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LESSONS 19-21, TEXTS 93-104: BHAGAVĀN'S IMPARTIALITY & HIS INTENTION IN REGARD TO THE CREATIVE ACT

- JīvaG has already established that Bhagavān is the cause behind the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the cosmos and yet, He is neither influenced by the modes nor undergoes any modification.
- According to the principle of driving a post [स्थूण-निखनन-न्याय], the more objections one can raise in opposition to a theory and then refute, the more firmly that theory is established. Indeed, then it becomes unshakable.
- **Thus, JīvaG raises a doubt:** If the Lord is the agent of such actions as protecting the demigods and killing the demons, then He must be influenced by the material modes; otherwise, how could He behave in the manner? He would be biased against the wicked and favoring saintly. If, on the other hand, these actions are done either by His expansions, or directly by Him, then it would contradict the principle that His actions and attributes are part of His inherent nature [स्वरूप-लक्षण].

Bhagavān acts only for the delight of His devotees [Text 93.2]

- Kuntīdevī: “You have appeared to grant bhakti-yoga to the pure-hearted paramhaṁsa sages. So how can we women see You?” [1.8.20]
- Brahmā’s statements:

प्रपञ्चं निष्प्रपञ्चोऽपि विडम्बयसि भूतले।
प्रपन्नजनतानन्दसन्दोहं प्रथितुं प्रभो॥

- “To expand the totality of bliss of those who are surrendered unto You, O Lord, You imitate the ways of the world on earth, though You are beyond all connection with the world.” [10.14.37]
- “So that I may remain untainted by my work, even as I create this universe, which is a display of His creative power, may the Lord, who fulfills the wishes of those who take refuge in Him, engage my mind in the divine play He performs, manifesting many transcendental virtues when He descends [ग्रहीत-गुणावतार ⇒ Bhagavān’s incarnations in the quality of mercy] along with His intrinsic potency, Ramā.” [3.9.23]

Devotees are self-satisfied [Text 93.3]

- [Another objection]: Since Bhagavān gives bliss to His devotees and they to Him, He (or they) must not be self-satisfied; moreover, He gives pleasure to His devotees, while neglecting others ∴ He must be biased because He acts only for the devotees' benefit and not for others.
- Response: His devotees' transcendental bodies are endowed with visuddha-sattva

Bhakti exists both in the devotee as well as in Bhagavān [Text 93.4] [9.4.63-68] ⇒

- Bhakti is the very essence of ह्लादिनि-शक्ति of the Lord, which is part of His स्वरूप-शक्ति.
- He is not ungrateful, nor He lacks self-satisfaction
- He declares that He is dependent on His devotees because they have captured His heart by their love.

JĪVAG DEFENDS BHAGAVĀN'S PARTIALITY TOWARD HIS DEVOTEES BY FIRST EXAMINING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMPASSION

COMPASSION = TRANSFORMATION OF HEART OR MIND [CITTA]

- Arises when heart directly contacts the misery of another
- When impelled by such compassion, the person moves to act for another's welfare

FEELS EMPATHY IN RELATION TO OTHERS' MISERY

**THIS EMPATHY IMPELS ONE TO REMOVE THE MISERY OF THOSE
WITH WHOM HE EMPATHIZES**

■ Bhagavān has no experience of material misery [Text 93.5]

यथा कण्टक-विद्धाङ्गो जन्तोर् नेच्छति ताम् व्याथाम्।
जीवसाम्यं गतो लिङ्गैर्न तथाविद्धकण्टकः ॥

- “One whose foot has been pricked by a thorn would not desire others to suffer such agony, having understood the sameness of all living beings [in regard to the experience of pain] through external signs, but not a person who has never been so pricked.” [10.10.14]
- It is the feeling of empathy that impels one to remove the misery of the person with whom one empathizes. For Bhagavān, however, such empathy is impossible ∴ He is not impelled by compassion, because to be compassionate the pain of another has to touch one’s own heart.
- For Bhagavān, who is eternally blissful and free from sin, there is no experience of material misery, just as there is a complete absence of darkness in light or an owl’s capacity to see the sun.

