

personal associate and always enjoys the pleasure of personally serving him. The eternally bound *jīva* is always averse to the Lord and suffers repeated birth and death and hellish existence. The ghost of illusion haunts and punishes him due to his fault of apathy to the Lord and he constantly has to undergo the three types of material misery. He becomes the servant of lust and anger and has to take the thrashing they give. In this way he wanders and wanders throughout the universe until finally he gets the good fortune to associate with a *sādhu* or saintly person who is like a physician. That physician gives the medicine in the form of instructions and causes the ghost to flee. Then the *jīva* is left free to serve Lord Krishna and ultimately go to Him. (Madhya 22.8.13)

The spiritual and material elements are antonymous or contradictory by nature. The natural inclination of the part is to mix with the whole. Therefore partial space merges in the whole of vast outer space, small pockets of air mix with the mass of air, the small drops of water go off in search of large bodies of water and every solid earthen item wants a place on the surface of the Earth. Just as it is the nature of "like to seek like" in the material elements, its also the natural inclination of the spiritual particle to seek union with the Supreme Spirit. The inclination of the *jīva* who is under the influence of ignorance is to reject his supreme spiritual counterpart to unnaturally identify with the antonymous material nature.

This should be understood as a perversion of his real nature. The personification of supreme consciousness and pleasure is Sri Krishna; He is the fullest revelation of the Supreme Spirit. Therefore, the *jīva* who is most fully realized of his own spiritual identity will take full shelter of Lord Krishna. Those *jīvas* who are like bees eager for the honey of Lord Govinda's lotus feet are the only ones who can claim to have attained the highest fulfilment of life. Only they have been able to gain the ultimate goal of existence.

Just like different colors like red, yellow and blue come out of the lapis lazuli stone, so also the omnipotent Supreme Lord has many inherent and dependent energies. ("ya eko'varṇobahudha śakti-yogāt" Svet 11. 4—1. "That Lord is unique and distinct, yet He becomes many by His various potencies.") Of these potencies, three are predominant, namely (1) His internal pleasure potency or *swarūp-śakti*; (2) His borderline potency, the *jīva* or *taṭastha-śakti* and (3) the external potency also called *Māyā* or the *bahiranga śakti*. Of these three energies, only the *jīva* can be called medial because he is possessed of an inclination in either direction—he must identify or take on the properties of either one of the internal or external potencies. In this reason, the introspective living beings coexist with the spiritual or internal energy (*swarūp śakti*) whereas the extrospective living entities identify with and take on the properties of the material potency. Because the *jīva* is incapable of re-

maintaining independent and self sufficient without absorption in one of these two natures he is called *taṭastha*. The other two energies, namely the internal and external, remain complete in themselves and never mingle or take on the qualities of any other energy. This is the main distinction between the living entity and the other two potencies. Just as an iron rod placed in fire, although taking on the redness etc. of fire, does not fully become fire completely discarding its iron-ness, so too the *jīva*, although he may take on the properties of either the *swarūp-śakti* or *māyā-śakti* and become absorbed in them, still he never completely loses his individuality to merge with those energies in all respects. The reason for this is that each energy has eternal uniqueness. Therefore, even though the *jīva* may show some similarities to the internal potency in terms of its spirituality, nevertheless the three aspects of spiritual nature, namely eternity, cognizance and beatitude all exclusive functions of the internal energy. They are not the qualities of the marginal or external energies.

The only means to influence the Supreme Lord is by pure devotion, i.e. that devotion which is devoid of material qualities. This devotion can be called the Godly function (*bhāgavatī-vṛtti*). This "Godly function" or devotion is the essence of the internal potency's aspects of cognizance and beatitude. (*hlādinī-śāra-samaveśa-samvit-śāra-rūpeti*—*siddhanta-ratnam* 1.8). Therefore it is not innate function of the medial or

intermediate potency, the living entity, nor it is the work of the inferior or material energy. Like the Ganges which flows down to the Earth from the heavenly planets, the river of devotion, which is the internal potency's active aspect, flows down from the personal associates of the Lord in His abode, through the channel of the succession of unalloyed devotees into the material world.

That pure devotion emerges in the heart of a *jīva* only as a result of coming in contact with that channel of the causeless association of pure devotees. The association of such great persons and the consequent hearing of the topics of the Supreme Lord are the combined cause by which the self-manifesting or self-revealing pure devotion dawns in the heart of a *jīva*. Other than this there is no means for attaining pure *bhakti*.

*"sataṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-kaṇṭha-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
tāj jōṣayaty āśu apavarga-vartmaṇi
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramisyati"* (S.B. 3.25.24)

The Supreme Lord said, "When one is blissed by the concentrated association of saintly persons, then many topics revealing My glories (i.e. My name, form, qualities and pastimes) are heard, all of which give pleasure to both the ears and the heart. Enjoying such topics in the company of the devotees śraddhā, faith (i.e. the faithful performance of regulated devotional

service), devotional feeling or *bhava* (i.e. the emotional stage of devotional life) and *bhakti* or pure devotion (i.e. *prem* or pure love) for Krishna Who is the only cause for liberation all appear in the heart of the devotee seccessively.”

The Supreme Lord makes similar statements in other places also in the same *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

“*prāyena bhakti-yogena sat-saṅgena vinoddhava
nopāyo vidyate samyag prāyanam hi satām aham*”

(S.B 11.11.46)

“Oh Uddhava, there is practically speaking no means to attain pure love for Me other than through the association of holy persons and the practices of hearing and glorification which are only available through them. Both these things together are the causes of pure devotion. The reason for this is that I am the main refuge of the saintty.”

The same thing is found in another place again in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

“*sat-saṅga labdhayā bhaktyā...*” (11.11.24) “By means of that devotion which is only obtainable through the *sādhus...*” Again the same fact is repeated in the *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita*: “*sādhu-kripā-nam binā prem nāhi hoy.*” “Without a hint of the benediction of an advanced devotee and the chanting of the Holy Name, one can never get love of God.” Both causes simultaneously work in union to bring about the dawning of pure devotion. Therefore, the company

of devotees is called the cause of the birth loving devotion to Lord Krishna.

