

ETHICAL PROBLEMS ON GOPANNA'S DEVOTION

(By Abhay Charan Bhaktivedanta)

An interesting story under the heading **Bhadradi Ramdas**, has appeared in the Hindustan Times. Extract from the above story as follows will be read with interest by persons engaged in the transcendental loving service of God.

There is a temple on the hill dedicated to Rama, Laksmana and Sita. The images lay concealed in the earth for ages. In course of time, a lady called Damakka who was a devotee of Rama, had a dream in which she was told the exact whereabouts of the images and was asked to unearth and instal them and offer worship till such time as a great Rama Bhakta would appear on the scene and bestow his attention. Damakka carried out the behest.

Bhadrachalam, which was a Jaggir under the Moghul rule, became subject to the Golconda Nawabs about the middle of the 17th century. One of the Golconda rulers was a man called Abdulla who had two ministers called Akanna and Madanna. Their sister's son was called Gopanna who from time to time of his infancy was lost in the worship of Sri Rama and the repetition of His Name. In course of time and of course due to the court influence of his uncles, he was appointed the Tahsildar of Bhadrachalam.

It is this Gopanna who subsequently became known as Ramdas of Bhadrachalam...

The lesson to be drawn from the history of his life is a bit complicated. We have something like a riddle in ethical properties and standard of public virtues. In short the story is this. Gopanna was prepared to do anything for his God. He wanted to renovate the temple in Bhadrachalam, bedeck the permanent images propetiate images with costly and dazzling jewels of precious stones, perform festivals galore and feed the public without distinction of caste and creed to their heart's content on every holy occasion. He utilised the revenue of the tehsil for these purposes and though the temple became prosperous and beautiful, the Nawab's treasury fell short of six lakhs of Varahas or gold mohurs.

When accounts were taken... Gopanna was brought to Golconda as a prisoner and incarcerated. He was subjected to every kind of torture... Gopanna did not mind the torments inflicted on him as sometimes they did not affect him very much.

Nearly 12 years passed in this manner before actual orders were issued by the Nawab for his decapitation.

The Tenesha was sleeping with queen in the harem and he had a dream. Two resplendent young men asked him to hasten up to receive all moneys due from Gopanna and issue a receipt so that he may be released forthwith. The Tenesha was dazed at the sight and when asked for the money the two people poured the amount in front of him on the floor. He asked them who they were and they said that they belonged to the Surya Vamsa or Solar race and were known as Ramojee and Lakshmonojee, friends and adherents of Ramdas (Gopanna).

The Tenesha could not restrain his surprise. He went to the prison house himself accompanied by the youngmen, acknowledged receipt of the moneys and directed Gopanna's immediate release. Ramojee and Lakshmonojee disappeared but the Tenesha found himself in bed once again and woke up as from a dream. The gold coins were there. He directed Gopanna to be brought and he appeared before him. He praised to the skies his good fortune and devotion to God and sent him back to Bhadrachalam as Tehsildar with six lakhs of varahas to be spent by him for the temple as he pleased. He also proclaimed that from that day the pious tehsildar was to be known as Ramdas or the devotee of Sri Ram.

The writer of the above narration Sri N. Chandra Sekhara Aiyar has raised some ethical problems in regard to the above. They are as follows:-

However intense might have been the devotion of Ramdas to his Lord, however pure and selfless his motives were, was it proper on his part to appropriate the public revenue in fit manner and divert them to purposes for which they were never intended? It is not as though Ramdas was not warned about the impropriety. Some of his friends, according to the story, appear to have done so but he did not pay any heed. This makes the offence more serious.

The answer which may be attempted but which is unconvincing, is that as it is the duty of the king to take care, maintain, protect and rennovate temples and tanks and object of public utility within the limits of his state, it was up to the Tenesha to have done this himself; and therefore there was nothing wrong in a representative like Ramdas having undertaken on his shoulders this duty in the performance of which the royal patron was silent.

But was it not the duty of Ramdas to ask the King's permission for the diversion of the funds? Why was Ramdas subjected to so much sufferings and misery? The answer given in the story is that in previous birth he had taken hold of a parrot and caged it and that it was an act of cruelty for which he had to pay his retribution in subsequent birth by undergoing imprisonment.

Is it necessary, however, to go to a previous birth at all? Good or evil deeds done intensively and in large scale bear fruit immediately and the results are not delayed till future births. Such colossal appropriation of state revenue for other purpose, however legitimate, was it not self sufficient to entail such punishment? Five questions about the absence *mens rea* do not arise in such matters. Judging by the standard of public duty, the conduct of Ramdas was not justified but in the

supermundane fields where faith and intuition, God's mercy and justice have their place, our poor judgement are more often likely to be more wrong than right.

