

Fate, Free Will AND THE Law of Karma

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Subject: Subj KARMA

Hare Krsna Prabhus!

Since there has recently been a lot of discussion about karma and free will I thought I would post the following segments which are from a much longer philosophy paper. They are of particular interest because they reflect the opinions of Baladeva Vidyabhusana's commentary of Vedanta-sutra - Govinda Bhasya. I must apologize because the foot notes seemed to have disappeared in the transition to ASCII. However it does not detract much from the contents.

FATE, FREE WILL AND THE LAW OF KARMA

In the following section we will examine what the sastras have to say about karma; and in what way if any, a devotee is under the influence of his past karma.

In the ancient Mediterranean world there was a long standing philosophical battle between fatalists and proponents of free will. It would be inappropriate to discuss their viewpoints, but suffice it to say that such a controversy clearly indicates an imperfect understanding of the law of karma.

The viewpoint of Vedic Astrology is that life is an interplay of both fate and free will. Our fate being the reaction to our previous exercise of free will. In our lives we are often faced with choices presented to us by our environment. We have the freedom to chose between a and b, but once that decision has been made we must accept the reaction to that decision. The reaction may be immediate or it may be delayed by thousands of lifetimes. In any case, the reaction, pleasant or unpleasant, will come at the appointed time determined by Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As Canakya Pandit says, Just as a calf can find its mother in a herd of 10,000 cows; in

the same way your actions [reactions] will find you. The reactions to life's actions are inescapable by everyone except those who are devoted to God in bhakti-yoga. When a karmic reaction ripens and fructifies it creates a new situation, an environment that presents you with more choices on which to exercise your free will. This of course brings us full circle. Thus life is an interplay of both fate and free will as previously stated.

EXAMPLE

Let me give an example of how this works. Suppose someone is born into a poor family because of his bad karma from a previous lifetime. This person is raised in a ghetto beset with crime and poverty. Let us say, hypothetically, that he has two choices. He can blame society for the evils he faces and thus try to victimize society by taking to a life of crime to acquire wealth. Or he can take responsibility for his situation as he finds it and try to better himself by education and honest endeavor; which is hard work and unglamorous. Suppose he chooses the first option of crime and robs several institutions. Eventually he will get caught (if not killed first) and sent to jail, which will be a reaction for his criminal behavior. But even while in jail he still has options, though more limited than those of a free man. He can choose to be a hardened criminal or to be a model prisoner and go straight. Each choice will have a reaction. Thus we can see that life is an intricate interplay of fate (karma) and free will.

DEFINITION OF KARMA

The word karma is derived etymologically in Sanskrit from the root word kri, to create, to make. Thus karma relates both to action and the fruits or results of our actions. The Bhagavad-gita 8.3, gives a concise definition of karma: The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The indestructible, transcendental living entity is called Brahman, and his eternal nature is called adhyatma, the self. Action pertaining to the material bodies of the living entities is called karma, or fruitive activities.

We are all familiar with the classification of good karma, bad karma [vikarma], and naiskarma or akarma [non-action, devotional service]. But from the Vedic literature many details are supplied that most of us are ignorant of. The following information on karma is paraphrased from the Govinda Bhasya of Baladeva Vidyabhusana.

CATEGORIES OF KARMA

Karma is divided up into two categories; sancita karma (stored up), and kriyamana karma (newly created); sancita karma is further subdivided into another two categories namely anarabdha karma (effects which have not yet

begun) and prarabdha karma (functional karma which is already acting). It is questioned whether or not these two karmas (sancita & kriyamana) are destroyed and made non-adhering respectively, through the majesty of the divine wisdom. The purvapaksin (anti-thesis) objects that neither the kriyamana karma can be loosened, nor the sancita karma burned up by vidya because it is well known that: The karma is never exhausted or weakened in its force even after a lapse of hundreds of millions of eons. It is exhausted only when its consequences are suffered. Verily one must suffer the consequences of his acts, whether they be good or bad. [no source given]

The Vedanta-sutra 4.1.13 refutes this view: On obtaining that [vidya] there take place the non-clinging of works done in the present life, and the destruction of works stored up which were done in the past life. Because this is so declared [in the Upanisads].

