daily being manifested in myriad ways in the external world, if followed to its very roots will be recognized as the pained sob, or proof of the existence of the ever-weeping fallen soul.

The scriptures say that the Lord has potencies which are inherent in Him the way that there is odour in musk or the sun has its rays. Although one cannot say the sun and its rays, or the musk and its scent, are completely non-different, still they have a relationship of being simultaneously one and different as cause and effect or shelter and dependent. In the same way, the Supreme Lord is non-different from His energies and yet He is eternally different as the cause of an effect, the shelter of His dependents and the object of the service of His servitors. Just as the sun cannot be thought of without its rays and vice-versa, similarly the Supreme Lord has no meaning without His energies nor could the energies have any existence without Him. Only the Supreme Lord is the universal controller, the possessor of all energies,

the resting place of all creation, the ultimate cause and supreme truth (“mattah parataram nānyat kiñcid asti Dhanañjaya” B.G. 7.7 Krishna says, “There is no truth superior to Me, oh Dhananjaya”). Even so, it should be understood that the Lord and His energies are one and yet, at the same time, are not one. Again, He and His energies are different, but simultaneously not different also. In this way there exists an amazing and inconceivable relationship between them. He is the Supreme Controller and master of all potencies. This inconceivable potentiality is the expression of the “God-ness” of God. The Energetic and His energies are simultaneously identical and yet distinct—this is explained in the ninth chapter of the Bhāgavad-Gīta (9.4-5) and explained very clearly in the Chaitanya-Charitāmṛita (Ādi 5.73-75)

“ei moto gītateho punah punah koy, sarvoda īshwara-tattwa achintya shakti-may. āmi to jagate bosī, jagat āmāte, nā āmāte jagat boise, nā āmi jagate, achintya aiśhwarjya ei jānoho āmār, ei to gītar artha, koilo porochār.”

“It is stated again and again in the Bhāgavad-Gīta that the Lord is possessed of inconceivable energies : ‘I am within the universe, yet the universe rests in Me; and again, the universe does not rest in Me nor am I in the universe. Know that My opulences are incomprehensible.’ Thus the meaning of the Gīta has being explained.”

Just as a fountain of fire gushes out of a certain type of fire-cracker, so the energies of the Lord spring out of Him as the energies of the supreme cause. The fire sparks, and smoke all pour forth from the fire-cracker at the same time and yet the firecracker remains independent as the cause, so too, in the same way, the Supreme Lord is the resting place of unlimited energies and even though manifesting such infinite potencies in primarily three divisions, He remains aloof as the eternally independent form of bliss and knowledge. The three divisions of the Lord's energies are known as superior (parā), the knower of the field (ksetrajñā—the jīva) and illusion (māyā).

*visnu-śaktih parā praktā, ksetrajñākhyā tathāparā
avidyā karma-sañjñākhyā trtiyā śaktir isyate.*

(VP 6.7.60).

“The Supreme Lord has three main divisions of energies; His personal internal energy is known as His superior (para) potency, the second is the living entity who is also called the knower of the field and the third energy is called ignorance or māyā.” Another name for the superior potency is the internal energy; it can be compared to the flame of the fire. Another name for the living being is the marginal or medial potency or *jīva-śhakti* and it can be compared to the sparks of the fire. The third energy, *māyā*, can also be called the external or material energy and can be compared to the fire's smoke. The Lord Him-

self, as the cause of all three, can be compared to the fire itself. (“yathāidraaidhāgnev abhyahitasya prthag ahūmā viniscaranti” Brihad Āranyaka 4.5).

Even though the Lord is transformed into countless universes by one undivided energy, still He reigns as the eternal, independent Supreme Potential. The scriptures have explained the mystery of the simultaneous inconceivable oneness and difference of the Lord and His energies with the help of this example of the fire.

*“eka-desa sthitas yāgne jyotsnā iv stānī yathā,
parasya brahmaṇah saktis tathedaṁ akhilam jagat.”*
(VP 1.22.52)

“Just as fire simultaneously remains in one place and also spreads itself over a much larger area by its effulgence, so too the Supreme Brahma, Lord Hari, also remains in one place, in His own unique form, and yet manifests Himself by His energies everywhere in the infinite universes,”

The sum total of all the living beings (*jīva-śhakti*) and the external energy is this material universe. The living entity is a fragmental portion of spiritual energy, i.e. a tiny individual atom of consciousness, and can thus be compared to an effulgent spark. The material energy, which is dull and without consciousness can be compared to the smoke which has a covering or obscuring nature. These two energies are most incompatible with one another. The *Upanishads*

also compare the jiva to the sparks of a fire, being many in number and very small.

