

### Transformation of Matter into Spirit

Ram, Shyam and Amit were all excited about their MMC meetings! Soon after they went to the hostel, they shared all about their meeting with Rishi Sir with their other hostel friends. Of course many of them didn't show as much interest as they had expected from them. Nevertheless the Mantra Meditation Circle (MMC) started in their college hostel with another 3 boys joining them. They used to perform the mantra meditation one round every day, read the 'Beyond Birth and Death' book provided by 'Rishi Sir' and also distribute the Kaja prasadam to everyone present during the meeting. Shyam was eagerly looking forward for their 'Vedic Science Club' meeting. Shyam had asked a very important question the day they had met. Although he was enjoying the Kaja prasadam every day and was seeing the miracle of prasadam as at least three of his friends got hooked onto MMC only because of the prasadam, he was still not clear about what this process of offering food and taking the remnants was. He was eager to find out in the next meeting. Finally the Saturday, the first day of their Vedic Science Club meeting arrived, and as promised 'Rishi Sir' was there in the hostel promptly at 5.30PM with some special prasadam! It was a really special surprise as Rishi had brought a huge cake with the icing letters of 'Vedic Science Club @ ABC-Engg.' At least another four more guys joined just at the sight of that 'special prasadam' and the first meeting saw 10 members totally joining the 'Vedic Science Club.'

As all the boys settled down, Rishi started the session after having a brief introduction of the newcomers. Shyam was eager to get answer to his question, he stated right away:

**Shyam:** Rishi Sir, Thank you very much for coming all the way taking such trouble to start a Vedic Science Club in our college hostel too.

**Rishi:** Oh that's just part of my duty as a volunteer of BASICS Foundation. So, what was the topic of discussion we decided upon?

**Shyam:** Oh I am eagerly awaiting the answer to that Sir. We decided to discuss about, "Why do we offer food to God who does not eat anyway?"

**Rishi:** Oh right! That's a very relevant question especially today as I have this huge cake prasadam!

**Amit:** Tell us, we are all ears to it!

**Rishi:** Let me begin with a true story. Once the Hare Krishnas organized a Fest in Canada in McGill University. There was a widespread advertisement for the program to get as many students. The ads and banners were all over the place, which said,

**"See matter transforming into spirit! The Hare Krishnas are here!"**

*Lecture cum Live Demonstration: Matter will transform into spirit*

So a big crowd of students gathered in the Hall on the announced date and time! Everyone was very eager to see how matter would transform into spirit! Everyone wanted to see the Live Demonstration! But as the students gathered a speaker came up on the stage and began a lecture on Bhagavad-Gita for one hour! All the students were getting restless as the lecture went on! Everyone was thinking when the lecture will end and when that live demonstration of transformation of matter into spirit will happen. Just then a Hare Krishna devotee came up the stage and to the Deity of Krishna which was placed there, with a large plate, filled with sixteen different items of delicious foodstuffs. Then he covered the plate with a cloth and covered the Deity with a curtain. Then he came out and announced to the gathering, "Now the process of transformation of matter into spirit will begin. Please await and watch for yourself." The students started hearing the ringing of a bell. They could hear some mantras being chanted behind the curtain. Everyone was eagerly waiting for the miraculous transformation. People could not see anything but could smell something delicious! So they guessed something very special was happening. The lecture ended, the curtain opened, plate was intact, and the devotee came out, and picked up the plate and started walking out! Then the speaker announced, "Now, after this mystical process that went on behind the curtain, the matter has transformed into spirit! This has become sacred food, prasadam!" Immediately one of the students got up and complained, "Hey! Come on! You said you will transform matter into spirit! You must do that!" The devotee replied, "Well... If you want..." and he removed the cloth covering the plate and revealed the contents of the plate to all the students, *and they saw that it was filled with samosas, chutney, pulav, rasagulla, jalebi, paratha, paneer sabji etc, etc, etc, totally 16 items in the plate;* and then he continued, "now I could actually explain to you how this food which was matter got transformed into spirit by speaking for the next two hours, and those interested to hear that explanation can come into the next room, and others who feel they don't need to know the explanation can start taking prasadam immediately!" Immediately, all the students caught hold of the complaining student and said, "Hey! We have understood how this food has got transformed into spirit! What is your problem!? You can't understand such a simple thing? It has transformed, can't you see? Of course it has transformed! Otherwise, how it will look like this? ☺" Then they turned to the devotee and said,

“Sir, we believe, we believe! Don’t mind this fellow, he is a bit dull headed, you don’t worry about him! Please start let’s start taking prasadam immediately! ☺ ☺ ☺”

*(Ram, Shyam, Amit and all other boys have a hearty laughter along with Rishi)*

So from this story we can understand that actually this transformation of seemingly material food simply cannot be explained by theory, it has to be practically experienced by tasting it, and then the transformation will happen within us at the consciousness level!

**Shyam:** But Rishi Sir, what is the logic behind this offering? It is still a question which is unsolved to me as to why we have to offer food to God who does not eat anyway.

**Rishi:** The process of offering food to God in the form of naivedya is a transcendental process. One need not expect that the Lord will grossly eat the food and empty the plate when we offer it to Him. Actually, The Supreme Lord is unlimited and is complete. Srila Prabhupada explains in a lecture on Bhagavad Gita “Now, in the Brahma-saṁhitā Kṛṣṇa is described as acintya-guṇa-svarupam, “the reservoir of all inconceivable, transcendental qualities.” We cannot conceive of Kṛṣṇa's qualities. For example, in the Bhagavad-gītā Kṛṣṇa says, patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtaṁ aśnāmi: “If one offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water with devotion, I will eat it.” How is Kṛṣṇa eating? That we cannot see. But He is eating. Therefore His qualities are acintya, inconceivable.

