

Questions & Answers with Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj on Jiva Tattva & Guru Tattva

Q: Does an eternal connection between the Spiritual Master and disciple exist? Does a disciple in this life have the same Guru which he or she had in the previous life(s) or not? And will he or she have the same Guru in the next life(s)?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: Actually there is a code as follows: "*chaksu dana dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei*" - means that Guru-tatva appeared in each life. Here Guru means Guru-tattva. So, if we accept sad-Guru in this life next life we will accept same type of Guru-tattva. Until we are not able to deliver from the planet we will accept same Sampradaya's Guru. Gurudeva is like a media to reach our ultimate goal of life.

Q: Can the devotees of the Lord be called sentimental or not? What is the real meaning of the concept 'sentimental'?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: According to our association we can be sentimental in the form of a devotee. The sentiment is not devotion at all. Sentimental things are changeable. At any movement we can change our mood, some time it can be favourable for devotion and sometime not favourable for devotion. Please watch it in your life then you can realize.

Q: Guru Maharaj, in the holy scriptures the spiritually elevated devotees are described. We can read that when these devotees speak about Sri Krishna or chant His Holy Name then tears are appearing on their eyes. Can we call these feelings 'spiritual sentiments'?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: Whatever an elevated devotee does, it is coming from his proper realization. Nowadays, mostly, we are very eager to get the prestige of being an elevated Vaishnava.

Even if we look in the Caitanya Bhagavata, at the time of Haridas Thakur one day one snake-charmer was singing the pastime of Kalia nag. At that time, as soon as Haridas Thakur heard the story of Kalia nag Lila of Krishna, Haridas Thakur was feeling ecstasy and the assembled people were honouring him (Haridas Thakur) from the core of their heart. At that place, one so-called Brahmana was there. He thought if he does the same activity like Haridas Thakur then everybody will honour him in the same way. As soon as he imitated the act of Haridas Thakur, the snake-player understood the fake mood of the so-called Brahmin. That's the reason he started to beat the Brahmin in order to stop the fake activity. The assembled people were astonished and did not understand why he (snake-player) did not object to Haridas Thakur. Finally everybody understood that Haridas Thakur's action was real ecstasy, that is why the snake player was worshipping Haridas Thakur. But the Brahmana's ecstasy was only a show to the public in order to get the same type of prestige from them. Here, the Brahmin's mood proved that his position was not stable.

For certain motives only, sentimental persons make a show of devotion in the public, but this type of emotion is not devotion at all. But though we are showing the symptom of elevated Vaisnavas in public, but it is not our real position of progress. It is in fact a symptom of their lack of progress as any real progress on the spiritual path is based in genuine humility and

surrender, saranagati. The above explanation, the fact of Haridas Thakur, fake Brahmana and snake-charmer, I like to say that sentiment is not our real position. It may change at any time.

Until, we are not in a position of pure devotion, in between what ever we will do, it should be under the guidance of pure devotee, otherwise our practice will not give us proper result. Our previous Acharyas give us instructions for chanting the Holy Name constantly, then gradually all our symptom of pure devotion will appear spontaneously. Here your explanation of sentiment, if he is in the position of pure devotion and his tears appear from real separation of Guru, Vaisnavas and God then it will not be sentiments. I like to worship this devotee for the rest of my life.

Q: What do the Acaryas and scriptures of Gaudiya Vaisnavas from Sri Brahma Madhva Gaudiya Vaishnava Sampradaya say about the position in Lord's Creation of the nitya-siddha jivas (eternally liberated) and nitya-baddha jivas (eternally conditioned)? Do the souls fall down from the Spiritual World due to their envy of the Lord as some preachers from ISKCON say?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: The Tattva as I have heard it from senior Vaisnavas is as follows:

We just have to accept that two types of souls who are eternally part and parcel of the Lord.

The Lord is equal to all nitya-siddha jivas and nitya-badha jivas as they are tasting the fruits of their actions.

According to the different levels of exploitation or dedication of the Lords energies they will have different degrees of happiness and distress.

The Lord's energy works for everybody the same.

The jiva (soul) is eternally tatastha-sakti, up till the point that he becomes liberated, from that point he becomes svarup-sakti.

The jiva-soul in its conditioned state Nitya-badha has the tendency to become attracted by the external energy of the Lord (Bahiranga-sakti) or the internal energy of the Lord (Antaranga-sakti).