When a nirapeksa devotee (totally detached mahabhagavata) gets brahma vidya (God realization) then his kriyamana karmas cannot cling to him for the Chandogya Upanisad 4.14.3 says: As water doesn't cling to a lotus leaf, so no sinful act clings to one who knows Him thus!

And Chandogya Up. 5.24.3 says: As the tuft of the isika reed entering into the fire is quickly reduced to ashes, thus indeed are burnt all his sins, who knowing the Lord, thus offers an Agnihotra.

The doubt then arises as to whether it is only the sinful reactions that are destroyed but not the pious reactions, because the pious acts are done in accordance with scripture. Thus it is not correct that as soon as vidya originates a man gets mukti. For, if he has un-exhausted good works; he must go to Svarga, etc.

The siddhanta sets aside this view in the next sutra, VS 4.1.14: The same is the case with the other [namely, the good deeds]; the stored-up good deeds are destroyed and the good done in the present life do not cling to the man. He verily gets mukti on the falling off of his prarabdha karmas.

Baladeva comments that vidya destroys reactions to good works also. No doubt, good deeds are done in conformity with the laws of the Vedas; but it cannot be said that, therefore, they are not in conflict with vidya. They are opposed to vidya, in this much that their result is to produce heavenly joy and svargic bliss; while the fruit of vidya is release; and as svarga and mukti cant co-exist together; therefore punya, though Vaidic, is opposed to vidya. He further goes on to say that from a Vedantic point of view even punya is papa. And that in the Chandogya Upanisad 8.4.1 the word papa is applied to both duskrtam and sukrtam: This self is a bridge (refuge) and a support, so that these worlds (may be kept in their proper place and) may not clash with each

other. Night and day do not pass that bridge, nor do old age, nor death, nor grief, nor the good deeds, nor the evil deeds (of men). All evils turn back from Him, because He is free from all evils. He is Brahman, the Great Refuge.

Also Brhad-aranyaka Up. 4.4.22 says: Him (who knows), these two do not overcome, whether he says that for some reason he has done evil, or for some reason he has done good, he overcomes both, and neither what he has done, nor what he has omitted to do, burns (affects) him.

Consequently in the Gita it is stated that all action, whether good or bad, are destroyed when knowledge is obtained. As a blazing fire turns wood into ashes, o Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions to material activities. (BG 4.37)

The word sarvakarmani is generic and refers to good deeds also. Thus it is established that both kinds of punya as well as both kinds of papa are respectively destroyed and made unclinging by vidya. And with the destruction of the prarabdha karmas the man gets mukti. Therefore it is not a meaningless statement to say that on the origination of vidya a man gets mukti.

END OF PART 1, CONTINUED

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Subject: KARMA CONTINUED

KARMA DESTROYED BY VIDYA

Now we come up to a very important point in the discussion of karma and its destruction by the action of vidya, the divine wisdom. Since vidya destroys both sorts of sancita karmas, namely good and bad, then it must reasonably follow that the body of the man should fall from him, because the body is the effect of such karmas; and when the karmas are destroyed, the body naturally falls off. If this be so, then anyone who gets divine knowledge, must immediately pass out of this world, and so the teaching of the divine knowledge by the knowers of Brahman becomes an impossibility.

As we mentioned before the sancita karma has two subcategories: prarabdha and anarabdha; one which has commenced its fruition in this world, and the other which has not. The doubt is then raised as to whether both of these kinds of sancita karma are destroyed by vidya, or only the anarabdha karmas?

The purvapaksin maintains that in the Brhad-aranyaka Up. 4.4.22 already quoted above it is said that both these are destroyed. No exception is mentioned in regards to the prarabdha karma; and because the action of vidya is uniform, therefore both sorts of sancita, mature as well as immature, are destroyed by

vidya. The siddhanta is established in the next sutra of VS which sets the erroneous view of the purvapaksin aside.

