

His Divine Grace Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada - Awareness Beyond the Restrictions of Matter

By Atul Krishna das

Sri Sri Vaisnava Carana Dandavat Nati Purvikeyam.

I am offering my dandavat pranams to the Vaisnavas' lotus feet and then I am writing.

The purpose of this paper is to eradicate any misunderstanding on the subject matter of the teachings of Nitya-lila-pravista Om Visnupada Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada regarding the omniscience of Sri Guru. In establishing the siddhanta, as presented in the voluminous teachings of His Divine Grace, it will be obvious that Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja is a true follower of His Divine Grace in his presentation of the subject matter.

DOES SRILA PRABHUPADA HEAR OUR PRAYERS?

Does Srila Prabhupada hear our prayers? If he has no ability to hear, then what is the use of praying? Why are we advised to pray to him every morning, day and evening, and in between? As he certainly hears our prayers right now, as he will hear them always in the future, so he has heard them always in the past. The children in the gurukulas were praying without a doubt. He knows our heart through and through, just as he knew and knows the heart of any rascal disciple engaged in atrocities.

When we cry out for his holy name, is he not hearing? Is he different from his name? Is his name material? Is his body material? Never. Such a claim is but one step from atheism.

"If one thinks that the body of a pure devotee is material, he is an offender, for that is a vaishnava-aparadha."

(Caitanya Caritamrta, Antya-lila, 4.194)

Srila Prabhupada is also nondifferent from his picture, and the picture will see, hear and smell just as he will. Srila Prabhupada is nondifferent even from the pictures that were hung on the walls of the gurukulas and printed in his books that they were reading.

"There is no difference between me and my picture. Therefore we should honor and keep pictures in that spirit. If we throw pictures this way and that way, that is offense. The name and picture are as good as the person in spiritual world. In the material world either picture or person, everything is illusion." (Letter to Jadurani, September 4th, 1972)

SUM TOTAL OF ALL THE DEMIGODS

Anyone desiring to succeed in spiritual life has to have unflinching faith in the spiritual master. Not only a fanatical faith of our own design, but faith in him as the revealed scriptures have described.

acaryam mam vijaniyan
navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyasuyeta
sarva-devamayo guruh

"One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am," said the Blessed Lord. "Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods." (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 11.17.27)

The demigods, such as Brahma, Yamaraja and Varuna, are aware of the past, present and future. They are described as omniscient in the books of Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada is the sum total of these demigods. How is he then any less in his awareness of the past, present and future? Indeed, all the demigods and their qualities are manifest in the body of a genuine akincana-bhakta.

yasyasti bhaktir bhagavaty akincana
sarvair gunais tatra samasate surah

"All the demigods and their exalted qualities, such as religion, knowledge and renunciation, become manifest in the body of one who has developed unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva." (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 5.18.12)

THE SAKTYAVESA-AVATARA

Srila Prabhupada is glorified throughout the world as the empowered representative, a saktyavesa-avatara, of the Supreme Lord, and he is renowned for the literature he composed. He describes Srila Vyasadeva as omniscient. The bona fide spiritual master is a representative of Srila Vyasadeva.

"The Vedic literatures composed by the omniscient Mahamuni Vyasadeva are evidence of all spiritual existence. Only through these revealed scriptures can all conditioned souls attain knowledge." (Caitanya Caritamrta, Madhya-lila, 20.353)

He also explained that in our Krishna consciousness movement we don't accept any knowledge from a person who is subject to the four inherent defects of all conditioned souls. He from whom we accept knowledge should have perfect knowledge, he should know the past, present and the future perfectly.

"Maha-muni, he is liberated. He is incarnation of God. He knows past, present, future, and everything. That knowledge is perfect. One who knows past, present, and future

perfectly, we should take knowledge from him. That is our Krsna consciousness movement, that we don't accept any knowledge from a person who is defective in so many ways." (Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.1.2 -- London, August 16, 1971)

He also described that the compiler of scripture must be liberated, thus being tri-kala-jna, or aware of the three phases of time, namely past, present and future.

"Tri-kala-jna. The sastrakara, or the compiler of the sastra, must be liberated person so that he can describe past, present and future." (Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.15.46 -- Los Angeles, December 24, 1973)

Not only Srila Vyasadeva and the great demigods like Brahma and Yamaraja, but also the great liberated sages and saintly persons are aware of the three features of time.