“yathā sudiptāt pāvakāt visphulingāh, sahasraśah prabhavante svarūpāh,

tathāksarāt vividhāh saumya bhāvāh prajayante tatra caivāpi yanti” (Muṇḍaka U. 2.1.1)

“Oh gentle one! Just as thousands of sparks disperse from a blazing fire, all of which like to it, so the different varieties of living entities emanate from the indestructible Supreme Lord and again enter into Him.”

The *jīvas* are described as being countless, measureless atomic particles of spiritual energy, each one smaller than the ten-thousandth part of a hair tip.

*“keśāgra śata-bhāgasya śatāṁśa-sadrśatmakah
jīvah sūkṣma-svasupoyam sañkhyātito he chit-kanah”*
(S.B.11)

Thus we have been able to understand that as countless infinitesimal particles of fire spring out of a flaming blaze—all of which are the same in quality as the original fire, in the same way, at the beginning of creation, unlimited numbers of living entities, sparks of eternity, knowledge and bliss or atomic particles of consciousness, emanated from God and at the time of universal dissolution they merge into Him and then they are again made manifest when there is a new universal creation. These uncountably numerous

particles of spiritual energy, are known as *jīvas* and they are eternal and their individual measure is thousands of times more subtle than the tip of a hair.

“īshwarer tattwa joiche jjolito jjolon, jiber swarūp joiche sphulinger kon.”

“The nature of the Supreme Lord is likened to that of a blazing conflagration and the *jīvas* are compared to the sparks coming out of that fire .”

(CC Ādi 7.111)

Both the sparks and the smoke are energies of the fire, but of the two only the spark is able to display the light and heat-giving qualities of the fire—and not the smoke. Similarly, the living beings or *jīvas* and matter as both the energies of the Lord, yet it is only in the *jīva* that His eternal, blissful and cognizant qualities are extant and never in the dull matter or material energy also called *māyā*. So also, just as the sparks have the qualities of the fire in only fractional quantity, the *jīvas* have the same qualities as the Lord in only atomic quantity whereas He possesses them in full. The Lord is the infinite conscious entity and the *jīva* is the infinitesimal conscious entity. The quality of consciousness is the same in both of them but the vast difference in being infinite and infinitesimal set them apart irrevocably. Due to His being infinitely great, the Lord remains the master of the material energy eternally independent whereas the tiny speck of consciousness that is the *jīva* is always dependent and falls under the control of the

material energy. The darkness of the night is easily defeated by the intense light of the sun, but it swallows up the thin traces of light given out by the glow worms. In the same way, due to their differences in being the macro-conscious entity and the micro-conscious entities, the same *Māyā* who is ashamed to come before the Lord still overwhelms the infinitesimal *jīva* and makes him think that he is a product of matter and that the by-products of this body are his.

*“vilajjamanayā yasya sthātumīksā-pathe muyā,
vimohitā vikatthante mamāham iti durdhiyah”*

(S.B. 2.5.13)

“*Māyā* always feels discomfiture upon coming into the Lord’s range of vision, but the foolish living beings are bewildered by her and proudly think, “I am this body and all these things are mine.”

Any one thing taken either fractionally or entirely will result in other differences also, as the whole and the part. A nice example of this is given in the Vedic literatures :

*“vanāni dahate vahniḥ sakhā bhavati marutah,
sa eva dīpa-nāsāya, ksīne kasyāsti gauravah”*

The meaning of this verse is that the same wind that acts as a friendly assistant to the blazing forest fire is the extinguisher of the small and flickering candle flames. Therefore there is never any glory in being tiny.

The Sruti refers to the Supreme Lord as the immense form of *sat-chit-ānanda* or eternity, knowledge and bliss. (*mahāntam vibhum ātmānam... Katha U. 1.2.22*) and to the *jīva* as the miniscule form of *sat-chit-ānanda*. (*eso’nur ātmā...Mund. U. 3.1.9*) Although he is thus *sat-chit-ānanda* in his natural identity, that atomic particle of consciousness called the *jīva* gets bound up by *Māyā*’s ropes of ignorance due to his minuteness and dissociation from the shelter of the Supreme Lord. Although the cause of the *jīva*’s coming under the influence of *Māyā* is the defect or fault known as aversion to the Supreme Lord, because they both exist since time immemorial the two situations exist simultaneously as cause and effect. Although it is well known that the seed is the cause of a tree, because of their mutual cause-effect relationship it is ultimately impossible to determine which came first, so similarly the cause of the living being’s bondage is the repugnance of the Lord to him, still due to the timeless existence of both it is impossible to determine which came first. The fire and the light are related as cause and effect, but due to their simultaneous appearance since time immemorial they are taken as one unit. So similarly, even though the cause of the *jīva*’s entrapment in the snare of illusion is his aversion to the Supreme Lord, because they both exist since time immemorial they can be spoken of as being coinstantaneous.

*“krishna bhuli sei jib anādi bahirmukho,
ata eb māyā tāre dey songsar duḥkhs”*

“The living being, being eternally indisposed to the service of the Lord forgets Him and thus *Māyā* makes him suffer the pangs of material life.”