The Nitya-badha soul is called Nitya-eternal because there was never a time in history when he was not bound by illusion to some degree.

Bahiranga-sakti (Maha-maya) can never enter in the Spiritual plane of existence and works under the directions of the Supreme Lord.

The Spiritual world is free from any shortcomings like envy, lust, anger etc..

Svarup-siddhi is not Tatastha anymore. The jiva becomes from that point nitya-siddha, eternally liberated fully under the protection and guidance of the Supreme Lord without the tendency to become attracted by the illusionary energy of the Lord.

Nitya-siddha souls only come to the material world for the purpose of giving guidance to the sincere seekers who want to receive Divine Grace and shelter within the Absolute Truth. Their position is that they are never bound by illusion.

All though sometimes they seem to be under the spell of illusion, this kind of illusion is arranged by the Lord energy in the form of Divine illusion (Yoga-maya) to manifest their pastimes in different ways according to time place and circumstances.

Q: Yet, after reading this elaborate and thorough explanation by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur I have not understand why did the Lord place me in the material world thus prone me to "gradually reach the transcendental abode" or suffer in maya (2) whereas He placed other jivas originally in the spiritual world without necessity to "gradually reach the transcendental abode" thus giving them originally purity and ability to serve Him without obstacles influenced by free modes of material nature? I think that this is unjust.

Or may be each jiva has to come through material lila of the Lord before jiva enters spiritual realm?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: The Lord did not actually place us in the material world or prone us to gradually reach the transcendental abode. It is none other than jiva misused free-will which has actually caused such miserable placement or proning.

On the other hand, we can not blame Lord for granting us such valuable gift as 'free will' which is in fact the expression of His mercy upon us. We should, therefore, remain thankful, grateful to Him.

Before trying to understand the purport of the above relevant quote (which is an honest literal translation of the original writing) let us analyse the following points: It says, "Å to facilitate the jivas and make them firm in their competence for various positions, He created many low levels associated with maya which present unlimited obstacles in the attainment of the Supreme bliss." So, He did all that to facilitate the jivas and make them firm in these competence. How can it be understood that He facilitated the jiva and their competence for the higher and happier [greater blissful] positions by putting them into or inviting them towards the opposite direction - low levels that endlessly hinder to attain Supreme bliss?! - very self-contradictory. There can be some utility of the above way for training up jiva like in army, to cultivate qualities like tolerance, stability etc. or for their comparative study so they understand the greatness, glory of blissful devotional service to the Lord compared to the miserable material life, in order to facilitate their positive competence. But, that can not be the whole picture, character or nature of the above facilitating process/procedure! Otherwise, it is self-contradictory.

Henceforth, the purport needs to be understood as follows: Krishna created those (low levelsÅ .obstacles in attainment of bliss etc.) to rather warn and caution the jivas/their free-will for not choosing that wrong direction. In other words, He demarcated the danger-line/danger zone thus saying, "Don't go to the dangerous zone, if you still go, then you have to reap the result." Thus, instead of proning He wanted to have a check on them. So to facilitate the jiva and their positive competence Krishna created the zone of misery so that the jiva do not go away from Him towards that zone to accept misery.

A question may arise: "Why then the Lord does not actually check them (by His will-power) from accepting that miserable life?" The answer is: "He does not want to interfere with the jiva's 'free will'. Because, if the free will is interfered with, then there can not be any real (living) devotional relationship between Him and the jivas for everything is then controlled by Him. Back to the point, - the Lord's afore-mentioned way of 'facilitating the jivas and make them firm in their competence' is also required to be seen from a slightly different angle [or through deeper perspective]: By giving the jivas some chances of experiencing the misery of material life, the Lord intends to tell the jiva, "So, give up this miserable life and come towards Me to attain your ambrosial destination." Furthermore, it is very clear from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's writing that the Lord does not go away from jiva while they (jivas) helplessly pass through the miserable life caused by their own wrong choice or misuse of free-will. The Lord rather comes closer with His rescue-team (His pure devotees) to rescue - asking them (jivas) to accept His generous help (relief-work). Again, this is another example of Krishna's mercifulness.

Q: Whereas He placed other jivas originally in the spiritual world without necessity to "gradually reach the transcendental abode" thus giving them originally purity and ability to serve Him without obstacles influenced by free modes of material nature? I think that this is unjust.

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: There are natural gradations or distinctions everywhere in the universal creation and it is accepted as normal whether some of us like or not. For example, we do not even treat everything, every person equally in our own life. This is so obvious that no more examples are necessary.