Therefore, although the medially a marginally situated energy, the *jīva*, does not possess such *bhakti* to the Lord of his own due to its being a function of the internal potency, still “*Kṛṣṇa-dāsyā*” or for the nature of subservience or servitude to the Lord is an inherent quality of the living being which is always situated in him. The reason for this is that the Supreme Lord is the controller of all energies and He is related with His potencies as the shelter and the sheltered and consequently as the served and servitor, master and minion. This relationship is eternally and naturally existing. Then the *jīva* comes under the influence of *Māyā* and thinks himself to be a servant of matter then his identity as the servant of Krishna becomes lost to vision and unmanifest. Thus the living being, even though he is Krishna’s servant by nature, due to his perpetual aversion to Him, he cannot think of Him as his eternal master nor can he spontaneously remember Him. At the touch of the great devotees’ mercy, the *jīva* awakens like the fairy-tale princess touched by the golden magic wand and remembers himself as the eternal servant of Krishna. When he starts thinking of himself in that way, then his various delirious rantings such as “I am the doer, I am the enjoyer” all come to stop and the pure and proper conceptions arise, e.g. “I am the servant of Krishna. He is the lord and master, I am His subordinate and

servant.” This is called the inclination or tendency toward Krishna (*Krishna-unmukhatā*). By the touch of saintly company this proclivity towards the Lord appears, and when accompanied simultaneously by the disposition to serve Him devotedly then that self-manifesting *bhakti* appears on the favorably disposed tongue and other senses in the form of chanting Krishna’s Holy Names etc.. Otherwise *bhakti*, in those forms, is never experienceable by the material senses.

“*ataḥ sri-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*”
(B.R.S 1.2.234)

By practicing or cultivating devotion the marginally situated *jīva* gradually gives up his sense of oneness with matter and begins to identify himself with the internal energy of the Lord. As a result he attains the most wonderful prize of all and becomes completely fulfilled. Even though fire is present with in wood, unless it comes into contact with an already ignited flame the fire inherent in it will never be revealed but will remain invisible. Similarly, the concept that “I am a servant of God”; although something intrinsic to his nature, remains invisible and unmanifest due to his perpetual aversion to the Lord and it should be understood that such a conception only becomes apparent when contact is made with the blazing devotional fire of those who are fully absorbed in the internal energy of the Lord. Therefore

it is concluded that the only cause of the first appearance of the inclination to bring the forgotten Lord Krishna into his mind is the powerful association of saintly persons and service to them. The Lord Himself says, “*mat-smṛtiḥ sādhu swayā.*” (S.B. 11.11.45) “The only means to awaken ones lost remembrance of Me is through service to the holy.”

Therefore it should be understood that service to the Supreme is the innate function of every living entity. The spirit of devotion, however, is a function of the internal or personal energy of the Lord and therefore is not inherent in the medial potency, the *jīva*, nor can it be found in the inferior or base material potency. The heavenly Ganges of pure devotion springs from that internal energy and flowing through the eternal companions of the sportive Supreme Lord comes down to the material world through the channel of the pure devotees of the present day. The association of such devotees is unpredictable, but even so it is the first cause of the awakening of the proclivity to the Lord, to awakening his lost memory of Krishna. Combined with that is an inclination to serve Him which results in the lifting of the curtain of ignorance in the form of the igotistical conceptions of lordship and doership, leaving instead the true conception that “I am Krishna’s servant. He is the master and supreme of object of service and I am meant to serve Him”. With this change the living entity becomes a pure *jīva*. In that condition self-manifesting

bhakti in the form of the topics of the Supreme Lord Krishna generated from the sadhus appears on the tongue, ears and other senses of that favorably disposed living being in the practice of hearing and chanting. In this way, when the practice of devotional service in the forms of chanting and hearing etc. becomes gradually transformed through the stages of faith and attachment until it finally becomes love for Krishna or Krishna prem.

The first cause of the survival of the innate favorableness to the Supreme Lord appearing in the heart of the devotee is the hearing of discussions related to the Lord from advanced devotees. With the simultaneous appearance of these two causes it becomes possible for the *jīva* to attain the most exalted function of the internal potency, devotion, despite being of the marginal potency himself.

Therefore, the proclivity to the service of the Lord is an innate function of the *jīva* and *bhakti* or devotion is an adventive function. Therefore in the assessment of the natural identity of the living entity it was not said that he is the eternal devotee or *bhakta* of the Lord, but that he is Krishna's eternal servant. The result of such servitude to the Lord, or the inclination to Him is inevitably pure *bhakti* or the attainment of the position of a devotee. The favorably inclined servant of Krishna desires nothing-other than the Lord's happiness and wants nothing for himself. Therefore it is said;

*"krishna bhakta nishkām ataeb śhānta,
bhukti mukti siddhi kāmī sakalei ashānta."*

"The devotee of Lord Krishna is free from desire and therefore he is peaceful whereas others who are afflicted by desires for sense gratification, liberation or mystic perfections are all agitated and unpeaceful." (CC.Madhya 19.132)