Not being able to tolerate this forgetfulness and aversion on the part of the *jīva*, *Māyā* desires to correct him by punishing him in the way of making him suffer the distresses of material life. With that intention she first covers over the *jīva*'s understanding of his spiritual identity with her “*āvarika*” or covering potency and then creates the mistaken idea in him that the body is his real identity and his family and home etc. are his possessions with her *viksepikā* or hurling potency. The poisonous fruit of this self-forgetfulness is that due to association with matter and material activities the *jīva* has to take birth again and again in different varieties of bodies in accordance with his *karma* or work. This is the way of material existence or *samsāra*. Any living being who thus falls into material existence or *samsāra* has to suffer the three-fold miseries and he is always filled with fear due to his absorption in matter. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* we find the following teaching about the fearfulness of the living entities in the Eleventh Canto as part of the instructions of the nine great sages :

*“bhayam dvitīyabhīniveśataḥ syad
isād apetasya viparyayo'smṛtiḥ*

*tan-māyayāto butha abhajat tam
bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma” (S.B. 11.2.37)*

“*Māyā* causes the living entities who are averse to the Lord to forget their spiritual identity and thus their misconception of identity with the body arises. Being infatuated with the body and senses which are secondary existences there arises the feeling of fear. An intelligent person therefore thinks of his spiritual preceptor as worshipable and with such devotional feeling should worship the Supreme Lord.”

Consciousness or cognizance is the nature of the spiritual particle, the *jīva*; it is not a function of matter. The perception in the body of heat and cold, happiness and distress etc. is not a function of the body itself but that of the soul. Just as an iron rod which has been heated in a fire adopts the capacity to burn, so similarly symptoms of consciousness are observable in the material or non-conscious body only due to the individual *jīva*'s presence and absorption in that body. As soon as one puts the iron rod under water, however, its burning capacity is lost within a moment and one is able to understand that that capacity was something extrinsic to it—the power to burn was something that belonged to the fire and not to the iron. In the same way, whenever the body is abandoned by the soul then it is possible to understand that it was due to the presence of the soul that there were sensations of heat and cold etc. in the

body. That soul is the *jīva*, the spiritual particle, the real "I".

One may put a spot of yellow *chandana* on his forehead, but its fragrance and cooling ability spreads over the entire body. Similarly, the soul is sitting in only one place in the body, the heart ("hṛdi hy esa ātma" Praśna U. 3.6) but its spiritual influence spreads all over the body.

"*anumatro'py ayani jīvah sva-deham vyāpya tisthati yathā vyāpya śarīrāni hāri-chandana-viḥrusah*"

(*Brahmānda Purāna*)

"The *jīva* is only atomic in size yet he expands all over the entire body in the same way that a spot of *hāri chandan* does."

Since extension is a quality of spirit it can be observed as a symptom of the soul. A lamp situated in one place in a room is able to extend itself over the entire room by its effulgence, so similarly the soul extends its energy of consciousness over the entire body even though it is situated in only one place.

That which is never destroyed is called eternal and that which never changes form or undergoes transformation is called unchanging. Spiritual energy is eternal and unchanging; therefore, because the soul is such a spiritual substance he is also eternal and unchanging. That which had no existence before it was created and will terminate with its destruction, which either was not or one day will not be is called

temporary. That item which undergoes a transformation of state or alternation of its basic qualities is called changing. Temporaryness and change are the qualities of matter and thus we can see the basic nature of matter and spirit is conflicting. Therefore we conclude that those things which are eternal and non-changing are spiritual and that those things which are temporary and subject to transformation are material. These are the main clues in the task of distinguishing matter from spirit.

The body, senses, life air, mind, and intelligence cannot possibly be the self because, even though one identifies with them they are seen to have a beginning and an end. The body undergoes transformation, becoming fatter or thinner etc. and thus it is obviously a material thing whereas the soul is eternal and unchanging. He can also observe that the senses are distorted by blindness and deafness etc., the life airs undergo the changes in breathing and belching etc., and the mind is also disfigured by lust and anger etc. at the time of deep sleep the intelligence merges into its cause ignorance and thus it is also seen to have a beginning and an end—therefore it cannot possibly be the self either, that must be accepted. Just as the sky is pure by nature yet it is sometimes seen to be sullied by smoke and dust, so too the soul is beyond the states of wakefulness, sleep or deep sleep and remains a witness in all these states, but due to its connection with them is manifested in

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degrees of consciousness called respectively *viśva*, *taijasa* and *pragñā* (dull, flickering and full blown). The whole machine of the body and senses may be asleep, but he who remains awake and duly awakens the rest, remembering and feeling everything, is the *jīvātmā* and he is the real self. Just as a very beautifully decorated sword remains hidden in its scabbard, so similarly the soul remains hidden within the gross, subtle and casual bodies, yet he is an eternal spiritual particle. The body and senses are not conscious of themselves but display the properties of consciousness due to the presence of the cognizant potency of the soul. This conclusion has been explained in the *Bhāgavad-gītā* by the Supreme Lord Himself:

“*Yathā prakāśayaty ekah kṛtsnam lokam imam raviḥ
kṣetram kṣetrī tāthā kṛtsnam prakāśayati bhārata.*”

(B 6.13. 33)

“Oh Bhāraṭ! Arjuna! Just as the sun lights up the entire solar system so too the soul within the body illuminates the entire body with consciousness.”