What is true justice-standard? Our conception of justice is fully relative according to our type of understanding of individual or collective interests. So, who are we to judge Lord's standard of justice? Although exact equality is impossible in order to maintain some variety, yet, the scopes/chances of living in natural harmony in relation to each other according to time, place, situation and quality-character are provided there by Lord for us; plus the scope for our great spiritual promotions is also kindly granted by Him and there His sense of justice lies.

The Lord is absolute by nature and so is His sweet-will. Therefore except for humble enquiry or respectful inquisitiveness, nobody can actually question (being a judge): why did He do it this way or that way? Krishna can do anything and everything the way He likes to do.

We may bear in mind that our discussion is taking place based on Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's own realizations about the Lord's ways of doing things, following his own style of writing or presentation. Another exalted devotee may also present his realizations in some other distinct style according to how the Lord's Lila manifests to him. But the basic or ultimate truth remains unchanged that the Supreme Lord holds the supreme absolute authority to do everything the way He likes and that is the ultimate definition of justice, because He is Absolute Good.

In "Jaiva Dharma" by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur we are reading the following:
(Chapter Sixteen)

"Vrajanatha: Why does the Lord give trouble to the jivas for the sake of His lila?

Babaji: The quality of the free will in the jiva is a special mercy of the Lord on them, because an inert object without free will is very insignificant. Because of this independence the jiva gains lordship over the inert material world. Misery and happiness are states of mind. What

we consider misery, a person attached to it considers happiness. The end result of all types of material happiness is misery and nothing else. A man attached to sense gratification ultimately attains misery. When this misery increases then it gives rise to the desire for happiness. This desire leads to discrimination, which brings inquisitiveness. Because of inquisitiveness one attains the association of saints, which gives rise to faith. By faith one ascends the path of progression. Just as gold is purified by heating it in fire and beating it with hammer, in the same way the jiva who is affected with the contaminations of sense enjoyment and non-devotion to Krishna is purified by putting him on the anvil of the material world and beating him with the hammer of miseries. Thus misery of the conditioned jiva ultimately brings him pleasure. Thus misery is an instance of the Lord mercy. Therefore the misery that befalls jivas as part of the Krishna's lila appears auspicious to the farsighted and miserable to the short sighted."

Q: The jiva originates from the jiva-sakti which is incomplete by the nature. Then the free will of such jiva is also incomplete and imperfect. It is called "minute" will by the shastra. Why then the will of the jiva called "free will" though its will is imperfect (minute) and everything is still (anyway) going on by the Supreme Will of the Lord. What is the gist of the so called "free will" of the jiva soul?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: According to the mood of your questions, let me just form another question here, just for more clarification: "How can there be any existence of true "free will" of the jiva, since, everything is going on by the Supreme will, in other words, under the control of the Supreme Will of the Lord?" [ans.] Just as a very small but independent king under the government of an Emperor, or, an ordinary citizen's small freedom under the control of country-government, likewise, is the situation of jiva's (Lord-given) tiny free-will in relation to [and compared to] Lord's Supreme Will. Sriman Mahaprabhu gave the final and transcendental answer to this sort of queries - the "acintya-bheda-abheda-tatva" or realities in relation to the Supreme Absolute Reality which are simultaneously one with and distinct from each other - the complete truth of which is ultimately INCONCEIVABLE. So, jiva's free-will is related to Lord's Will and yet, to a certain extent, independent of His Will. We are required to believe that it thus happens; why and how it happens - is not to be conceived by our limited capacity.

Q: There is no freedom. This is only a word devoid of sense because everything is happening by the Will of the Lord, not the jiva. If the "free will" of the jiva-soul is minute then why Acharyas and shastras are calling it "free will"; may be it is more true to call it "minute will" but not "free will"?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: Both questions are interrelated. To answer this one I would say, I understand what you mean and basically agree with you that 'minute will' can not be called as 'free will' in absolute sense. Please know that the sastras have actually called it "free will" just in a relative sense. For example, a human being and an ant - both have their own "free wills". Compared to human beings nature of free will an ant's free will is very limited or minute, yet, that is considered to be its "free will" by which it does its life-activity. Similarly, compared to the "absolute free will" human free will is so small, but still, it is "free will" - let us call it as "minute free-will".