VS 4.1.15: But only the immature karmas of the former lives, namely, those karmas whose effect has not yet begun, are destroyed by knowledge; because that is the limit of the life of the jnanin; (namely) the limit of the life of the wise is the period over which his former karmas which have begun to produce their effects extend.

It is said in the sruti that a man lives on even after acquiring vidya, if his prarabdha karmas are not exhausted. The Chandogya Upanisad 6.14.2 says: For him there is a delay only for as long as he is not delivered from his body. Also in SB 10.87.40 it is said: When a person realizes You, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is You alone who control this good and bad fortune...

PRARABDHA KARMA CONTINUES

This shows that it is the will of the Lord, that the man who has obtained the divine wisdom, should go on living in this body, so long as his prarabdha karmas are not exhausted. Vidya is supremely powerful and can destroy all karmas but out of deference to the will of Sri Krsna she doesnt destroy the prarabdha karma for we see that divinely illumined sages, full masters of divine wisdom, are living on this earth and their bodies do not fall down as soon as they get vidya. We further see that they teach others and are not inactive, consequently, we must admit that it is the will of the Lord that such men should continue to live, in order to spread knowledge of brahma vidya among mankind.

It should be noted that it may take more than one life to exhaust the prarabdha karma, even in the case of a nirapeksa devotee. This is dealt with in VS 3.4.52: Similar is the case with the mukti. There is no invariable rule of the time of its fruition, because it depends upon well ascertained conditions, because it depends upon well ascertained conditions.

Moksa which is the characteristic fruit of vidya may be delayed till the next life if prarabdha karmas remain that must be worked out. If there are no prarabdha karmas to be worked out, then mukti takes place in that very life. But if there are prarabdha karmas which are not exhausted in one life, then the man must take another birth to get mukti; for mukti can never be partial. Why do we say so? Because the condition of mukti is a definite condition, fully ascertained in the sastras. Thus in the Chandogya Up 6.14.2, it is laid down that a man who finds a guru obtains the knowledge; but there is delay in his getting mukti so long as his prarabdha karmas are not exhausted: In the

same way does a man who finds the guru, obtains the knowledge. For him there is delay only so long as his prarabdha karmas are not exhausted. Then he reaches the perfect.

MUKTI AND THE JIVAN MUKTA

This Chandogya text shows a well determined rule of mukti that the man who has vidya, obtains mukti, not immediately, but on the exhaustion of his prarabdha karmas. There is a similar rule laid down in the smṛti sastra call Narayana Adhyatma: The man who has acquired vidya gets immortality. There is no doubt in it. He goes to mukti at once when his prarabdha karmas are exhausted; but if his karmas are not exhausted, then he has to take many births, and on the exhaustion of such karma he goes to the world of Hari.

No doubt it is a rule that vidya exhausts all karmas, yet the force of prarabdha karma is not exhausted and remains active because the Lord has so willed it. What, however, is the state of consciousness of a mahabhagavata, and how is his experience of prarabdha karma different from mine? In Bhagavad-gita 6.20-23 Kṛṣṇa gives the following description of spiritual absorption:

In the stage of perfection called trance, or samadhi, ones mind is completely restrained from the material activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by ones ability to see the self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness, realized through transcendental senses. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

Here we see the condition of a jivanmukta, one who is liberated while still embodied. Though he is encased in the gross and subtle body which is the product and enjoyer of prarabdha karma still he doesnt suffer because he is experiencing spiritual ecstasy. He is free. It is the gross and subtle body that suffers and enjoys the karmas. So ultimately he is not subjected to karma, but is free.