Devotion has another aspect—this one not coming like the *Gangā* through the channel dug by the disciplic succession of pure devotees but standing within the material universe like a desire tree for the purpose of helping the impure desires of the living being to be fulfilled. The reason for this is that without devotion, even the desires of the *jīvas* for sense enjoyment (*bhukti*) salvation (*mukti*) or mystic perfection (*siddhi*) can never be fulfilled. (*"bhakti bina kono sādhan dite nāre phol"* (CC Madhya 24) "without bhakti no other practice can bear fruit.") In every other practice there is a necessity of adding or combining devotion in a partial way. Therefore, for such practitioners the processes of chanting and hearing Krishna's Names etc. and other devotional exercises are very performed due to their desires. By the un-failing association of the devotees, there is an awakening of remembrance of the forgotten Lord, and thus it is only in the *jīva* whose favorable inclination to Krishna has been aroused that there is not even a trace of dedication to his own happiness, but seeks

only the happiness of Sri Krishna. In all other living beings who have never reaped the fruits of association of advanced devotees and are thus living without any proclivity toward His service, and egotistic conception that "I am the doer and I am the enjoyer" is seen to exist. For this reason all these other *jīvas* don't desire for the service of the Lord, but out of ambitions for personal happiness consider religiosity, economic development, the fulfilment of sensual desires and salvation to be the ultimate goals of human life. Hence, they take the help of devotion as an additional practice for the fulfilment of their selfish interests. Devotional service by nature is untainted by matter, but the containers in which she appears may be tinged due to lack of *sādhu-sanga*, saintly association. When manifested in such an impure place she is called qualified devotion or *saguna-bhakti* (*sa*—with; *guṇā*—material qualities; *bhakti*—devotion) as opposed to pure devotion or *nirguṇā-bhakti* (*nir*—without; *guṇā*—material qualities). In the case of the former *bhakti* does not produce her main fruit of love for God (*prem*) but gives the secondary results of sense satisfaction, liberation or perfections as desired by the devotee.

Thus it should be understood that without the association of devotees and the resultant pure hearing and chanting of the Name and fame of the Supreme Lord there is no possibility of the appearance of pure devotion. Just as two causes, namely a potter and

mud, are both needed for a pot to be made so similarly these two causes of devotion, namely the association of devotees and the consequent practice of hearing and chanting, are both required for the attainment of *prem*. The mud itself without the help of a potter can never become a pot and so also the culture of the different practices of devotional service by the impure soul will never become love for God—but *bhakti* by her inconceivable potency frees those *jīvas* from countless sins and awards them their desired benedictions of material enjoyments, etc., all of which are merely her secondary gifts.

That which is that rightful heritage of the *jīva*, or that which he has the right to obtain, is called his legacy. By getting one's rightful claim no one is the gainer or the loser. Anything over and beyond the legacy is gain and similarly anything less than one's heritage can be considered a loss. The *jīva* should understand that as the medial or marginal energy, for him to identify with the inferior material energy and wander on the path of material existence, repeatedly undergoing the repeated processes of birth, growth, deterioration and death in many different bodies is nothing other than a colossal loss. For the eternal spiritual spark known as the *jīva* this is certainly nothing short of a great calamity and certainly there should be no obstacle to calling it that.

Mukti, or liberation, means the living entity's release from his self-identification with matter and his

becoming one with the *Brahma* from which he was created. (“*yato va imāni bhūtāni jāyante...*” (from whom all existences spring) “*janmādy asya yatah* (Brahma Sutra 1.1.2) from whom the creation, maintenance and destruction of these universes takes place.”) For the *jīva* to return from whence he came is certainly part of his legacy, attaining to which there is neither a question of gain or loss. Thus it should be understood that in the attainment of liberation there is no particular happiness or distress.

That attainment of the super-cxcellent internal potency’s function of pure devotion is an achievement over and above the due legacy of the *jīva*, hence *bhakti* can be called the unexcelled goal of life for the living being. No one is happy unless he gets more than simply that “which is coming to him.” Only when one is able to attain the highest fulfilment by absorption in the internal energy of the Lord does the *jīva* become qualified to experience the supermost ecstasies like those of the pleasure potency itself. Therefore the attainment of *bhakti* should be known as the genuine gain of the living being. Thus the Supreme Lord has said, “*lābho mad-bhaktir uttamā*” (SB.11.19.40). “Devotion to me is the highest gain.” If devotion to God is the highest gain for the *jīva*, then devotion for Lord Krishna must be the most super-cxcellent gain of all, that can be easily understood. Therefore, in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, in connection with the extraordinary incarnation of the Su-

preme Lord Sri Krishna, i.e. Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, it is said that the presentation He made of Krishna *prem* in this Kali-yuga by preaching the chanting of the Holy Names was certainly the ultimate gain for the living beings.

“*na hy atah paramo lābho dehinām bhrāmyatm iha
yato vindeta paramām śāntim naśyati saṁsṛtiḥ*

(SB.11.5.36)

“The supreme peace and liberation that can be attained from the chanting of Name and glories of the Lord or *saṅkīrtan* is the highest possible gain for the embodied souls who are wandering from body to body in this universe.”

Thus we have been able to understand that the company of *sādhus* is absolutely necessary for the reawakening of the *jīva*’s lost consciousness of Krishna and the inclination to serve Him. Any other appearance of devotion that might take place, by her grace will be “qualified devotion” or *saguṇa-bhakti* and not pure devotion or *nirguṇa-bhakti* or *śuddha bhakti*. Therefore, the association of devotees, although it is very rare, difficult to recognize and yet infallible, causeless and unpredictable, still any *jīva* who wants to attain the highest welfare must make a determined effort to attain it. That is the direction of such *sādhus* themselves. Sridhar Swami has written, “*ato maṇiṣiṇa yatnaḥ kāryo mahad-anugrahe*”—(commentary on SB 7.1.1) “Intelligent persons will make an effort to at-

tain the mercy of great personalities.” In this connection one should look at the *Bhāgavatam* verse beginning with “*naisām matiḥ...*” (SB 7.5.32).

In the *Caitanya Charitāmṛita* it is also said:

“*sādhu saṅga, sādhu saṅga sarva śhāstra koy;
lobo mātra sādhu saṅge sarva siddhi hoy.*”

(CC Madhya 22.33)

“All the scriptures repeatedly glorify the association of saintly persons or *sādhu-saṅga*,” for by such association one can attain all perfection in life.

Śrīla Viśwanāth Chakravarty has also written, “*mahad-anugrahāt śraddha, śraddhato bhaktiḥ, bhaktiḥ premetyādi...*” (comment on SB 7.7.17). From the company of great personalities and their mercy one develops faith, from faith comes devotion and from devotion comes *prem* or love of God. This is the evolutionary development of devotion that is described in the scriptures.

