BG 2.22

väsäàsi jérëäni yathä vihäya naväni gåhëäti naro 'paräëi

tathä çaréräëi vihäya jérëäny anyäni saàyäti naväni dehé

As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.

PURPORT

Change of body by the atomic individual soul is an accepted fact. Even the modern scientists who do not believe in the existence of the soul, but at the same time cannot explain the source of energy from the heart, have to accept continuous changes of body which appear from childhood to boyhood and from boyhood to youth and again from youth to old age. From old age, the change is transferred to another body. This has already been explained in a previous verse (2.13).

Transference of the atomic individual soul to another body is made possible by the grace of the Supersoul. The Supersoul fulfills the desire of the atomic soul as one friend fulfills the desire of another. The Vedas, like the Muëòaka Upaniñad, as well as the Çvetäçvatara Upaniñad, compare the soul and the Supersoul to two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird (Kåñëa) is simply watching His friend. Of these two birds—although they are the same in quality—one is captivated by the fruits of the material tree, while the other is simply witnessing the activities of His friend. Kåñëa is the witnessing bird, and Arjuna is the eating bird. Although they are friends, one is still the master and the other is the servant. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the atomic soul is the cause of one's changing his position from one tree to another, or from one body to another. The jéva soul is struggling very hard on the tree of the material body, but as soon as he agrees to accept the other bird as the supreme spiritual master—as Arjuna agreed to do by voluntary surrender unto Kåñëa for instruction—the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentations. Both the Muëòaka Upaniñad (3.1.2) and Çvetäçvatara Upaniñad (4.7) confirm this:

samäne våkñe puruño nimagno 'néçayä çocati muhyamänaù

juñöaà yadä paçyaty anyam éçam asya mahimänam iti véta-çokaù

"Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord and knows His glories—at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties." Arjuna has now turned his face towards his eternal friend, Kåñëa, and is understanding the Bhagavad-gétä from Him. And thus, hearing from Kåñëa, he can understand the supreme glories of the Lord and be free from lamentation.

Arjuna is advised herewith by the Lord not to lament for the bodily change of his old grandfather and his teacher. He should rather be happy to kill their bodies in the righteous fight so that they may be cleansed at once of all reactions from various bodily activities. One who lays down his life on the sacrificial altar, or in the proper battlefield, is at once cleansed of bodily reactions and promoted to a higher status of life. So there was no cause for Arjuna's lamentation.

Bg 2.23

nainaà chindanti çasträëi nainaà dahati pävakaù

na cainaà kledayanty äpo na çoñayati märutaù

The soul can never be cut to pieces by any weapon, nor burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind.

PURPORT

All kinds of weapons—swords, flame weapons, rain weapons, tornado weapons, etc.—are unable to kill the spirit soul. It appears that there were many kinds of weapons made of earth, water, air, ether, etc., in addition to the modern weapons of fire. Even the nuclear weapons of the modern age are classified as fire weapons, but formerly there were other weapons made of all different types of material elements. Firearms were counteracted by water weapons, which are now unknown to modern science. Nor do modern scientists have knowledge of tornado weapons. Nonetheless, the soul can never be cut into pieces, nor annihilated by any number of weapons, regardless of scientific devices.

The Mäyävädé cannot explain how the individual soul came into existence simply by ignorance and consequently became covered by the illusory energy. Nor was it ever possible to cut the individual souls from the original Supreme Soul; rather, the individual souls are eternally separated parts of the Supreme Soul. Because they are atomic individual souls eternally (sanätana), they are prone to be covered by the illusory energy, and thus they become separated from the association of the Supreme Lord, just as the sparks of a fire, although one in quality with the fire, are prone to be extinguished when out of the fire. In the Varäha Puräëa, the living entities are described as separated parts and parcels of the Supreme. They are eternally so, according to the Bhagavad-gétä also. So, even after being liberated from illusion, the living entity remains a separate identity, as is evident from the teachings of the Lord to Arjuna. Arjuna became liberated by the knowledge received from Kåñëa, but he never became one with Kåñëa.

Bg 2.24

acchedyo 'yam adähyo 'yam akledyo 'çoñya eva ca

This individual soul is unbreakable and insoluble, and can be neither burned nor dried. He is everlasting, present everywhere, unchangeable, immovable and eternally the same.

PURPORT

All these qualifications of the atomic soul definitely prove that the individual soul is eternally the atomic particle of the spirit whole, and he remains the same atom eternally, without change. The theory of monism is very difficult to apply in this case, because the individual soul is never expected to become one homogeneously. After liberation from material contamination, the atomic soul may prefer to remain as a spiritual spark in the effulgent rays of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but the intelligent souls enter into the spiritual planets to associate with the Personality of Godhead.

The word sarva-gata ("all-pervading") is significant because there is no doubt that living entities are all over God's creation. They live on the land, in the water, in the air, within the earth and even within fire. The belief that they are sterilized in fire is not acceptable, because it is clearly stated here that the soul cannot be burned by fire. Therefore, there is no doubt that there are living entities also in the sun planet with suitable bodies to live there. If the sun globe is uninhabited, then the word sarva-gata—"living everywhere"—becomes meaningless. [VTE]

Bg 2.25

avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam avikäryo 'yam ucyate

tasmäd evaà viditvainaà nänuçocitum arhasi

It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable and immutable. Knowing this, you should not grieve for the body.

PURPORT

As described previously, the magnitude of the soul is so small for our material calculation that he cannot be seen even by the most powerful microscope; therefore, he is invisible. As far as the soul's existence is concerned, no one can establish his existence experimentally beyond the proof of çruti, or Vedic wisdom. We have to accept this truth, because there is no other source of understanding the existence of the soul, although it is a fact by perception. There are many things we have to accept solely on grounds of superior authority. No one can deny the existence of his father, based upon the authority of his mother. There is no source of understanding the identity of the father except by the authority of the mother. Similarly, there is no source of understanding the soul except by studying the Vedas. In other words, the soul is inconceivable by human experimental knowledge. The soul is consciousness and conscious—that also is the statement of the Vedas, and we have to accept that. Unlike the bodily changes, there is no change in the soul. As eternally unchangeable, the soul remains atomic in comparison to the infinite Supreme Soul. The Supreme Soul is infinite, and the atomic soul is infinitesimal. Therefore, the infinitesimal soul, being unchangeable, can never become equal to the infinite soul, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This concept is repeated in the Vedas in different ways just to confirm the stability of the conception of the soul. Repetition of something is necessary in order that we understand the matter thoroughly, without error.