"This is called tri-kala-jna: past, present and future. So Yamaraja or Lord Brahma or great personalities, they, even great sages, saintly persons, they know the three features of time." (Lecture on Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.48 -- Detroit, June 14, 1976)

I have not heard of one authorized Gaudiya Vaisnava who would dare to claim that Srila Prabhupada was not a liberated soul. His awareness of the world was not limited by the gross and subtle elements.

IN BILLIONS OF UNIVERSES

To further illustrate the fact that Srila Prabhupada's awareness is not limited like ours, the reader should remember the fact that His Divine Grace is nitya-siddha, an eternally liberated associate of Radha-Krishna, who descended into this world to bestow upon us the rare gift that Mahaprabhu descended to distribute, the unparalleled prema-bhakti of the residents of Vraja.

We should not think that Srila Prabhupada has left the nitya-lila of Radha and Krishna upon his descent into this world. In fact, he is simultaneously present in the eternal pastimes in the spiritual world. In addition, every moment, as the Lord begins to display His pastimes in another one of the countless universes, Srila Prabhupada is present in every one of those universes, where in his siddha-deha he is expertly assisting the gopis in making different tasteful arrangements for the perfection of the conjugal pastimes of Radha-Krishna.

ALL MYSTIC PERFECTIONS

There are eight mystic perfections, namely anima, laghima, mahima, prakamya, prapti, isitva, vasisitva and kamavasayita, or becoming smaller than the smallest, becoming greater than the greatest, becoming lighter than the lightest, acquiring whatever one desires, experiencing any enjoyable object, manipulating the subpotencies of maya, being

unimpeded by the three modes of nature and obtaining anything from anywhere, to the highest possible limit. This constitutes very little of Srila Prabhupada's godly opulence.

"A person who is cent-percent engaged in the service of the Lord is the emblem of all knowledge. Such a devotee of the Lord in full perfection of devotional service is also perfect by the qualification of the Personality of Godhead. As such, the eightfold perfections of mystic power (asta-siddhi) constitute very little of his godly opulence." (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.6, purport)

There was no need for Srila Prabhupada to travel over the Atlantic Ocean with Jaladuta to reach Boston. He could have flown there in a moment. He could have brought Boston to India without a problem.

There was no need for Srila Prabhupada to struggle to pay the rent for Matchless Gifts, the storefront on the 26 Second Avenue. He could have snapped his fingers and created an ISKCON-planet with one hundred and eight sky-high temples.

Out of his compassion for us, he did not do so. Had he done so, who would have felt that they need to help Swamiji, who is all alone in America. Thus Srila Prabhupada awakened sweet devotion in the hearts of so many conditioned souls who felt that he needed their help in his appearance of an elderly Indian sadhu.

In his compassion to help us by engaging us in acts of devotion, the maha-bhagavata vaisnava carefully interacts with us exactly as an ordinary human being would do, sometimes saying words wrong, or misunderstanding things. This is nothing but his humanlike pastimes for our benefit.

WORDS OF VAISNAVA HUMILITY

The maha-bhagavata devotee hides his opulence and presents himself as an ordinary person. In his humility he will say so many things, setting an example of behavior for the world to follow.

[Bob:] Do you personally feel disease and sickness?

[Srila Prabhupada:] Yes.

[Bob:] Is this a result of your past karma?

[Srila Prabhupada:] Yes.

[Bob:] So one in this material world never escapes his karma completely?

[Srila Prabhupada:] Yes, he escapes. No more karma for a devotee. No more karmic reaction.

[Bob:] But you must be the best devotee.

[Srila Prabhupada:] Hm-m... No, I don't consider myself the best devotee. I am the lowest.

[Bob:] No!

[Srila Prabhupada:] You are the best devotee.

(Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers 6: The Perfect Devotee)

He may even call himself an ignorant conditioned soul.

"I am conditioned soul. I cannot say something which is absolute." (Lecture on Bhagavad-gita 2.8-12 - Los Angeles, November 27, 1968)

He who takes the humble words of the maha-bhagavata vaisnava as the final conclusion and broadcasts it all over the world is a great offender indeed.

Is it so that Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami is more sinful than Jagai and Madhai, lower than the worms in stool, and that whoever utters his name becomes sinful?