So we have been able to understand that even though *bhakti* is an aspect of Krishna’s personal internal potency which makes its advent in the heart of a pure soul who has become inclined towards the Lord’s service by the grace of the great devotees, still as soon as the pure *jīva* becomes absorbed in the internal potency, because both he and *bhakti* are eternal substances, he never again becomes disjoined from her. For this reason, from that time on, of the nature of the *jīva* is that of a devotee and devotion

becomes his natural and spontaneous activity. Such an achievement is dependent on a great amount of good fortune and if it is attained it should be recognized as the penultimate achievement of the individual. For the *jīva* entangled in the material situation, averse to the Lord since time immemorial and absorbed in identification with matter it is the most perfect achievement possible and the most complete fulfilment of his *jīva*-hood. Henceforward it should be understood that whenever devotion is described as the natural function of the *jīva* or that his inherent nature is to be a devotee, then it is the nature and function of a *jīva* who has become favorable to the service of the Lord and has been gifted with *bhakti* that is being referred to. It is most essential that this be kept in mind.

That which is connected with the self is called *ātmīya* or self-related or relative. The self or *ātmā* is the “I” or ego and that which is connected with the self is that which we identify as “mine”. Without any relations to anything outside of himself the *jīva* finds it intolerable to remain alone. The actual connections of the soul are all spiritual. Although it is the factual propensity of the *jīva* to associate with such spiritual existence the *jīvas* entrapped in material bondage are seen to be disposed to associating with matter which is of an entirely different nature. The cause for this is that he has forgotten his real identity under the spell of ignorance and is bound in identi-

fication to the material body and therefore his sense of possessiveness is applied to those things such as home and family which are connected to the body. This is the inevitable consequence of false identification with the body and can be called its poisonous fruit. The natural tendency of the fragmental or incomplete material substance is to seek fulfilment by connecting with the greater mass, thus when the *jīva* identifies with the body and due to ignorance thinks himself to be connected with the entirety of matter and then, for the pleasure of the body and senses he seeks heaps and heaps of material enjoyments. Because of the identification of the self with matter the *jīva* is forced to become the servant of illusion rather than the servant of Krishna. Due to that misconception of self, the heart of the *jīva* becomes polluted by ignorance and fills up with the desire for the pleasure of the senses of the body instead of for the satisfaction and pleasure of the senses of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Thus the *jīva*'s identification with the matter, which is the creation of ignorance, is the main cause for the presence of egocentric lust in the one who is the eternal servant of the Lord rather than *prem* or love for God; it is the main cause for his extrospection rather than introspection and thus it is the cause of his degradation and never of his upliftment.

The soul who is bondage to his material identity finds himself in a mixed condition of existence. He

himself as a fragmentary particle of consciousness is spiritual and the body and senses etc. are all material. Thus both spirit and matter are mixed in him. A flame encased in red glass will cause the appearance of red light, yet redness is the quality of the glass whereas light is the quality of the fire. The two separate qualities of two distinct substances, light and redness combine to become red light, so similarly the combination of the conscious entity in the material body, the body's quality of inclination to sense objects and the soul's quality of desires combine to become desire for sense gratification.

Although the living entity is engaged night and day in an effort to fulfil the desires of the fragmental or incomplete material body's desire for pleasure or satisfaction, he can never achieve success in that effort. For this there are mainly two reasons; namely material energy's insufficiency and the dissimilarity of the self and matter.

The non spiritual substance is dissimilar and antagonistic to the soul. Therefore the soul finds that sense-enjoyment or association with matter results in a feeling of deficiency and when associating with the like spiritual substance he becomes fulfilled and satisfied. This has been referred to in the *Śrūitis* by the words *śreyah* and *preyah*.

*“śreyaś ca preyaś ca manuṣyam eatas
tau samparitya vivinakti dhīraḥ*

śreyo hi dhīro' bhīpreyaso vṛṇite
preyo mando yoga-ksemad vṛṇite (Kāṭha.U.1.2.2)

“*Śreyah* means the ultimate good and *preyah* means the immediate good. (directly translated *śreyah* means “better” or “auspicious” and *preyah* means “that which is pleasing”.) Both these things are always facing man. Those who are intelligent are able to distinguish between the two, they choose *śreyah* over *preyah* whereas those who are less intelligent choose *preyah* out of the desire to gain new kinds of facilities for sense enjoyment and the protection of previously accumulated resources.

The non-spiritual substance, matter, is incomplete and short-lived due to its fragmental nature. It is not eternal and complete like the spiritual substance. Another name for incompleteness and fragmentedness is insufficiency. The material body and senses do not find plenitude even after enjoying heaps and heaps of material sense objects because it is quite impossible for one imperfect and transient substance to be the cause of fulfilment of another similarly deficient substance. The bodily senses are momentarily gratified on contact with the material sense objects, but immediately afterwards the feeling of insufficiency again arises. Thus anyone who thinks carefully will be able to understand how the *jīva* will never be able to find any satisfaction even after passing many, many lifetimes in this illusory endeavour.

Without the experience of transcendental beatitude, without the experience of the “vast”, in no way it is possible for the *jīva* to satisfy his desire for unlimited happiness by contact of fleeting sense enjoyment—the “scanty”. Therefore the *Śruti* explains the nature of both the “vast” (*Bhūmā*) and the “scanty” (*alpa*) and advises the *jīva* to become detached from the latter and encourages him to search out the former.

“yo vai bhūmā tat sukham nālpe sukham astir bhūmaiva sukham

yatra nānyat paśyati nānyat sṛṇoti nānyot vijānāti sa bhūma

atha yatrānyat paśyati anyat sṛṇoti anyat vijānāti tad alpam.

yo vai bhūmā tad amṛtam atha yad alpam tan martyam

(chāand.u.7.23.24)

That which is vast is happiness. There is no happiness in that which is scanty, the vast is happiness. What is this vastness? That which upon seeing leaves nothing else to be seen, which upon hearing leaves nothing more to be heard and which upon knowing leaves nothing more to be known is called the “vast”. And that thing which leaves one desiring for more to see, to hear or to know is called the “scanty”. That which is vast is immortal, but the “scanty” or the temporary titillation of the material senses is the mirage of this temporal existence.”