Although the dark universe is lit up by its rays of light, still we call the sun the illuminator of the universe because it is the source of that arrangement of rays. Similarly, although the individual soul's presence in the body causes it to take on symptoms of consciousness, still the cause and shelter of that *jīva* is the infinitely cognizant and supreme energetic, the sun-globe of spiritual energy; the Supreme Lord is

the source of that fragmental appearance of consciousness. The Supreme Lord, cause of all causes and master of all energies is by His inconceivable potency unique and intact, yet He resides within every body occupied by a *jīva* as the Supersoul or *Paramātmā*. Both the existence of the body and the individual soul are maintained by His presense there. Just as the sun's rays are no longer visible after the sunset or just as the effulgence of a candle is no longer present after the flame has been extinguished, so similarly if the supersoul does not occupy the body then there is no possibility that the *jīva*, who is His energy, can remain there. It is a fact that the presence of the *jīva*, the atomic spiritual particle, is the cause of the dull body's taking on the appearance of being conscious, but since the supersoul is the ultimate cause of the *jīva*'s potency and his shelter He should be known to be the supreme cause. The *jīva* is covered over by nescience since time immemorial, yet for as long as he goes on taking different bodies as the result of his *karma* or activities, the Supreme Lord accompanies him and remains with him in each body as his refuge.

Although both the individual and supreme souls are present in the same material body, side by side, still the *jīva* is minisoul and is apathetic to the Lord and is thus influenced by the results of his own activities or *karma*. On the other hand, the Lord is always the controller of the material energy and is known as

the supreme consciousness. Needless to say, therefore, He can never be influenced by ignorance like the fragmental living being. The supersoul is also called *antaryāmī*, the in-dwelling resident of the heart of every living being. He Himself remains untouched and unattached, yet He watches the activities of the *jīva* and how he suffers the results of those activities. The Srutis have therefore compared the body to a tree upon the branches of which two birds, namely the soul and supersoul, are sitting as dear friends—but of the two, one is non-involved and the other is entangled.

*“dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā
samānam vrksam pariśaṣvajāte
tayor anyah pippalam svadvatty
anaśnan anyo bhicakaśīti.*

(Svet. U. 4-5)

“The supersoul and the individual soul are two friendly birds sitting on the same branch of the same tree, but the one bird (the *jīva*) is busily tasting the sweet fruits of the tree while the other (the *Paramātmā*) is watching him without partaking of the fruits Himself.”

When the living entity is forced by his accumulation of *karma* to leave the worn habitation of his old body to take on a new one, he is helplessly forced to leave all his friends and relatives. In that distressed and futile condition his only associate is the

Paramātmā, who is a friend dearer than his very self. By the force of his karma the *jīva* may have to take birth in the body of any creature, locomotive or stationary, he may take the body of a demigod, man or sub-human, insect or any other respectable or despicable form, yet whichever body he may have to enter, the supersoul never abandons his friend for even a moment but follows him as his eternal companion, his eternal refuge. Just as a mother takes her unconscious child on her lap and gazes at his distorted and colorless face with unblinking eyes, day and night waiting for signs of recovery, so similarly the supersoul the *Paramātmā*, who is more closely related to the *jīva* than his own mother, sitting within the same body takes him on His lap in affection and watches him absorbed in his dream of material life, distorted by the disease of ignorance and misidentification with the body. The *jīva* scurries along the road of material life like a fatigued traveller carrying the burden of his past deeds on his shoulders and the *Paramātmā* accompanies him like a dear comrade just to help him maintain his life. Behind this great journey of the *jīva* and the Supreme Lord along the desert trail of material existence a great purpose is hidden. That purpose is that the stupified *jīva* when by some great fortune regains his consciousness and becomes fully aware of his real identity and function is able to understand clearly and completely that the happiness which he has been seeking for, age after age, in body

after body, running towards the external world, has its source within and not outside of himself. When the *jīva* uncovers this mystery he stops looking externally and, turning around, he becomes introspective and seeing the *Paramātmā* there within his very self, more dear than life itself, he clutches him to his chest in embrace. The Supreme soul is more dear to the *jīva* than anyone and He remains with him through birth and death, waiting for that one auspicious moment when he will arise out of the tremendous darkness of his ignorance. Just as a maiden bound up in multiple bonds of affection by her dearest lover momentarily loses her memory of who she is when she sees him on account of her great ecstasy, so too the *jīva*, after awakening to his spiritual nature, in the jubilation of seeing the supersoul directly and being embraced tightly by Him, also forgets his identity once again. The greatest difference in these two kinds of forgetfulness is that one is caused by ignorance and the other by ecstasy. That self-forgetfulness born of ignorance is called insentience and that born of ecstasy is the greatest prize of the fullblossomed self-realization of the individual soul.