Is it so that the body of Gaura Kisor dasa Babaji Maharaja should have been dragged through the streets of Navadvipa after his disappearance, because he said so? It was his direct order! Yet, disobeying the direct order of his guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was the true disciple, and he was fiercely defending the true glory of Babaji Maharaja with a stick in his hand. Babaji Maharaja told him to never go to Calcutta, the material world. Is it so that Srila Sarasvati Thakura is now "writing over Babaji Maharaja's words with another piece of chalk", as the expression goes, disobeying his order and changing his message, as he went to Calcutta, and as he broadcast the glory of Guru and Gauranga far and wide, and as he instructed us to do? Never, never and never! He was the true disciple.

Is it so that Srila Prabhupada was not omniscient, because he stated something to that extent in one conversation? Never and never. And anyone who defends the glory of Sri Guru, establishing his inner glory, even if it were in contrast with his expressed words, is the true disciple, and only he is the true disciple, not the one who has not understood the heart of Sri Guru.

IN CONCLUSION ("Knowing Him, Everything Else Becomes Known")

"Yasmin vijñate sarvam evam vijñatam bhavati. Anyone who is a devotee of the Lord knows about the Lord to some extent, and devotional service to the Lord makes him able to know everything by the grace of the Lord. Although a devotee may apparently express himself to be ignorant, he is full of knowledge in every intricate matter." (Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.7.8, purport)

Although he may express himself to be ignorant, he is aware of everything within this universe.

"The Vedic mantras say: yasmin vijñate sarvam evam vijñatam bhavati. When the devotee sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead by his meditation, or when he sees the Lord personally, face to face, he becomes aware of everything within this universe. Indeed, nothing is unknown to him. Everything within this material world is fully

manifested to a devotee who has seen the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Srimad Bhagavatam, 8.6.9, purport)

The Vedic hymn declares: "Knowing Him, everything else becomes known." This phrase is quoted dozens of times in the books, lectures and conversations of Srila Prabhupada.

"Yasmin vijñate sarvam evam vijñatam bhavati. This Vedic hymn declares emphatically that the devotee of the Lord knows everything material and spiritual in relationship with the Lord. Devotees are not simply emotional, as is ill conceived by certain less intelligent men. Their direction is practical. They know everything that is and all the details of the Lord's domination over the different creations." (Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.7.26, purport)

He knows all that is, both material and spiritual, in relationship with the Lord. He is also in full awareness of how the suffering and enjoyment of this world is nothing but the interaction of the three modes of material nature. Omniscience does not bind the omniscient to interfere with the temporary good and evil of this world. The omniscient saint interferes in the actions and reactions of this world only in so much as it is helpful for the spiritual progress of the conditioned souls. Beyond this, all good and evil are but a mistake in perception, devoid of meaning, a conception of the conditioned mind only, as expressed in Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta, Antya-līla, 4.176:

'dvaite' bhadrabhadra-jñana, saba--'manodharma'
'ei bhala, ei manda',--ei saba 'bhrama'

"In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore, saying 'This is good' and 'This is bad' is all a mistake."

Thus, according to his best consideration for the ultimate welfare of the conditioned souls, he acts in this world, in full awareness of everything.

To establish that "knows everything" does not only mean "knows everything about bhakti and bhagavan", we shall quote another clear statement from Srila Prabhupada.

"Therefore he says susuma, humble and meek and hear. Then you'll understand God. Then you'll understand what is religion, then you'll understand everything. Not only religion and God, but everything. Yasmin vijñate sarvam evam vijñatam bhavati." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.40 -- Los Angeles, June 6, 1976)

He who considers Sri Guru to be an ordinary man in any extent, limited in his awareness as the conditioned souls, is taken to be a resident of hell. Omniscience is but a little spark of his glory.

gurusu nara-matir yasya va naraki sah

"One who thinks of the spiritual master in the disciplic succession as an ordinary man, is taken to be a resident of hell." (Padma Purana)

Let the glory of Sri Guru be established in all the three worlds.

(Anyone wishing to comment on this paper is warmly invited to contact the author at: atul.krishna@pamho.net)

This excerpt is from the, 'Omniscience quotes' file.
52. All-cognizant

Any person who can understand the feelings of all persons and incidents in all places at all times is called all-cognizant.

NOD, Chapter 22

It is described that Krsna, the enemy of Kamsa, has sixty-four transcendental qualities, and all of the ever-liberated souls who accompany the Lord have the first fifty-five of the qualities, without any doubt.

NOD, Chapter 25