However much the *jīva* identifies himself with the material body and senses out of illusion, he will no more be able to factually become one with them any more than it is possible for oil to fully dissolve in water. Spirit and matter are inherently antagonistic to one another. One who mistakes a rope for a snake may become frightened or agitated as a result, but the rope remains a rope. In the same way, we may make the same type of mistake in thinking that the spirit self is a material substance, but despite this artificial application of material identification to the soul, the soul remains an eternal spiritual substance. The Supreme Lord personally says the same thing:

*“yathā sarva-gataṁ saukṣmyād ākaśaṁ nopalipyate
sarvatrāvasthito dehe tathātmā nopalipyate (BG. 13.33)*

“Due to its subtle nature, the sky remains unaffected despite being spread everywhere, so similarly the soul is situated in the body but never mixes with it irrevocably.”

Factually, the soul is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss and eternally free and distinct from the material body. The sky may appear to be sullied by smoke and dust but it is actually untouched, so too one may identify himself with this dissimilar and antagonistic material nature, but in fact he is always untouched and free. Just as a bewildered parakeet remains inside his cage even after the door has been unlatched, so similarly the living being remains bewildered by

his false conception of self and sits in the cage of the body as if imprisoned. Hence, even though the living entity may think himself to be matter out of confusion, it should be known that he is an eternal particle of consciousness—the spiritual substance.

The *sat chit ānanda jīva* can only find satisfaction of his desires in the association of the spiritual nature which is similarly eternal, full of knowledge and bliss. even if he should consider the non-congenious body to be himself, that which is factually untrue can never be made true. One can complete a golden earring with gold and an earthen jug with mud and can never finish the work on a golden earring with mud nor the earthen jug with gold, and in a similar way matter can be fulfilled only by matter, the consciousness can be fulfilled by the spiritual substance and the reverse will never be possible. For this reason, if one tries to satisfy the soul by pouring piles upon piles of material form flavor, sound, feeling and smell as fuel for the fire of the five senses, although these may be a momentary relaxation of their desires, the discontented soul's thirst will remain. Most probably the soul's dissatisfaction will increase due to the addition of more unfavorable materials to bury him. For example, if during the summer a baby is suffering due to the oppressive heat and its mother should cover it with more warm clothes due to being unable to understand the cause of its discomfort, then just as that child's discomfort increases so also the soul

wishes to enjoy complete beatitude and is anxious for that, but due to the influence of nescience he is unable to understand the cause of his own discomfort and he starts to collect masses of sense objects and piles them on to the already insufferable burden that he has to bear. As a result, his inexpressible suffering, far from being mitigated, is increased greatly. The inner complaint or discontent of the soul whose nature has thus been covered by the non-congenious and antagonistic material substance is constantly expressed in the form of desire. The scriptures also describe how the *jīva*'s fire of desire, rather than being extinguished by the addition of the fuel of the sense objects, becomes increased by them geometrically:

“*na jātu hāmaḥ kāmānām upohogenā sāmyati
haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmaiva bhūya evābhivarbhate*”.

(SB.9.19.14)

“Desires are never quietened by sense gratification, but rather, just as clarified butter when poured on the sacrificial fire causes its increase, so too the fire of material desire expands greatly when the fuel of sense gratification is added.”

If a medicine does not have the desired effect then it should be understood that there has been a mistake in the diagnosis of the disease. If one thinks the matter over carefully he will be able to see how the *jīva* is making mistakes in every direction in under-

standing what is his material disease and what its correct treatment is.

If the following mistakes are made in the course of treating a patient then there is no possibility of a cure being effected: (1) treating one person for another's disease, (2) giving a medicine meant for another disease, (3) giving patient that which is the cause of the disease. The living entity makes exactly these same errors in his treatment of the “disease of material life.” (1) For the disease of the soul he is treating the body and senses. (2) The living being thirsts for complete spiritual ecstasy and yet wants to quench it with the poison of the sense objects. (3) The suffering which is felt by the *jīva* is caused by his lack of contact with the congenious spiritual substance and yet he makes arrangements to give it more contact with non-congenious substance, namely the material sense objects.

Another name for the endless desires of the *jīva* bewildered by nescience is the disease of material existence (*bhaba-roga*). As a result of this disease, the *jīva*, who by nature is always full of bliss, has to be admitted in to the hospital of this material world where he is being treated. His condition is critical and as long as no change is made in the medication there is no possibility that the suffering and distorted soul's disease of desire can ever be cured nor that his unquenched thirst will ever be slaked.

An inherent quality of the spiritual substance is

bliss or happiness as much as an inherent quality of fire is heat, of musk is pleasing fragrance and of honey is sweet taste. There is no possibility of fire's existing without heat, nor of musk's existing without its pleasing fragrance, nor of honey without its sweetness. Similarly, the spiritual substance can never be without its intrinsic quality of bliss or happiness (*ānanda*). The existence of honey means its existence along with sweetness and similarly the existence of the spiritual substance means its external existence along with bliss. Where there is fire but no heat, musk and no fragrance or honey without sweetness that should be known as an illusion or non-existent paradox. In the same way, the conscious entity without happiness is a similar impossibility. Wherever the word *chinmoy* (conscious or spiritual) is used it should be understood as *chit-ānanda* or consciousness and bliss, which are, of course, both *sat* or eternal.

At this point the doubt may arise that if the *jīva* is a spiritual particle, a fleck of consciousness, so to speak, then it must be accepted that bliss is present within him. The relation of heat with fire and sweetness with honey is intrinsic and innate, such qualities don't have to be brought from outside and added. Similarly, when blissfulness is the natural quality of the living being then what is the cause of his apparent lack of happiness? And why does the conditioned soul in the world of *samsār* always have to look for the fulfilment of his desires for happiness from ma-

terial sense objects? The naturally blissful *jīva*'s scarcity of happiness is as meaningless as the poverty of the Goddess of Fortune, yet when it is observable everywhere that he is always absorbed in the effort to find happiness and avoid distress then it is certainly a matter of wonder what has caused such an impossible occurrence.