There are many examples from sastra of great devotees who were beyond the body and lived on another dimension. Lord Caitanya would fall into a divine swoon and be transported to Vraja to witness the sporting activities of the gopis with Kṛṣṇa. Meanwhile, in the external world His associates would be trying their best to bring Him back; when they succeeded He was often displeased. In the life of Syamananda we have another vivid example. When Syamananda was being examined by his guru, Hrdaya-Caitanya, about the change of his name from

Duhkhi Krsna to Syamananda, and his new tilak, Syamananda went into meditation and in his siddhasvarupa approached Radharani to resolve his problem. Another example is that of Haridasa Thakura whose body was beaten, yet because he was not on the bodily platform, he remained unaffected.

Our Srila Prabhupada was also on such a platform. Hari Sauri Prabhu informs me that once while he was serving Srila Prabhupada he noticed that Srila Prabhupadas jaw was swollen because of a toothache, yet Prabhupada didn't complain. A few days later Hari Sauri noticed that the swelling was reduced and inquired from Prabhupada if his toothache was gone. Prabhupada replied that in the night a tooth had fallen out. On searching Prabhupadas bed he found the tooth and was amazed to see that it had a huge hole in it. Anyone else with such a rotted tooth would have been in extreme agony, yet Prabhupada was phased.

Text 362690: 17-Mar-94 Shyamasundara.AC BSP@com-link.org
Subject: KARMA CONCLUSION

What is the mechanism that allows a mahabhagavata to be encased in a body yet be unaware of it? This is explained in the Srimad Bhagavatam 3.28.34-39:

By following this course, the yogi gradually develops pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari. In the course of his progress in devotional service, the hairs of his body stand erect through excessive joy, and he is constantly bathed in a stream of tears occasioned by intense love. Gradually, even the mind, which he used as a means to attract the Lord, as one attracts a fish to a hook, withdraws from material activity.

When the mind is thus completely freed from all material contamination and detached from material objectives, it is just like the flame of a lamp. At that time the mind is actually dovetailed with that of the Supreme Lord and is experienced as one with Him because it is freed from the interactive flow of the material qualities.

Thus situated in the highest transcendental stage, the mind ceases from all material reaction and becomes situated in its own glory, transcendental to all material conceptions of happiness and distress. At that time the yogi realizes the truth of his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He discovers that pleasure and pain as well as their interactions, which he attributed to his own self, are actually due to the false ego, which is a product of ignorance.

Because he has achieved his real identity, the perfectly realized soul has no conception of how the material body is moving or acting, just as an

intoxicated person cannot understand whether or not he has clothing on his body. The body of such a liberated yogi, along with the senses, is taken charge of by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it functions until its destined activities are finished. The liberated devotee, being awake to his constitutional position and thus situated in samadhi, the highest perfectional stage of yoga, does not accept the by-products of the material body as his own. Thus he considers his bodily activities to be like the activities of a body in a dream.

Purport to 3.28.38:

The following questions may be posed. As long as a the liberated soul is in contact with the body, why don't the bodily activities affect him? Doesn't he actually become contaminated by the action and reaction of material activities? In answer to such questions, this verse explains that the material body of a liberated soul is taken charge of by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is not acting due to the living force of the living entity; it is simply acting as a reaction to past activities. Even after being switched off, an electric fan moves for some time. That movement is not due to the electric current, but is a continuation of the last movement; similarly, although a liberated soul appears to be acting just like an ordinary man, his actions are to be accepted as the continuation of past activities. In a dream one may see himself expanded through many bodies, but when awake he can understand that those bodies were all false. Similarly, although a liberated soul has the by-products of the body - wife, children, house, etc. - he does not identify himself with those bodily expansions. He knows that they are all products of the material dream. The gross body is made up of the gross elements of matter, and the subtle body is made of mind, intelligence, ego and contaminated consciousness. If one can accept the subtle body of a dream as false and not identify oneself with that body, then certainly an awake person need not identify with the gross body. As one who is awake has no connection with the activities of the body in a dream, an awakened, liberated soul has no connection with the activities of the present body. In other words, because he is acquainted with his constitutional position, he never accepts the bodily concept of life.

Text 39 Because of great affection for family and wealth, one accepts a son and some money as his own, and due to affection for the material body, one thinks that it is his. But actually, as one can understand that his family and wealth are different from him, the liberated soul can understand that he and his body are not the same.