Giving the above-mentioned example, the Śrutis have given a hint at what the ecstasy of the reunion of the soul and supersoul is like :

*“tad yathā priyayā strīyā samparisvaktō
na bahyam kiñcana veda nāntaram evāyam*

*purusah prajñenātmanā samparisvaktō
na bāhyam kiñcana veda nāntaram”*

(Bṛihadāraṇyaka U. 4.3.21)

“Just as in this world a man embraced by his most dear wife forgets all things both internal and external, so too the *jīva* when he is embraced by the omniscient Supreme Lord, forgets himself and becomes unable to distinguish inside from out.”

Just as the body and senses which house the spiritual particle, the individual soul, and his refuge, the Supreme Soul, displays the symptoms of consciousness due to their presence, so too the entire macrocosm of the unlimited universes of creation displays the manifold symptoms of life and activity due to the inconceivable potency of the *jīvas* and the *Paramātmā* dwelling within all bodies. Although the *Paramātmā* is one undivided entity, till He enters separately into every individual body by His inconceivable potency and by means of His energy, the individual soul, He gives consciousness to the insentient body. That same *Paramātmā* also acts as the supersoul for the entire universe which he activates by awakening the aggregate of *jīvas* to action. The controlling force which organizes the entire material universe rests in that indwelling supersoul. His existence is the foundation and maintenance of all existences. As long as He remains in the body it will never become a corpse, and similarly the universe will never face destruction

as long as He is present within it. He is the indwelling force of everything small or great.

*“tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānupraviśat,
tad anupraviśya sac ca tac cābhavat” (Taitt. U. 2.6.2)*

“After the Supreme Lord creates the entirety of material existence He enters into it. After entering into the universe He became both the formed and the formless”.

That regulative principle which determines the changes of generation, sustenance and dissolution in the microcosmic individual body and that in the macrocosmic universal body are the same. A limited ability to regulate is present in the *jīva* due to his atomic size and that ability is fully present in the all-expansive Supreme Consciousness. Regulation is one of the functions of consciousness and not one of matter. Even though we see material things acting under the force of many laws, we should understand that it is always due to the presence of some regulating conscious entity. Consciousness is the determinant of all regulation whereas matter remains dependent on and engaged by it. Both the body and the universe are material things therefore they only take on the feature of regulation when they get the help or shelter of the cognizant potency. Due to the presence of the supersoul the existence of the body is maintained and it goes through the regulated changes of infancy, adolescence and maturity, so in

the same way also when the Supreme Soul enters into the universe it is maintained within infinite space and it undergoes the regulated changes of morning, noon and night or summer, autumn, winter and spring etc.

The *Paramātmā* is the soul of the individual soul and as long as He remains present in the individual body the bodily fluids and blood flow through it, the inhalation and exhalation of air, the growth of hair on the body and head, nails and teeth etc. , the arising and mitigation of hunger and thirst, wakefulness and sleep, hope, enthusiasm and many other moods and functions are all observable in it. In the same way, as long as the same Universal Soul is present in the universe then the unlimited solar systems revolve in their designated orbits, the billowing waves can be seen in the ocean, the rivers and streams flow tirelessly toward the seas; as long as that master of the cosmos remains as the in-dwelling Universal Supersoul the Earth will be moistened by the showers of the rainy season which will follow the dryness and torrid heat of the summer; the spring will revivify the Earth with freshness and enthusiasm after the torpor and depression of the winter, the days and nights, fortnights, months and years will go by in their regular course; wind, rain, lightning, fog and all other transformations of the weather will take place. As long as the Supreme Controller resides in the universe as its Supersoul there will be the sprouting of new greenery, beautiful crops, trees and creepers on

the dusty face of the Earth; their leaves, fruits and flowers will be appreciable in variegated colours, flavors and odours, as if the Earth was being adorned and beautified in newer and newer ways by Nature just like a doting mother dresses and decorates her child a dozen times in an hour. All these wondrous symptoms of life are not the glories of matter alone, but are the glory of the presence of the Supersoul. When the Supersoul departs from the gross body with the *jīva* then the body is destroyed and its constituent elements merge into the sum total of matter, so similarly when the Universal Soul departs from the universe along with the aggregate of all living beings, then the universe merges into the Causal Ocean, the ocean of dissolution. Just as there is oil invisibly present in a sesame seed, so too the Supreme Soul maintains the universal existence without being seen. The individual soul and body as well as the cosmic entirety are regulated and managed by His presence, by His laws and discipline. The Mother *Śrutis* speak in a voice as deep as the ocean to cure the *jīvas* of their disease of blindness their materialistic ignorance by giving the appropriate medicine of knowledge :
"etasya vā akṣarāya praśāsane gārgī"