In answer it must be said that the living entity's bewilderment as to his own identity is the root cause. A millionaire lying in a golden bed is handsome, healthy and happy, yet even so, in his dreams he may experience himself to be dirty, diseased and depressed in his dream body. In that way also the spiritual particle or *jīva* is always blissful by nature, nevertheless the material nature, *Māyā*, illusion, is capable of making even the impossible occur. By her trickery the *jīva* forgets his actual identity and experiences all kinds of miseries due to thinking himself to be the body.

“*śoka-mohau sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ dehāpattiś ca māyayā
svapno yathātmanah khyātiḥ saṁsṭir na to vāstavi*”

(SB.11.11.12)

“A dream is another condition of the intelligence in an altered state. *Māyā* similarly creates the illusory experiences of grief and bewilderment, distress and unhappiness, death etc. One should know that material existence which is symptomized by experiences is not actually real”.

The body, house, etc. of the living being are not completely illusory in all respects as is the case of those in a dream, but because of his false super imposition of self identification on the body and of possessiveness on the home and family etc. connected with the body, they have a dream-like unrealness to them. (*dehe ātma-buddhi ei bibarter sthān* (“cc”)—Illusion means identification with the body—not the unreality of the entire creation.”) Both the spiritual particle, the *jīva*, and the body, family etc. which are material are energies of the Lord, but even so they have mutually opposing natures. A snake and a rope are both real, yet to think that the rope is a snake is false and so too both the body and soul are real existing items, yet the concept that “I am this body” and the resultant appearance of distress and suffering is as unreal as a dream.

The nature of *chit* (spiritual energy) is to be blissful, but the material energy is void of such blissful nature. The materialism or identification with matter experienced by the *jīva* is the cause of his non-experience of his innate blissfulness. Just as the naturally effulgent spark appears dull when covered by clouds of smoke, so also the spiritual spark is covered by the smoke of matter, and the more he is veiled by that covering of matter’s three qualities the more his inherent spirit of ecstasy becomes dulled. Glowing coals when covered by ash no longer seem to be in their natural state and thus and uncomfortable feel-

ing of want and incompleteness arises and the consequent effort to discard the covering and be established in its nature is made; similarly, when the non-spiritual qualities eclipse the soul, then a feeling of want and dissatisfaction arises in him and he seeks to rid himself of that covering and re-establish himself in his actual nature. This effort takes the form of the search for happiness and the effort to avoid suffering. The *jīva*’s experience of unhappiness is simply due to his actual identity being covered by material nature. Whatever insufficiency or lack is felt by the *jīva* results from his innate blissfulness being thus covered.

The natural blissfulness of the *jīva* is never mutated or destroyed. It is an eternal quality like the *jīva* himself. No matter how much the living being is covered by and identification with matter, that nature can never be changed or destroyed. The more one mixes water in a sweet solution, the more its sweetness becomes progressively diluted and ultimately appears to disappear; due to the coverings of matter the soul’s inherent blissfulness appears to have completely vanished but factually it is never mutated or destroyed. When heat is applied to the aforementioned sugar solution and the water is boiled away, the sugar appears once again as before—its existence was never destroyed or lost, it only needed to be freed from its coverings. Similarly, as the *jīva* becomes gradually freed from the modes of material nature

and his natural qualities are fully revealed, when he is completely free from the clutches of ignorance, then it can be clearly understood that his innate blissfulness neither increases nor decreases, nor is it altered or destroyed but it simply took on an eternal substance—he is eternally blissful by nature. Mutation and dissolution are not the functions of that *jīva*, but are the functions of matter. He sees six changes always taking place in every material substance i.e. generation, growth, stasis, reproduction, deterioration and finally dissolution or death. Movement is the function of the floating boat and not of the trees lined on the riverbank, but being seen from the boat they appear to be moving; in the same way the six changes undergone by matter appear to be the changes of the soul, but this is only appearance. These changes are the workings of matter and not spirit—the *jīva*'s legacy of bliss remains neither increased, nor decreased, nor destroyed but eternally the same. A line of clouds passes across the moon and hence its rays appear alternately intense or infirm according to the density of the clouds, still we know that the moon itself and the actual intensity of its rays to be unchanged. In the same way the spiritual particle's blissfulness is an eternal and unchangeable quality which undergoes the appearance of change due to the changes undergone by material nature. The fish, born of the water, cannot remain without water even for a moment, and so too the *jīvas*, born of the Su-

premely blissful and conscious entity cannot live for even a moment without that blissfulness. Thus the *Śrutis* have said:

“*ānandād hy eva khalo imāni bhūtāni jāyante
ānandena jātāni jīvanti, ānandam prayanti
abhisamviśanti*”

(Taitt.U.3.6.1)

“All living beings are produced from bliss, after birth they maintain their existence due to bliss and at the time of destruction they merge again into that blissful existence”.

If the function of happiness were not eternally inherent in the *jīva*, then in some particularly unfavorable situation it would certainly be destroyed, but because he is innately blissful, no matter how much that quality is covered by the non-spiritual substance or the three qualities of nature he is never at any time completely without happiness. No matter how much he is submerged in the ocean of distress, no matter how much his feelings of insufficiency are increased, there will always be some message of happiness hidden there. Even the *jīva* who is completely bound up by the ropes of illusion, who is tormented by the pangs of intense grief in loss or disease, who after searching and searching is unable to find even the faintest trace of happiness in the deepest recesses of his heart, when even the slightest breeze of felicitousness doesn't seem to be anywhere available to cool

the steaming, poisonous fever of material suffering—even in such an aggravated condition the existence of bliss within the soul cannot be denied. Just as aquatic volcanos are possible even in the ocean's deepest trenches and the existence of water is possible in blazing fires, so too the *jīva* even though blanketed by nescience and the three qualities of material nature, and ever-increasingly oppressed by feelings of scarcity and want, it can still be observed that in the depths of his heart that form of his which is eternally embraced by bliss is still present.