There are two similar verses in the 11th canto.

Just as a drunken man does not notice if he is wearing his coat or shirt,

similarly, one who is perfect in self-realization and who has thus achieved his eternal identity does not notice whether the temporary body is sitting or standing. Indeed, if by Gods will the body is finished or if by Gods will he obtains a new body, a self-realized soul does not notice, just as a drunken man does not notice the situation of his outward dress. The material body certainly moves under the control of supreme destiny and therefore must continue to live along with the senses and vital air as long as ones karma is in effect. A self-realized soul, however, who is awakened to the absolute reality and who is thus highly situated in the perfect stage of yoga, will never again surrender to the material body and its manifold manifestations, knowing it to be just like a body visualized in a dream. (SB 11.13.36-37)

PERFECT SOUL UNAWARE OF HIS BODY

Here we see that the perfect God-intoxicated yogi is unaware of whether or not he is wearing a body! Just like a liquor-intoxicated man is unaware of whether or not he is wearing clothing. In such a perfectly detached mood Krsna takes charge of the bodys functions until its destined activities are finished and as long as ones karma is in effect. These statements of course further explain and verify what the Vedanta-sutra says about prarabdha karma.

In his comment on VS 3.4.16, Baladeva Vidyabhusana gives us more insight into the position of a sage who has acquired vidya but not mukti. He says that vidya has the power to burn to ashes all karmas, yet the illumined sage, who is harmonized with the will of the Supreme Lord, allows the prarabdha karmas to continue to produce their effects, in order to carry out the will of the Lord, and to spread His glory in this world. The sage allows the vidya to singe the prarabdha karmas, but not to reduce them to ashes. The prarabdha karmas of such a sage are like a half-burnt cloth, which retains its texture, and looks like a cloth; but which at the slightest touch, falls into pieces. The wise sage is dressed in such a prarabdha karma, and carries on the activities generated by such karma.

Baladeva further opines about a nirapeksa thus. But the great difference in his life before the origination of vidya and in his life after the origination of such vidya consists of this; that before such origination, he feels the good and bad effect of his karmas, but after the origination of such vidya his center of consciousness being fixed on the Lord, he is so much absorbed in the Lord, that he never perceives the effects of these karmas.

For the sake of completion I want to mention in brief one more thing about prarabdha karma as it is discussed in the wonderful Vedanta-sutra commentary, Govinda Bhasya. The topic is vicarious atonement. Apparently in different shakhas (recensions) of the Vedas, namely the Kausitakins and Satyayanins, there it is mentioned that in the case of extremely ardent lovers of Sri

Krsna, vicarious atonement takes place. This means that the prarabdha karmas of these nirapeksas are divided into papa, and punya, and that the papa-karma, evil karma, is given to his enemies to suffer, and the punya-karma, good karma, is given to his friends to enjoy. Thus the prarabdha karma is still worked out, but vicariously, and the body of the nirapeksa falls down and he goes back to Godhead.

What, however, is the situation of less advanced devotees? Sometimes we hear that Sri Krsna minimizes our karma; instead of having our hand cut off we supposedly get a small cut as token punishment. This actually is just the humble attitude of the devotee, he knows that he has been greatly sinful and deserves equally great chastisement. Yet, because the devotee sees all the actions of Krsna as being mercy he thinks that he is not being chastised as much as he deserves. This is exemplified in the history of the Avanti Brahmana (SB 11.23) who simply tolerated his prarabdha karma as the mercy of Sri Krsna. Lord Brahma has summarized the situation in the famous verse SB 10.14.8:

*tat tenukampam su-samiksamano
bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurbbhir vidadhan namas te
jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya-bhak*

My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.