- **JĪVAG, TO THESE OBJECTIONS, REPLIES THAT THE PAIN AND PLEASURE OF A DEVOTEE ARE NOT MATERIAL. RATHER, THEY ARE BOTH MANIFESTATION OF BHAKTI, THE INTRINSIC POTENCY OF THE LORD** ∴ He experiences only His intrinsic potency while realizing the pain and pleasure of His devotee. Thus, the principle that He is unable to experience material pain and pleasure is not violated.
- One may object this contention based on Gajendra pastime ⇒ Wasn't the Lord able to empathize with the pain of Gajendra?
- JīvaG's response: While it is a fact that Gajendra was in material pain, Bhagavān did not rescue him out of empathy for his pain, but by his surrender in the form, "You are my only shelter." Thus, it is bhakti alone that impelled the Lord to rescue him.
- **Conclusion: The compassion of the Lord (or His pure devotees) manifests as a result of their bhakti and not because of the material suffering of the person so blessed.**

- His devotees, however, do experience material misery, and thus it is possible for them to empathize with the suffering of others. If a devotee is moved to bless such a person and prays to the Lord to be compassionate on him, then the Lord may bestow His blessings on that person.
- Thus to sum up, Bhagavān is complete in Himself. He acts only for the delight of His devotees, while the sustenance of the universe is but a concomitant effect of those pastimes with His devotees.

Demons killed by Bhagavān attain sāyujya-mukti—liberation by merging within the Lord’s impersonal Brahman effulgence (brahma-jyoti) [Text 93.6]

- It may appear that the Lord is punishing the wicked when He chastises them, but His actions end up in the purification of their evil tendencies. Ex: Kṛṣṇa bringing back His guru’s dead son to life.

- The boy had been killed by a demon named Śankhāsura. Bhagavān is altogether free from bias. He grants brahma-sāyujya-mukti or heaven to those who envy His devotees.

Bhagavān has no enemies [Text 94]

न ह्यस्यार्थः सुरगणैः साक्षान् निःश्रेयसात्मनः।
नैवासुरेभ्यो विद्वेषो नोद्वेगश्चागुणस्य हि॥

- “He who directly embodies the supreme welfare certainly has no purpose to fulfill from the hosts of demigods, nor does He, who is devoid of the material modes, feel any animosity toward the demons, nor is He any way fearful of them.” [7.1.2]
- This is in response to Parīkṣit’s perplexity when he heard that Lord Viṣṇu had favored Indra and killed the sons of Diti. How could the Lord act in a seemingly biased manner?

Is Bhagavān biased? [Text 95]

इति नः सुमहाभाग नारायणगुणान् प्रति।
संशयः सुमहान् जातस्तद् भवांश् छेत्तुम अर्हति॥

- “O greatly fortunate one, a very grave doubt has arisen in my mind regarding the qualities of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, which you alone are capable of resolving.” [7.1.3]

■ Hearing about devotees nourishes devotion [Text 96]

साधु पृष्टं महाराज हरेश् चरितम् अद्भुतम्।
यद् भागवत-माहात्म्यम् भगवद्-भक्ति-वर्धनम्॥

- “O Emperor, you have raised an excellent question. The exploits of Bhagavān Hari are wonderful; they also include the glories of the great devotees, which increase one’s devotion to Bhagavān.” [7.1.4]
- The reason for this is that we can relate to the lives of devotees more easily than that of Bhagavān.