**Amit:** Rishi Sir, But how does Lord eat? What is this ‘inconceivable’ eating?

**Rishi:** Our conception of eating is that we can eat through the mouth. Whatever eatables are offered to us, we pick them up and put them into our mouth. This is our process of eating. But because Kṛṣṇa is acintya, inconceivable, His eating process is different from ours. As stated elsewhere in the Brahma-saṁhitā, aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti. “Every limb of His body can work as any other limb.” With our eyes we can see; if we close our eyes we cannot see. But even if Kṛṣṇa closes His eyes, He can see everything with His hand. Now, this is inconceivable. So, we offer the food to Kṛṣṇa, and He eats it by seeing it. He can eat through His eyes, just as we can eat through our mouth.

**Shyam:** Okay, granted that Lord can eat through His eyes. But in that case, how can the plate still remain full after He has eaten? He should have emptied the plate by His eating isn’t it? If He has eaten the food, why is it lying as it was offered in the beginning?

**Rishi:** Good question. That is answered in the Īsopaniṣad : pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate” If the complete whole is taken from the complete whole, still the complete whole remains.” In other words, Kṛṣṇa can take the whole plate of food, but still the whole plate remains. That is His inconceivable, transcendental quality.”

**Ram:** Yes, This explanation does appeal to the logic, Rishi Sir. Since God is unlimited and supremely powerful, it is possible for him to keep the whole even after he has eaten.

**Shyam:** But still the question is, why should we offer food to Him at all? After all, everything in the world belongs to Him, and He has offered it to us for our survival and enjoyment. So what sense does it make to again offer back His own property to Him?

**Rishi:** Good point Shyam! Let me explain by drawing a parallel from this analogy to explain why we should offer food to God. We must all have experienced this in our childhood. Any child’s parents are very fond of their own child, and are always eager to provide the child with some enjoyment so it remains happy. For instance, a father buys a big box of chocolates sometimes for his child, because he knows that the child loves it and would enjoy eating it. When the father offers the chocolate box to the child, what does a good child do?

**Amit:** It says, “Thank You dad!”

**Ram:** An even more refined child that loves its father very much would also offer some chocolates back to its father saying, “You too please have it Dad!”

**Rishi:** But does this mean that the father really takes the chocolates and eats it for himself?

**Amit:** No! He bought the entire box only for the child’s enjoyment! He is not interested in eating those chocolates!

**Rishi:** But, that enjoyment and satisfaction, that joy he feels by this reciprocation of love by his child is heartwarming to the father. He is touched by the child’s innocent offering in love, isn’t it? Although his eyes would brim with tears of joy, what would he say?

**Amit:** “Thank you very much child! You enjoy it; I bought it just for you!”

**Rishi:** Similarly, The Supreme Lord has made everything in this world for the enjoyment of His children, all living entities. He is not interested in any of this creation. But when the living entities recognize the facilities of the world to be gifts of Supreme Lord and offer them back in love and gratitude, Lord accepts such loving feelings of reciprocation, called Bhakti or devotion. Of course, Lord is not hungry for our offering of food, but he does hanker for our loving reciprocation, for that love we give benefits us and make us completely joyful by connecting ourselves with the complete whole.

This is the reason why Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad-Gita 9.26,

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam  
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati  
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam  
aśnāmi prayatātmanah*

*If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit and water, I will accept it.*

Lord specifically wants our love and devotion, not just the physical offering, and when we do offer these leaf, flower, fruit and water, he accepts it and returns it back to us as His remnants. This food is called prasadam- or sanctified remnants of The Supreme Lord. Such food has the capacity to bring about great transformation in our consciousness and make us into pure devotees of the Lord.

Let's go back to the analogy of father and the child. If the child is not at all refined or well mannered, but is just a selfish one, what would it do?

**Shyam:** It would probably just grab the box of chocolates and without even an acknowledgement or word of thanks, it would start devouring the chocolates.

**Rishi:** What would such a child be called and how does its father deal with it?

**Shyam:** It would only be called a brat and would rightly be disciplined by the father for its own good. It would be taught by the father to acknowledge the gift, to say 'thanks' and to even offer a chocolate back in courtesy.

**Rishi:** Similarly, Lord Krishna states in Bhagavad-Gita about the need for every living entity to offer sacrifice (yajna) and then partake of its remnants, lest they be covered by sin. He says in BG 3.13

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo  
mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ  
bhuñjate te tv aghaṁ pāpā  
ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

*The devotees of the Lord are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered first for sacrifice. Others, who prepare food for personal sense enjoyment, verily eat only sin.*

Therefore, unless we recognize the gifts of the world, the Supreme Lord has offered to us and offer it back to Him in sacrifice we are not civilized, and without being civilized we cannot be happy in a human society, because without civilization, humans are no better than animals.

**Shyam:** Thank you very much Rishi Sir. Every example you have stated is so logical and has solved all my questions!

**Rishi:** Don't thank me. Thank Srila Prabhupada, for he has so clearly explained this Vedic Science in his books. I urge you to further scrutinizingly read this booklet 'Beyond Birth and Death' as part of your daily MMC meeting and I am sure all your questions will be solved. You can also make note of some doubts which may arise in the course of your reading and I will answer them in the 'Vedic Science Club' meetings every week.

**Amit:** Sir! The class you gave was very nice. The logic is very appealing to my intelligence, but most importantly let's do it practically! Sir, The cake! ☺

(Everyone laughs out aloud☺☺☺)

**Rishi:** Okay guys! Let's now have Krishna Prasadam!