It should be obvious from the previous discussions that the more we are able to absorb ourselves in the process of devotional service, specifically chanting the maha-mantra, the more we are able to exist on the spiritual platform and become unconcerned with the effects of our prarabdha karma. That is why it is sometimes stated in certain scriptures like Sri Harinama-cintamani or the Nrsimha-kavaca that namabhasa averts malefic planetary influences, demons, etc.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the sastras all declare that even the most perfect mahabhagavata devotee must experience his karma until the body falls off, what to speak of less advanced devotees. But, in the case of mahabhagavatas, because they are not on the bodily platform, ultimately they are not affected. Others are more or less affected according to their degree of realization. That is why it is said in the eleventh canto that in this material world the only happy persons are the perfected sadhus and the fools; everyone else is miserable.

OBJECTIONS

An objection may be raised that Srila Prabhupada supposedly stated that simply by clapping in front of the deities the lines in your hands change, implying that a devotee is immune to such things as astrology, palmistry, etc. The question must then be answered by such objector: Did personalities like Jayatirtha Dasa, Bhagavan Dasa, Ramesvara Dasa, Bhavananda Dasa, etc., etc., not clap hard enough? After studying the conclusions of the sastras we see that indeed the lines change by clapping in front of the deities. This change in the lines indicates a different future for the devotee because by worshipping the Lord, all karmas, save and except prarabdha karma, as noted above, get eradicated.

There is another similar objection raised: Devotees are immune from astrology, because astrology only deals with karma; and since devotees are immune to karma, they therefore are immune to astrology. This objection contains three fallacies: The first is the assumption that astrology is a causal agent from which you can be granted immunity; that was disproved in the section on What is Astrology. The second, that astrology only deals with karma; this was also disposed of in the same section for we see that as a language it can describe any phenomena including the divine Godhead. Thirdly, that devotees are immune to karma; this has been dealt with in great detail above.

END OF PART THREE, CONCLUSION

Text 362693: 17-Mar-94 Urmila.ACBSP@com-link.org
Subject: free will

Shyamasundara has very nicely explained how one who has attained to brahma vidya is no longer affected by karma except so far as its the Lords will for preaching purposes. I assume that this brahma vidya is equal to brahma-bhuta or nistha, in other words, factual realization of the spiritual position of the self.

What, however, is the position of someone who has not yet achieved the brahma-bhuta position? If one is a kanistha adhikari, or in the beginning stages of madhyama, that is, not yet free from all anarthas, then to what extent does previous and present karma influence him? Does it depend on the strength and/or purity of his sadhana?

Text 362755: 18-Mar-94 Shyamasundara.ACBSP@com-link.org
Subject: Correction From Hari Sauri

Hare Krsna!

In the philosophy paper discussing fate, etc., I made a reference to Hari Sauri finding Srila Prabhupadas tooth. I was wrong and Hari Sauri has kindly corrected me. Here is the real story.

A slight correction - I didnt find the tooth in Prabhupadas bed. It was in Bombay in August 1976. I came into his room one morning and he smiled and I immediately saw that a tooth was missing. I was surprised and asked him where it was. He didnt say anything but opened the drawer of his desk and the tooth was lying there. Either he had extracted it himself, or it simply fell out.

At any rate, it was too good an opportunity to miss. I reasoned I had about two seconds to either ask for it (we had a standing rule that servants were never to ask Srila Prabhupada for anything) or keep quiet and watch Prabhupada close the drawer and never see it again. I asked if I could have it because I reasoned it would simply lie in the drawer forgotten if I didnt, and I also thought my personal service would inevitably finish but by having the tooth I would be able to continue my worship of Srila Prabhupada in the same way that Maharaja Prataparudra worshiped the piece of cloth that Lord Caitanya wore.

So I asked him and he immediately handed it to me. When I got back in my room I was amazed to see a huge hole, about half the size of the tooth, in the side of it, filled with bits of prasadam and spices. I couldnt imagine how anyone could have tolerated such a condition except Srila Prabhupada. I still worship the tooth on my altar along with my deity of Srila Prabhupada.