*dyāv-āpṛthivyau vidhṛte tiṣṭhata etasya vā akṣarasya
 praśāsane gārgī nimeṣa mūhūrta aho-rātrgny
 arddhamāsā stavah samvatsarā iti vidhṛtas tiṣṭhante
 etasya vā akṣarasya praśāsane gārgī pṛacyo'nyā nadyah*

*syandante śvetebhy parvatebhyah pṛāticys'nyal yām yām
 ca diśam anu".*

(Bṛihad-āraṇyak U. 3.8.9)

“Yājñavalkya said, “oh Gārgī, by the order of the undivided Supreme Person the sun and moon maintain their positions in the firmament; by His order the Earth and heavens were created and maintained; by His order all the measurements of time, the moment, the hour, the day and night, the fortnight, month, the season and year, were all created and are maintained; by His order the rivers come down from the snowy peaks of the Himalayas and flow in all the different directions.”

The individual body is the habitation of the individual *jīva* and similarly the fourteen planetary systems of the universe make up the body or habitation of the aggregate *jīva*. In each universe this aggregate *jīva* is known as the *Hiranyagarbha* or *Brahma*. He is the personification of the aggregate of all the living entities i.e. their predominating deity or demigod. Just as the Ganges is a river which is non-different from a personality who is its personification or predominating deity, *Gangā-devī*, so too *Brahmā* is non-different from the entirety of living beings in the universe. Just as the departure of the *Paramātmā* with the individual soul from the body results in its death, so similarly, at the end of *Brahmā's* lifetime of two *parārdhas*, when he and the the Universal Supersoul

leave this *brahmāṇḍa* or universe, then that body of the aggregate *jīva* dies and, being dissolved, merges into the Lord lying on the Causal Ocean. When the material energy becomes beset with debility after many eons of expediting the results of the aggregate *jīva*'s pious and sinful activities and thus arranging for his suffering and enjoyment, then that energy, along with the countless *jīvas*, merges into the body of the Supreme Lord. At that time, no signs of life, no names or forms remain of the cosmos, only He, the Puruash remains [“*eka ha vai Nārāyaṇa āsīt*” (*Maha U.*)” In the beginning there was only Nārāyaṇa”]. When the Lord, out of His desire for amusement again wishes to create the universe, then He revives the aggregate living entity and material energy from their unmanifest state and engages them in activities once again. [“*so’kāmāyata bahu syām prajāyayeti*” (*Taitteriya U. 2.6.2*) “*He desired, I will become many and create offspring.*”] In this way, the unlimited beings along with the unlimited material universes are manifested at the time of creation and unmanifested at the time of dissolution. This has been going since beginningless time and will continue to go on.

The Supreme Lord is only one, yet for different functions in the universe He takes on many different names and forms by His inconceivable potency and displays them eternally. That one, supremely majestic personality, full with six opulences, appears in His personal expansion as

the Supersoul of material nature as a whole—at that time He is known as the first *Puruṣhāvatār* or *Mahā Viṣṇu*. Because He lies on the Causal Ocean, He is also known as *kāraṇ-Araṇava-Śāyī* Viṣṇu (*kāraṇ*—cause, *orna*—ocean, *Śāyī*—he who lies). That *Māyā* Viṣṇu glances at material (mother) nature desiring to recreate the dissolved universes; that first glance of the *Puruṣh* is His resolution to create. By that glance of the *Puruṣh* the material nature which was quiet becomes agitated. Out of that agitation the universes are progressively created starting from the *mahat-tattwa* or creative foundation. That first *Puruṣh avatār*, although one undivided entity, He takes unlimited forms and enters into each universal shell and becomes its Supersoul. In all His forms He maintains His Godly nature. The second *Puruṣh avatār* is called *Garbhodaka-śāyī* Viṣṇu (*garbha*—the universal shell, *Udaka*—water, *śāyī*—who lies upon). From His lotus navel sprouts the lotus flower and stem in which the aggregate *jīva* or *Hiranyagarbha* and the fourteen planetary systems are all contained. This second *Puruṣh* is also one, single undivided entity, but when He manifests Himself unlimitedly in every universe, in the heart of every individual, preserving the existence of each one, then He becomes the third *Puruṣh* or *Kṣhīrodaka-śāyī* Viṣṇu. This *third Puruṣh*, *Kṣhīrodaka-śāyī* is the supersoul of every living being. He alone is the

Supreme Soul who dwells in everything, everywhere. It is He who dwells within the material nature and makes her potent. It is He who is the foundation of the universe and beholds the entity of the universal shell, as the Universal Supersoul, and it is He alone who resides in the heart of every living entity and maintains their existence. That *Paramātmā* is the soul of every individual soul and He is the resting place of the universe as the Universal Supersoul. The following statement about these three *Puruṣh avatars* is found the scriptures (*Sātvata-Tantra*).

