

Thing, Word and Idea are Identical in the Realm of True Existence

From “Answers to Questions”

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Rṣi-s are the seers of the mantra. Through His śakti, which works within them, they experience that word, idea and form are identical.

The word rūpa [form] is derived from rūp, rūpyate, “it is seen”, and what is seen is rūpa.

We, however, read and hear a mantra whose letters in the best case convey a vague idea which in the best case condenses into a form. Things we see we give names or use names that are already known. But we do not get in touch with things consisting of pure knowledge or cit. The most subtle things [that we are able to experience] are those consisting of manas or mind.

I picture a train in which there is a man reading his newspaper, a manomaya-train, etc. I describe it to somebody who subsequently, just like myself, sees it in his mind. This train has no dimensions, otherwise it wouldn't fit into my head or into the room where I sit. But it is in no way everywhere and always present – it is present only in my head, as long as I think of it.

That which consists entirely of cit, of pure knowledge, doesn't even fit into my head: it is beyond space and time, for it belongs to the category of vaikunṭha.

Where is it? Where time and space are not, where mahāmāyā has no access. And where is this realm beyond time and space? It is everywhere and always present. Thus, there is no space and no time left next to or beyond it where the world of space and time could be squeezed in.

To give a slight insight into this secret, linguistically, it is said that Kṛṣṇa enters the heart and body through the ear. A sixteen-year-old boy? Or a mere word consisting of letters?

No, His Own śakti makes Him, Who already *is* everywhere and always *present*, become abhivyakta or so to speak, break through into that which can be experienced. His form is mantramaya, i.e. consists of idea that at the same time is word and form.

This does not in any way imply, as is the case in Christian thought, that the laws of nature given by God are broken through – because from God’s, from Vaiṣṇava’s point of view, the world does not exist at all; He and His realm are already there and have always been. The world of time and space is only a shadow that veils our sight so that we don’t experience Vaiṣṇava, the world already present.

And just as our world is a shadow world, our words are shadow words. Just as it is no use striving to obtain the shadow apple, it is no use reading, studying, etc., the Śāstram-s or the Vedas and their words [without śraddhā, His Own śakti]. One person sits in the tree and tastes the apple and talks about it. I sit in the shadow and talk about the shadow apple the way I experience it, as shadow. The Vedas express the apple, whereas we read the letters: the shadow of the apple.

That is why it is said with regard to *every* Śāstram: only one who has śraddhā should, and is able to read, hear, etc., the Śāstram. It is śraddhā, His Own śakti, that gives the first idea as to what the real apple is, even though the words seem identical.

Just as Vaiṣṇava is without time and space, it is also free from the separation or division of the thing (vastu) into idea, name and form. To clarify this: When Kuntī called for Kṛṣṇa, He was immediately there. Does that mean that in one second He travelled those hundreds of miles from Dvārakā in a jet plane? No, He is already there, He just becomes abhivyakta [visible]. He and His Name are identical.

Nothing could be further from the truth than to believe that the Śāstram-s want to tell us stories. They contain “stories” to somehow convey some idea of the realm beyond time and space and to give some indication of the secret.

Another illustration can be found in the account of Jagāi-Mādhāi. When those two behaved like louts, “Caitanyadeva remembered the sudarśana-cakra, and there it was in His hand and struck Jagāi and Mādhāi with terror” (Caitanya Bhāgavatam). This is not a fairy tale for an age without scientific education, but serves to illustrate that: 1) *in* Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa is present, and in Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu – who carries the cakra – is present, and that: 2) in His realm, idea and thing are identical.

Just as a religion of the mind or the soul [the untrue I-concept] can never lead to God – only His Own nirguṇa-śakti – the mere pronunciation of, or meditation upon, the worldly letters that make up the Name Kṛṣṇa cannot lead to the experience of Kṛṣṇa and the fact that He is fully identical with His Own Name.

To the degree that His śakti, i.e. bhakti, pronounces the Name, the Name, i.e. Kṛṣṇa Himself, is experienced.

God does not get Names; He *has* Names that are only revealed (e.g., through Garga in Bhāgavatam X.), and these Names are identical with Him. According to the līlā that makes the Names abhivyakta [makes them appear], the Names are thus an expression of His Own *personality*.

God does not “play” a līlā, He *is* līlā; just as it is the nature of the sun to be light, it is His nature to be and to experience and express Himself, and that is līlā.

Words cannot convey this secret and therefore it is said: He plays this or that līlā – and then again, to avoid any misunderstanding – He is līlāmaya, i.e. He consists of līlā.

Please reflect upon this thoroughly!!

Please – dry, yet so important!!

Sadānanda