In Volume Two of my Diary (out this week) you will find in the Toronto chapter how Srila Prabhupada kept on preaching even though his face was visibly swollen from toothache. When we asked if there was anything we could do, he simply asked for some cloves to suck. He declined to see a dentist since his teeth were all bad and thus they would want to remove them all. He simply tolerated the pain without complaint and continued on with his regular schedule.

As Hari Sauri mentions his book, volume two of *Transcendental Diary* is out next week. If I were you I would get mine as soon as possible because they will sell out fast. Volume one sold out in record time. I have seen a preview copy of Volume two and it is even better (if that is possible, Prabhupadas pastimes must be monotonically increasing) than vol 1. So get some cash and order one from Hari Sauri today.

YS Shyamasundara Dasa

Text 362758: 18-Mar-94 Shyamasundara.AC BSP@com-link.org
Subject: Free will

Brahma vidya is the nomenclature used by Baladeva Vidyabhusana. It literally means spiritual knowledge, understanding ones true spiritual nature to its fullest extent.

At initiation all anarabdha karma is removed because the guru accepts it and it is transferred up to Krsna thus getting destroyed. Kriyamana karma may cling however and create new sancita karma depending on the strength of the sadhana and desire of the sadhaka.

As for the experience of present prarabdha karma that will depend on how much one can take shelter of Krsna and merge our mind into KC. As an example of how this is done I would strongly advise you to read SB 11.23, the Song of the Avanti Brahmana. This clearly shows how the brahmana was able to overcome the last vestiges (prarabdha) of his karma, and not get re-entangled. It is very inspiring and helps to control the mind.

Text 377329: 04-May-94 Vaidyanath (das) HKS (NE-BBT)

Dear Shyamasundara Prabhu,

After carefully studying your dissertation on karma and free will and the appropriate section of Govinda-bhasya, I still have 2 questions. Could you kindly answer them?

1. It is mentioned in your paper that prarabdha karma may not be exhausted within one life, and if later is the case, the nirapeksa devotee even though possessing perfect knowledge will continue to live several lives until his prarabdha karma is completely destroyed. The question is what constitutes then prarabdha karma? I always thought that prarabdha karma manifests itself as this body, so naturally when the body is dead prarabdha karma is finished.

2. Your (and Baladeva Vidyabhusanas) conclusion is that prarabdha karma of the pure devotee is neither destroyed, nor modified, but have to be lived out by the devotee (except for the rare cases of vicarious atonement). You argue that SB statement (10.14.8) tat te nukampam is just an expression of the humble sentiment of the devotee, and the statements of Harinama-cintamani and

Nrsimha-kavaca are but figurative statements intended to show the inner situation of the pure devotee as being unaffected by the reactions of his prarabdha karma.

However, there are another statements in the books of Srila Prabhupada which seem to contradict this conclusion. For example, These changes of resultant actions are especially rendered by the Lord when a pure devotee is involved. It is assured in the BG (9.30-31) that the Lord saves a pure devotee who has surrendered unto him without reservation FROM ALL SORTS OF REACTIONS OF SINS, and there is no doubt about this. THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF EXAMPLES OF REACTIONS CHANGED BY THE LORD IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. (SB 1.13.43) It does not sound like a description of changing anarabdha karma, does it? How to be with Krsnas statements, such as na me bhakta pranasayati, or yoga-ksema vahamy aham, and thousands of stories in the scriptures which are there to illustrate the point of personal involvement of the Lord when His devotees are put into difficult situations (as a result of their prarabdha karma?)

your servant

(Comment in text 377474 by Vaidyanath (das) HKS (NE-BBT))

Text 377474: 05-May-94 Vaidyanath (das) HKS (NE-BBT)

Comment on: Text 377329 by Vaidyanath (das) HKS (NE-BBT)

Subject: Free will again

There is another, even more direct statement by Srila Prabhupada regarding prarabdha karma in SB 6.1.15, When one takes to devotional service, however, all phases of sinful life, including prarabdha, aprarabdha and bija are vanquished.

[Note these cogent points raised by Vaidyanatha Dasa have been answered in a separate paper.]