“*Viṣṇos tu trīṇi rūpāni prajākhyāny atho viduh
ekam tu mahatah sraṣṭa, dvitīyas to anda-samsthitam
trīyaṁ sarva-bhūta-stham tānī jñatvā vimucyate.*”

“The Supreme Lord has three forms described in the scriptures as *Puruṣh*. The first *Puruṣh* is the Supersoul of the entire material nature and is the creator of the *mahat-tattva* (the basis of the material creation). The second *Puruṣh* is the indwelling Supersoul of each individual universe or aggregate *jīva* and the third *Puruṣh* is the indwelling Supersoul of every living being.”

Just as one must approach the flame to understand the effulgence which emanates from it, so too when searching out the identity of the individual soul we find ourselves confronted with the problem of knowing the Supreme Soul. Even though one small flame

may give off a little light, still the sun is the ultimate cause of all effulgent objects; similarly, He Whose partial personal manifestation is the *Paramātmā* is the Supreme Whole, Controller and cause. When searching out the ultimate cause of all causes, that truth at Whose feet all inquiries come to rest should be known as the Supreme controller, Supreme truth and Supreme worshipable object. The *Śrutis* have announced that that supreme worshipable object is *Śrī Krishna*—

“*tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devah*” (Gopal U. Purva 49)
“The Supreme Deity is Krishna alone.” He is not simply a *Puruṣhāvatār*, He is the *avatārī* or the source of all *avatārs* or incarnations. Thus His form can be called the original or ultimate form of Godhead, *swayam rūp*.

That form of the Supreme Lord upon which all other forms depend and which in turn depends on no other form is called *swayam-rūp*.

“*ananyāpekṣā yad-rūpam swayam-rūpam sa ucyate.*”
(*Laghu Bhag. 1.12*)

“That form of the Supreme Lord which is completely independent and self-sufficient is called *swayam rūp*”.

All the incarnations or *avatāras* and pastime forms which emanate from the *avatārī* or *swayam rūp* may seem different in appearance etc. but They are in no way different from it, i.e. They are identical in es-

sence. This is called *tad-ekatmā-rūp* (*tad*—His, *eka*—one, *ātma*—self, *rūpa*—form) and has been described in the *Laghu Bhāgavatāmṛitam* as follows :

“*yad rūpaṁ tad-abhedena svarūpena virājate
abṛtyādibhir anyā-dsk sa tad-ekātma-rūpakāḥ*”

“That form which is non-different from the original form or *swayam rūp* and yet if manifest in a form different from it is known as a *tad-ekātma* form.”

(L.B. 1.14)

Although there is thus no difference between the *swayam-rūp* and the *tad-ekātma-rūpa*, still the *swayam-rūp* of the Lord is completely self-sufficient whereas the *tad-ekātma-rūp* depends on the *swayam-rūp*, i.e. the *swayam-rūp* exists fully independently of the partial and pastime forms which are otherwise known as *tadekātma* forms. Those personal expansions and pastime forms of the Lord exist dependent on His original form called *swayam-rūp*: For this reason the *swayam rūp* is said to be the most complete form of the Lord and the cause of every thing else including all other incarnations and forms of Godhead.

The *swayam rūp* of the Lord is called in the scriptures, *Swayam Bhagavān* or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and other *Vedic* scripture have glorified the form of Sri Krishna as being that Supreme Personality of Godhead. “*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*” (S.B. 1.3.28) “Krishna is the

Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.” That Supreme Personality, Lord Sri Krishna, is completely self-sufficient, but all His pastime forms such as *Nārāyaṇ*, *Vāsudev*, *Sankarṣhaṇ* etc., His incarnations like *Rām* and *Nṛsiṅgha* etc., as well as His personal portions like the *Puruṣh* are indifferent of Him and they are also portions of Him, but still they are not completely self-sufficient; all other forms of Godhead are dependent on Śrī Krishna. Therefore, the Supersoul of every *jīva*, who maintains and preserves his existence, even though He is the one shelter or refuge of the *jīva*, still He has as His cause the supreme whole, original form of Godhead, Lord Sri Krishna. That Lord Krishna is therefore the ultimate refuge or resting place and cause of all the living beings, and is known as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The scriptures clearly state that the *Paramātmā* is Śrī Krishna’s expansion.