One of the best examples of suffering in the material world is that of a mother whose newborn infant has died. When that mother's piteous cries pierce the very heart of others and the surrounding directions are burned to cinders by the fire of her grief as she falls to the ground like a tree in a typhoon, beating her breast in lamentation, still, even in that vast desert of distress a trace of happiness can be found like an oasis. The bereaved mother of our example is still feeling some happiness even while crying, beating her breast and falling to the ground—and it can be proved very easily. If someone should try to stop her from going through the above-described display of lamentation then it is seen that her suffering seems to increase even more. Therefore it has to be assumed that, in her expression of grief she must be experiencing some greater satisfaction by increasing it. Thus it can be seen that even in the most heightened in-

stances of bereavement the *jīva* experiences some kind of happiness.

Sometimes it is seen that due to great intensity of suffering some people express a desire to die, but when the possibility of death actually presents itself they give up that desire and make their utmost efforts to escape from its hands. For example, there was an old woman carrying a heavy load of wood. Being oppressed by the labor of carrying it, she cried out to the Lord of Death to take her away. When he actually came before her she immediately retracted her statement and asked him to help her lift the load back on her head. From this it can be understood that even in suffering so intense that one wants to die, still there is some happiness which at least is greater than the suffering which will be brought on by death, otherwise why would the effort be made by one to avoid death? Therefore it can be clearly concluded that some speck of happiness remains even in the most miserable situations experienced by the living being while under the influence of nescience.

Even in the extreme case where people take their own lives by drinking poison etc., even in such cases of suicide evidence of the eternity and blissfulness of the soul can be found. Due to ignorance the *jīva* may think himself to be the body, but that is actually the self's secondary feature, the primary feature being the consciousness itself. Due to the presence of the primary self in the body a sense of identity or

relationship is created for the secondary self. If the body's existence is seen is detrimental to the happiness of the primary self, then some people are able to even give that up. To preserve the life and happiness of the body one may be forced to amputate a limb bitten by a snake and similarly the people who give up their body voluntarily do so at the behest of pleasing the primary self whose existence is beyond that of the body. That self is by nature the eternal and blissful spiritual particle. That person who recognizes something to be the cause of suffering and hence rejects it is called a renouncer (*tyaktā*) and that which he rejects is called the object of renunciation (*tyājya*). One who renounces for the purpose of gaining pleasure will certainly give up the causes of misery thus these are the objects of renunciation, but he himself can be his own *tyājya* or thing that must be given up. Therefore, just like a person rids himself of burning garments to save his body from a fury blaze, so the suicide rids himself of his suffering body but from this we can surmise at the existence of a renouncer who has his existence beyond the body and at this living entity's innate blissfulness. The great philosopher Bhārati Tirtha explains this matter very nicely in his well-known work, *Pañcadaśī*:

*“rogakrodhābhībhutānām mumūrsā viksyate kvacit
tato dveṣād bhavet tyājya ātmeti yadi tan na hi
tyaktum योग्याsya dehasya nātmatā tyaktur eva sā*

na tyaktary asti sa dveṣyas tyājye dveṣye tu ka kṣatih”
(12.28-29)

Sometimes a person who is overwhelmed by anger or disease may be seen to develop a hatred for himself and desire to die (i.e. to give up such a hateful “self”). This however is not logical because the body can be the object of renunciation but how can one renounce himself? The renouncer never has hatred for himself but he hates the suffering body and other causes of his misery and what is the harm in hating such objects of renunciation?”

Looking at the question from every angle it is impossible to deny the eternity and blissfulness of the self. When we observe the increase and decrease of happiness in the living being it should be recognized as the result of relative changes in the covering of the non-spiritual or material substance over him. It is not really an increase or decrease of bliss.

Another name for the spiritual substance is the *ātmā* or *ātma-vastu*. The *jīva* is a particle of consciousness and therefore he is a spiritual substance or *ātma-vastu* also. The all-powerful *Paramātmā* is the indwelling Super-soul of the spiritual substance known as the *jīvātmā* who is His energy. Further, the most complete and perfect form of the Supersoul is Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the root cause of all spiritual existences. Since ecstasy is the innate function of the spiritual substance, it

can be easily understood that Lord Krishna is the most complete form of such ecstasy. All of His expansions and the *Paramātmā* can be called more complete than the *jīva* who is simply a complete form of bliss. Anything which has been cut off or divided up can be called incomplete. The spiritual substance or *ātma-vastu* can never be cut-off or divided-up and therefore it is complete. Thus the measure of the spiritual substance starts from the point of complete (*pūrṇa*) and ends with *purnatamā* or most complete. In the spiritual realm there is no measurement lower than perfect and complete.

Even though the *jīva* is a mere spark of consciousness, in terms of untainted blissfulness he is perfect and complete. The blissfulness of the *jīva* and that of Krishna are similarly complete but just as there is a difference between a full jug of water and the full ocean, so too such a difference exists in most respects between the individual and supreme souls. Those who are known as *ātmārāma* or self-satisfied can remain absorbed in the innate beatitude of the soul. Their self is completely freed from the coverings of non-self and thus they are complete in their natural quality of joyfulness and thus they are known as *ātmārāma*. Because they feel no shortage of joy they find it unnecessary to search for pleasure in things outside of themselves like other embodied or conditioned souls. They, although as a spiritual particles are mere fragments in size, they are completely satisfied with their

natural spiritual blissfulness and are therefore called *pūrṇa* or full. This is the main difference between a liberated and conditioned soul.