Sages glorify Bhagavān and His devotees [Text 97]

गीयते परमं पुण्यं ऋषिभिर नारदादिभिः।
नत्वा कृष्णाय मुनये कथयिष्ये हरेः कथाम्॥

- “Bhagavān’s exploits are supremely pious and so are sung by great sages like Nārada. First bowing to the sage Vyāsadeva, I shall narrate a tale of Lord Hari.” [7.1.5]

Bhagavān behaves as if conditioned [Text 98]

निर्गुणोऽपि ह्यजोऽव्यक्तो भगवान् प्रकृते परः।
स्वमायागुणमाविश्य बाध्यबाधकतां गतः॥

- “Although devoid of the material modes, unborn, unmanifest, and beyond material nature, Bhagavān enters into the modes of His own Māyā and assumes the roles of oppressor [bādhaka] and oppressed [bādhya].” [7.1.6]

- Out of love for His devotees, He descends into the material world and behaves as if under the control of Māyā. He remains manifest with His six divine opulenses, even though hidden from view. JīvaG here refers Māyā as His grace.
- **Viśuddha-sattva is different from material sattva [Texts 99-104]**
 - Material sattva \Rightarrow part of material nature and subject to modification
 - Viśuddha-sattva \Rightarrow immutable and intrinsic potency of Bhagavān
 - Bhagavān endows a portion of viśuddha-sattva into the demigods and others in proportion to the needs of His pastimes.

जयकाले तु सत्त्वस्य देवर्षीन् रजसोऽसुरान्।
तमसो यक्षरक्षांसि तत्कालानुगुणोऽभजत्॥

- Śuka's response: It is time itself, corresponding to the period of prominence of the various modes, that conforms to Bhagavān (and not the other way around) \Rightarrow tat-kālānugūṇa
- Time, while always under the control of the Lord, is a specific functional capacity of Māyā that impels the beginning-less flow of the aggregate karma of the cosmos, in accordance with His will alone.

The invisible presence of Bhagavān [Text 101]

- If Bhagavān's potency is present in the demigods and demons, then why is it not perceived directly?
- Analogy of a lens concentrating the sun's rays at the focal point at which, if a piece of paper when placed, it will be burnt. Similarly, the demigods are able to assist the Lord, or the demons to oppose Him, only by the infusion of His own power. W/out it, they have no such capacity. In reality, it is a portion of His own intrinsic power, transmitted into them, that accomplishes the act of assistance or opposition.

- “Bhagavān, to whom the qualitative movements of time conform, enables the demigods and sages when sattva is supreme, the demons when rajas is predominant, and the yakṣas and rākṣas when tamas prevails.” [7.1.8]
- In this way, Bhagavān undergoes victory and defeat for the sake of the diversity of His pastimes to nourish the joy of His devotees. This is described in the narration of the churning of the Ocean of Milk:

तथा सुरानाविशदासुरेण रूपेण तेषां बलवीर्यमीरयन्।
उद्दीपयन् देवगणांश्च विष्णुर्देवेन नागेन्द्रमबोधरूपः ॥
- “Viṣṇu entered the asuras in His demonic feature, intensifying their strength and prowess, the demigods in His divine aspect, enlivening them, and the snake Vāsuki in the form of unconsciousness.” [8.7.11]
- **Doubt:** If the Lord is subject to the influence of time in which a particular mode is predominant, is the independent nature of His pastime not lost thereby? And does not this excessively close relation with that mode clearly reveal that He is partial?

Paramātmā creates for the sake of His devotees [Text 102]

यदा सिसृक्षुः पुर आत्मनः परो रजः सृजत्येषः पृथक् स्वमायया।
सत्त्वं विचित्रासु रिरंसुरिश्वरः शयिष्यमाणस्तमः ईरयत्यसौ ॥

“When the Supreme Self desires to create bodies for Himself [out of the equilibrated state of the 3 modes], He separately brings forth rajas by His Māyā potency. When ईश्वर wishes to sport in these manifold forms, He manifests sattva, and when on the verge of going to sleep [योगनिद्रा], He impels tamas.” [7.1.10]

- He evolves the cosmos specifically to revive the opportunity of serving Him for those Jīvas who were practicing devotees in the last cycle of creation and were merged with His body prior to the new cycle of creation.
- **Doubt:** Since the Supersoul resides in everyone’s heart, so what is so special about devotees among all the Jīvas? Why is it stressed that the creation is evolved specifically for the sake of the devotees?