“*Kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānaṁ abhitatmanāṁ
jagad-dhitāya so’py atra dehivādhāti māyayā.*”

“(SB. 10, 14, 55)

“You should know that this *kṛṣṇa* is the soul of all souls. even though that is His constitutional position, still He has covered that majesty of His by His illusory potency and has appeared in this world like an ordinary embodied *jīva* for its welfare”

He can know this from direct statements of the Supreme lord Himself:

*“athavā bahunaitina kim jñātina tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idam kṛtsnam ekāmsena sthito jagat”.*
(BG 10.42)

“Hey Arjuna ! What is the need of all this detailed information about My opulences ? By My one portion, namely *Paramātmā*, permeate and support the entire universe.”

Previously we called the *Paramātmā* the refuge of all living beings, yet that *Paramātmā* is only a portion of the Supreme Lord at Whose shelter He also finds His perfection and fulfillment. Therefore it should be known that the final cause and supreme refuge of all *jīvas* is the ultimate or complete *Paramātmā*, Lord Sri Krishna. Therefore the scriptures say:

*“īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sat-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam.”*
(BS. 5.1)

“Lord Sri Krishna is the supreme controller Who has a form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, *sat-chit-ānanda*; He is the beginning of everything, yet He Himself has no beginning. He is also known as Govinda, the cowherd of Vṛindāvan, yet He is the Supreme Cause of all causes.”

The self is the most dear thing. More dear than him is the Superself and the Superself's most ultimate condition is the most dear of all. Therefore the only true function of the living entity is to engage in His worship, and by that He will find complete fulfil-

ment. Thus the Śruti says, “*taṁ dhyāyet, taṁ raset, taṁ bhajet, taṁ yajet.*” (STU. P. 49) “Meditate on that Sri Krishna, relish loving devotion to Him, worship Him and serve Him.”

The truth of Lord Krishna is personified eternity, knowledge and bliss and is the ultimate form of the Supersoul. As a result, He is the spiritual fragment or *jīva*'s most close relative, protective shelter and supreme object of worship. Both the *jīva* and *Krishna* can be called *ātmā* as the *jīva* is also an eternal *sat-chit-ānanda* like Krishna, yet because Krishna is the infinite being and the *jīva* is infinitesimal their relationship is that of the shelter and the sheltered. The shelter is by nature the object of service and the sheltered is endowed with the nature of a servitor. Therefore the eternal servant of the supreme object of service is the individual living being. That fragmental portion of spirit known as the *jīva* is Krishna's marginal potency. Although one in the qualities of consciousness etc., because they are respectively the Supreme and the minute, the shelter and the sheltered, the object of service and the servant, Krishna and the living entity are eternally different from one another. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu first answered Sanatan Goswāmi by saying,

*“jīver swarup hoy nitya kṛṣṇa dās,
kṛṣṇer tatastha-śakti bhedābed prakāśh.”*

“The true nature of the *jīva* is that he is the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord Krishna. He is Krishna’s marginal potency, simultaneously one and different from Him.” (CC Madhya 20. 10).

Even though the *jīva* is thus the eternal servant of Krishna he has assumed himself to be the eternal servant of *Māyā* and so, instead of experiencing the ecstasy of love for Krishna he has to burn in the fire of desire for material sense objects. The root cause of all his suffering is a simple misconception. Due to his timeless resistance to the loving service of the Lord and the consequent forgetfulness of his spiritual identity, the *jīva* takes his real identity to be the material body even though he is in fact a transcendental being. Therefore, due to this mistake all his calculations in the arithmetics of life are erroneous from beginning to end.

The medial energy living entity has basically two kinds of self-identification—one where he identifies himself as spirit, the other as matter. The former leads to advancement and the latter to debasement. These two types of attitude can also be called introversion and extroversion. No living being can remain without following one of these two paths. The self-conception of the *jīva* or sense of “I” when applied to spirit should be understood as his real nature, and when applied to the material body and senses it should be known to be distorted. Because the *jīva* is

able to follow both these paths of self-conception he has been called *taṭastha-śakti* or the medial potency (“marginal potency” by some). This medial quality (*taṭa*—shore, *stha*—situated; *śakti*—energy) of the living being takes on other appearances also. There are countless living beings who have followed in the footsteps of the eternally perfected companions and associates of the Supreme Lord and have thus identified with and absorbed themselves in His internal or personal energy. They are known as *nitya-mukta* or eternally liberated and they relish the happiness of serving the Lord, thus attaining complete fulfilment. The other living entities are those who are extrospective and identify themselves with the external energy known as *Māyā*. Taking on material qualities and following the dictates of illusion they eternally suffer the pangs of repeated birth and death in the material world. If by some great fortune, if any *jīva* should get the association of a saintly person or the scriptures and become directed to the Lord by their grace, then he can also become a liberated soul by the practice of pure devotion. The *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* has described both types of living beings as follows:

“The separated fragments of the Lord are of two types: one is eternally liberated and one in eternal bondage. The liberated soul is always directed to The Supreme Lord’s lotus feet; he is known as the Lord’s