Q: In "Jaiva Dharma" by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur we are reading the following:
(Chapter Sixteen)

"Vrajanatha: The misery in the conditioned state is ultimately auspicious, yet it is painful at

present. Was it not possible for the omnipotent Lord to find some other solution to this miserable process?

Babaji: Krishna lila is very wonderful and of myriad types. This is also one type of astonishing lila. The supremely independent Lord performs all types of lila; why would He not perform this type? To maintain all varieties, no lila can be abandoned. Besides, even if some other type of lila is performed, the instruments (jivas) of that lila have to accept some form of lila trouble. Lord Krishna is a person (purusa) and an agent. All instruments (jivas) are under the will of the purusa. They are objects. Or in other words, that which is acted upon by the purusa, whereas the purusa is the agent, or He who acts. Being under the will of an agent, it is natural that they will experience some misery. Why are you calling it misery? The apparent misery which nourishes Lord Krishna's lila is supremely blissful for the jiva. Abandoning the pleasure aspect of the Lord Krishna, the jiva, who has free will, has accepted the misery, which comes as a result of absorption in maya. If anyone is to be blamed then that is jiva, not Krishna".

In other words, we can understand from the above quote, that the unlimited and omnipotent Lord would be limited and impotent if He did not perform all varieties of lila, and He would not be supremely independent. The jivas are like the subjects that are ruled by the king, the agent. Their independence is minute, not absolute. They are under the will of the Lord and, being under another's will, it is natural that ones has misery. However, because this misery leads to pleasure it should not be taken as misery. And in any event, the choice is always open to the living entity to reject lording it over matter and accept the pleasure aspect of the Lord. Although he has never been in the nitya-lila of the Lord, and although he has been in the Lord's material lila from a time without beginning (anadi), the choice to be in material consciousness or spiritual consciousness is made by the jiva. Hence the jiva alone is responsible for being in the bondage of karma in the material world. This is my understanding of the above quote. In the quote above from Jaiva Dharma we are reading the following: "If anyone is to be blamed then that is jiva, not Krishna."

The jiva can be blamed if jiva being under the influence of maya does not accept the service to the Lord even if Lord gives to jiva such an opportunity. But how the jiva can be blamed in the absolute sense if jiva has not absolute will and was placed to the material world by the arrangements of the Supreme Lord? But how the jiva can be blamed in the absolute sense if jiva has not absolute will and was placed to the material world by the arrangements of the Supreme Lord?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: No, jiva has NOT been placed to the material world by the arrangements of Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is NOT involved with such matter.

Although jiva does not have absolute will, yet he has some free will. Even if it is minute, still that is enough to make a choice in the beginning before actively choosing to take the association of maya-sakti. It is, therefore, jiva who needs to accept the responsibility for such happening. For example, a citizen of a country lives under the country-government and it's constitution (law) allows using country-currency that is sanctioned by the government. The freedom or free-will of a citizen is actually "minute" compared to the freedom/free-will of the President or a minister of the government, yet, the freedom/free-will of a citizen IS considered ENOUGH for living a good or bad life. So, the freedom/freewill which is originally meant for good use, proper utility and so facilitated by the government, gets

misused by a citizen, can we then hold a good president or minister of the government as responsible for that act saying - "you provided us the facility and opportunity, therefore, you have to take all responsibility for it"? Similarly, we can not hold Krishna responsible for any individual or collective misuse of freedom. So, "if anyone is to be blamed then that is jiva, not Krishna."

There are two main separate divisions in the above quote from Jaiva- dharma: (a) Babaji: Krishna lila is very wonderful and of myriad types. This is also one type of astonishing lila. The supremely independent Lord performs all types of lila; why would He not perform this type? To maintain all varieties, no lila can be abandoned + (the last part) Abandoning the pleasure aspect of the Lord Krishna, the jiva, who has free will, has accepted the misery, which comes as a result of absorption in maya. If anyone is to be blamed then that is jiva, not Krishna.

(b) [the middle part] Besides, even if some OTHER type of lila is performed, the instruments (jivas) of that lila have to accept some form of lila trouble. Lord Krishna is a person (purusa) and an agent. All instruments (jivas) are under the will of the purusa. They are objects. Or in other words, that which is acted upon by the purusa, whereas the purusa is the agent, or He who acts. Being under the will of an agent, it is natural that they will experience some misery. Why are you calling it misery? The apparent misery which nourishes Lord Krishna's lila is supremely blissful for the jiva.