- JīvaG’s response: Even though the Supersoul is situated in everyone’s heart, He is attached to the devotees. Ex: People may live in a city with millions of people, but their affection is only for their family and friends.
- Bhagavān protects His devotees and kills the demons—The history of Jaya & Vijay [Texts 103-104]
 - The Lord acts only for the sake of His devotees, whereas the functions of the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the cosmos are carried out solely to facilitate that purpose. He does not personally deal with His Māyā. Time is the medium thru which He executes His functions in regard to Māyā. Time is His subtle effort, or His volitional act [चेष्टा].
 - Śuka exemplifies this principle of the Lord’s mercy on Prahlāda, Jaya and Vijaya: “O King, the celestial sage, Nārada, affectionately narrated a history on this very matter to King Yudhiṣṭhira in response to his questions at the time of great sacrifice.” [7.1.12]

- Upon being cursed by the 4 Kumāras (all because of the arrangement of the Lord Himself), the Lord's personal associates, Jaya & Vijaya, became the formidable demons, Hiraṇyakaśipu and Hiraṇyākṣa. Prahlāda was a great devotee of the Lord and the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu, who was killed by Lord Nṛsimhadeva because he had been torturing his innocent son Prahlāda on account of the latter's devotion to Lord Viṣṇu.
- Both of these demons were able to oppose and fight Bhagavān solely because they had been empowered by Him. The Lord killed both of them to protect His devotees, i.e., Mother Earth and Prahlāda. Both of the demons were ultimately reestablished in their eternal service as doorkeepers in Vaikuṇṭha. Externally it seemed like the Lord was biased against the demons, but in reality He was playing exclusively with His own potency, which He had invested in them for their pleasure and for the pleasure of His other devotees.

QUIZ QUESTIONS

- 1. Since Bhagavan is known to protect the demigods and kill the demons, how could He justifiably claim Himself being equal to all, or impartial? Won't He be then influenced by the material modes; otherwise, how could He behave in this manner? Isn't He favorably biased towards His devotees at the expense of the lives of the demons, who are inimical towards Him and His devotees?**
- 2. If Bhagavan is omnipotent, why does He not remove the sufferings of humanity?**
- 3. If Bhagavan has no self-experience of material misery in any form, how could we expect Him to be compassionate w/out having been touched by another's pain? If defies the very meaning of the word empathy, doesn't it?**

- 4. So what is the overriding feature of the manifestation of Bhagavan's compassion? [THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCLUSION WE SHALL EVER LEARN FROM THE ENTIRE SRI PARAMATMA-SANDARBHA]**
- 5. When Bhagavan descends onto earth, it seems as if He is also under Maya's grip. Otherwise, how is it that the demons are able to oppose Him, and that His devotees are tormented by the demons? This makes it seem as if the devotees also undergo their karmic outcome, doesn't it? Seemingly, this negates His own promise, "sarva-dharman..."**

- 6. After hearing that the two sons of Diti were killed by Varahadeva and Nrsimhadeva, none other than King Pariksit himself was intrigued by the behavior of Bhagavan. He presented his doubt to Sukadeva Gosvami. What 3 qualities of Bhagavan he lists that imply Bhagavan's unbiased nature?**
- 7. It is a known fact that devotees too do undergo birth and the normal tribulations of human life, perhaps much more severely so. They too must face problems and have to behave and struggle, even while dedicating their entire lives for the sake of the Lord's mission. In what way, by hearing about them even more so than about the Lord's own pastimes, it teaches us how to face various life challenges in a way that is commensurate with devotion?**

- 8. If Bhagavan's potency is present in the demigods and demons, then why is it not perceived directly?**
- 9. Since it is a fact that Paramatma is situated in everyone's heart, then what is so special about devotees among all living beings? Why is it then stressed that the creation is evolved specifically for the sake of the devotees?**
- 10. What is the purport of the history of Jaya and Vijaya and its resultant conclusion that Bhagavan is neither biased nor cruel, even though He sometimes appears to be so?**