The *jīva* who is situated in his constitutional spiritual qualities can be called complete, but even that is not his most complete state. The highest achievement or state attainable by the *jīva* is to be a devotee or servant of Krishna. As long as the *jīva* is not able to surrender himself entirely to his supreme cause and shelter there is no possibility of his achieving his ultimate happiness or benefit. Although the spark once separated from its covering of smoke is naturally bright and pleasing, still it is even more effulgent and beneficial when it is reunited with its shelter and cause, the fire; similarly, the *jīva* who frees himself from the material condition, although liberated, in his independent state he is neither irrevocably free from any danger nor does he experience the same unlimited happiness that he does when he takes shelter of the desire tree of Govinda (Lord Krishna) Who is the ultimate cause of all causes. Giving up all his independence to Him, he finds the highest ecstasy and fearlessness. A woman may be shackled in chains of iron in some country far from home; if she is released from that bondage, still, until she is able to take shelter of her own husband and bind herself to him out of her own will she is not free from anxiety or danger, no matter how elated she may be at having attained freedom. In much the same way, the *jīva*

who is freed from the bondage of material life, although finding the pleasure of his spiritual nature, cannot consider himself to be completely safe and satisfied until he can immolate himself completely and voluntarily at the lotus feet of the life of his life, the dearest object of love for all living beings, Lord Sri Krishna. Furthermore, just as the women of our example finds the shelter of her husband to be hundreds of times more beneficial than any amount of independence and service to him be hundreds of times more exhilarating than the attainment of freedom from bondage, so too the *jīvas* who takes shelter of Krishna finds that to belittle the glory of millions of freedoms and the pleasure of service to Him to make billions of *brahmānandas* or *ātmānandas* to appear faulty. Thus Sanaka and other *ātmārāmas*, even though absorbed in the happiness of *brahmānanda* or impersonal spiritual beauty, they were later attracted to the form of Krishna and this prior attachment was broken. They became interested in His lotus feet exclusively. And not that they were attracted by directly seeing His personal form, they simply caught the aroma from the tulasi leaves offered to His feet and the bees of their minds were attracted and flew to them. What a powerful influence He has to be able to attract even such *ātmārāma*!

*“tasyāravinda-nayanasya padāravinda-kiñjalka-miśra-
tulasī-makaranda-vāyuh,
antargataḥ sva-vivareṇa cakāra teṣāṃ*

sañkṣobham akṣara-jusam api citta-tanvoḥ.”

(SB.3.15.43)

“When Sanaka and the other sages, his brothers, all of whom were liberated personalities or *ātmārāmas*, bowed down to the feet of the Lord, breeze carried the fragrance of tulasi leaves which were decorating them. When that beautiful aroma entered their nostrils their minds became thrilled and the hairs on their bodies stood on end—even though they were completely self-fulfilled”

In the *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*, whose every verse has its basis in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the same thing is mentioned:

*“iha sob rohu, krishna charaṇ sambandhe
ātmārāmer mon hare tulasī gandhe “*

(CC Madhya 17.133)

“What to speak of Krishna’s other qualities and those of His lotus feet, simply the fragrance of the tulasi leaves offered there was enough to capture the minds of the *ātmārāmas*.”

The ultimate state of ecstasy is Sri Krishna. All the unlimited streams of pleasure have their source in Him. He is not only the most complete form of ecstasy, but being the cause of all other ecstasies also. He is the lord of all spiritual moods or varieties of enjoyment which are called *rasa*. Ecstasy develops out of *rasa* (taste), and therefore *rasa* is the cause and ecstasy is the effect. *Rasa* has form whereas ecstasy is

a formless substance. Just as a pleasing fragrance emanates from a scented joss stick, so similiary ecstasy (*ānanda*) arises from the different varieties of spiritual enjoyment which are known as *rasas*. Thus these *rasas* or modes of transcendental loving exchange are the foundation or resting ground of *ānanda*, or spiritual ecstasy. Because He is the cause of all ecstasies and moods of spiritual enjoyment, Lord Krishna is also known as *Rasarāj* (the king of *rasa*). Thus He is also the abode or foundation of the impersonal form of bliss known as *Brahman**

The Lord states this Himself in the Bhagavad-gīta, "*brahmāno hi pratiṣṭhāham*". ("I am the basis of the impersonal brahmaṇ. I am this brahmaṇ's personal form." (BG.14.27). The impersonal or formless effulgence of the sun emanates from the sun-globe which has form. The sun globe is possessed of varieties whereas its effulgence does not. Similarly, that which the Śrutis have described as "*ānanda-brahma*" ("*ānanda-brahmeti vyajānāt*" —Taitt.U.3.6."He understood that bliss is the supreme, that *ānanda* is *Brahman*"), the non-fragmental or undivided ecstatic truth, which has no qualities or distinguishing fea-

This Brahma is not the same as the creative deity, Brahma. The etymology of the word is given in Sruti, "*brhat brmhayatei brahma*." That which is itself great and makes others great also is known as brahma. Therefore brahma is the name generally given in the Vedic literature, especially the Srutis to the Supreme absolute truth. It again is divided into a personal and impersonal aspect.

tures, is simply the bodily effulgence of the Supreme Lord Krishna, Who is the embodiment of eternity, cognizance and bliss.

"*yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi-koteṣv aśesa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnaṁ tad brahma-niskalam-anantam-aśesa-bhūtam govindam ādi-purusam tam aham bhajāmi*." (B.S.5.40)

"I worship the original personality, Govinda (Krishna), Whose bodily effulgence is the unlimited, undivided, impersonal Brahma which is the resting place of unlimited universes."

Just as the sun's effulgence can be called its glory, and as the fragrance of the incense stick can be called its glory, so too one of the glories of the Supreme Lord Krishna, Who is the embodiment of *rasa*, is His impersonal expansion of ecstasy, *ananda-brahma* "*madiyam mahimānam ca param brahmeti sabditam*" (SB 8.24.28) "My glory is known as *param brahma*. "Therefore *ānanda-brahma* can be called the glory of *rasa-brahma*, or Krishna's glory. We can understand from the statements of the Lord Himself in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that this impersonal *Brahma* is one of His potencies.

So we have come to understand that the root or cause of all ecstasy is *rasa*, which loosely translated means flavor or taste. Ecstasy depends or is based on *rasa*. Therefore, the ultimately perfect position or