The above two divisions are two different contexts or considerations, despite their inter-relation. I think the first division is that of one's principal concern. So, let us discuss it in the first place. In this context, two different aspects of Krishna-lila are found: 1."anvaya-mukhi" (that of positive aspect) and 2."vyatireka-mukhi" (that of negative aspect) ["anvaya-vyatirekabhyamÅ "].

The context [a] refers to Lord's "vyatireka-mukhi" or negative type of lila which is not fully understandable by jiva's [limited] relative conceptions. Questions may arise "why Lord really needs to do such type of lila? Could it not be ignored? We can not have a simple answer, because, it's reasons are covered under mystery, in such lila though Lord is not directly related, yet some indirect connection is there and that is why it is described as "astonishing lila". According to Siddhanta (spiritual conclusion) two-fold reasons are generally found: [again] i) the misuse of free-will ii) creating the scope for jiva's comparative experience or taste.

Example for i) Even a good king (not a motivated exploiting dictator) is required to create prisons (jail), police men or enforcement department for the misusers of freedom and power. From another angle, it is the misusers who actually create the need for all that aforementioned and not the good king who has no direct involvement, though playing a required role to help their (misuser's) rectification which becomes ultimately beneficial for them. Lord Krishna also plays the similar role in His negative aspect of lila, of course, in much higher, transcendental sense.

ii) Having versatility or variety in tastes (or experience) is one of the living characteristics of life. One can not have complete idea of the attraction of sweet-taste unless and until he tastes bitter. Similarly, under-going painful experiences can help one to have a better appreciation of the transcendental happiness/ecstasy of Krishna-lila. In this regard, one most important factor is noticeable to the devotees that Krishna does not just go away from the jiva, leaving

him helplessly in the miserable condition, rather, mercifully comes forward to offer in different forms, ways His invaluable helps to the jiva.

Besides, another reason is also involved with Lord's negative aspect of lila - that is to distribute the facilities also among the other species of lives, plus different levels of creation in this universe. We know that the common law of the mundane life is to live on or at the sacrifice of another life.

ahastani sahasanam
apadani catus-padam
phalguni tatra mahatam
jivo jivasya jivanam

Srimad Bhagavatam (1.13.47): "Those who are devoid of hands are prey for those who have hands; those devoid of legs are prey for the four- legged. The weak are the subsistence of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another." For example, Lord needs to facilitate the human living and so, trees, plants, vegetable's lives are sacrificed for to meet their need of food, making house etc; thus tree, plant, creeper's life becomes miserable or distressed for a time-period (until their death) in order to facilitate the human life. Again vegetarian animals live on vegetable, but, non-vegetarian animals live on other animal's meat. For another example, as the insects or germs of a disease get facilitated to live on/in a human body, then the body becomes sick, on the contrary, when attacked by medicines - their lives get miserable or killed and at the cost of their life, again the human body regains health. Following the similar principle, we all have to take some misery of death-procedure/process one day in order to create vacant spaces for the future generations + reduce the burden of mother earth and so on.

So, that's how the lives on this plane is going on, following the law of karma etc. (Today, one is enjoying facility causing other's misery and tomorrow that "other" will enjoy facility causing one's misery - cycle of karmic action and reaction). Now, back to the main point - may be some partial reason for Lord's negative aspect of lila is to facilitate one kind of jivas, causing some sacrifice on the part of others (who are also given the due facilities when their turn comes).

The division (b) distinctly refers to Lord's OTHER kind of lila which means none other than a kind of His own natural pastimes of positive aspect (anvaya-mukhi). In such lila or pastimes, a jiva is engaged in Lord's direct service that requires him to accept some troubles for nourishing or promoting His transcendental enjoyment, remaining under His direct shelter and such acceptance of trouble is ultimately converted into blissfulness in his [jiva's] life for his unconditional dedication to the Lord. In some other cases, jiva's acceptance of trouble for Lord becomes instantly transformed into ecstasy. Therefore, Thakur Srila Bhaktivinoda writes, "Why are you calling it misery? The apparent misery which nourishes Lord Krishna's lila is supremely blissful for the jiva."

Q: Does such a lila exists where it is possible to attain "nothing"? (not Goloka, not Vaikuntha, not Viraja river, not dilution in brahmajoti, not material creation) or in other words if there is some realm where there is no any lila?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: No.

Q: Can the Lord made something that He can not made? Is it possible or not?

Srila Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaj: The question of such possibility and/or impossibility simply does not arise in Divine Perfection, as they are absolutely irrelevant.