It may be asked why all these questions of conduct and moral propriety should be raised when the Tenesha himself was not only satisfied with what had happened but praised Gopanna for what he had done. This is no doubt one aspect. It is a consoling thought but it is by no means an argument in defence of Gopanna. Whatever one's judgement may be there is no doubt that Gopanna as *bhakta* Ramdas is adored by thousands as a prince among devotees.

In the above statement of the story of Gopanna, many intricate questions have been raised and we shall try to answer them one by one in accordance with the verdict of the scriptures. No amount of imaginative judgement will help us unless we refer the matter in terms of Shastras.

We first of deal with the points of what is the real position of devotee of God, in this mundane world? A devotee's position is not relative. Because he is fixed up in the service of the Absolute he does not live in the relative world by all his activities although apparently he seems to remain among us. Being situated in the Absolute, a devotee is not to be conditioned by the laws of the physical world.

ईहा यस्य हरेर् दास्ये कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।

निखिलास्व अप्य् अवस्थासु जीवन्-मुक्तः स उच्यते

A person who is in all respects and in all conditions of life, engaged cent per cent in the service of the Lord, is to be considered a liberated soul. A liberated soul cannot be judged by another conditioned soul. As the position which was held by Gopanna in his dealings with the State service or in respect of crossing the threshold of ethical principles conceived by conditioned souls, were beyond the conception of human power—it is better to conclude the actions of Gopanna in the manner as Mr. Chandrashekhar has done in the following words namely, "our poor judgement are often likely to be more wrong than right."

Every action of a devotee is considered as good because it is targetted towards the service of all-good. God is all-good. He is Absolute knowledge. There is no difference between Him, His pure devotee and all devotional activities. Gopanna was a pure devotee of God and therefore all his activities were good, that is the verdict of Shastras. That was the reason why ultimately Gopanna was adored even by the Tenesha although he committed a criminal act of misappropriation of public money—in the eyes of the mundaners. There are many instances where not only the devotee but also God himself have committed this so called criminal act of theft for the pleasure of the devotee. Sree Gopinathjee at Remuna (in the district of Balasore, Orissa) is still famous as Gopinathjee who had committed theft for Sree Madhbendra Puri—His pure devotee. The thief Gopinathjee is equally adored by His devotee as Ramdas of Bhadrachalam is adored. Therefore

these acts of criminality by God or His devotees are not the subject matter of material jurisprudence. This is confirmed in the Bhagbat by the following sloka.

यस्यास्ति भक्तिर्भगवत्यकिञ्चना

सर्वैर्गुणैस्तत्र समासते सुराः ।

हरावभक्तस्य कुतो महद्गुणा

मनोरथेनासति धावतो बहिः ॥

If a person has got unflinching faith and devotion upon the Personality of Godhead—all the good qualities of the Suras (the most enlightened living being) do overtake him. But a non-devotee cannot have any good quality whatsoever because he is sustained in the subtler activities of physical nature—which is always inferior than the spiritual nature.

A house made of iron however decorated with workmanship is always much inferior in quality than a grain of gold. Mundane ethical and moral codes which are manufactured in the laws of physical nature, are certainly always inferior in quality than the *spiritual act of theft*. Spiritual world being Absolute there is no difference between such acts of theft and honesty. Every thing coincide in the act of transcendental loving service of Godhead.

In the Bhagawat Geeta difference between the qualities of spiritual and material nature is defined as follows :-

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।

अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥

Earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence and false ego all these eight gross and subtle elements of physical nature are different separated energies of Godhead. All of them are insentient matters and therefore inferior in quality than the other spiritual nature of which living entity is an infinitesimal fragment. Being superior in nature the living entity although small particle can partially lord it over the inferior material nature.

Such being the difference between the above two natures, superior action of the spiritual nature cannot be judged from the level of physical nature. God is all spirit and the living entities are all of spiritual nature. Both of them are eternally related in the spiritual plane as the eternal servitor and

served. Impersonal monist are unable to realise the significance of this eternal spiritual nature. Reciprocal activities of God and devotees are all spiritual. The physical nature is controlled by spiritual nature and not the vice versa and as such the laws of physical nature stops to act when spiritual nature begins to work.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।

मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

Everyone is illusioned by the encaptivating energy of physical nature and thus no body is able to know how the spiritual nature works. *It is very difficult to surmount the laws of physical nature undoubtedly but one who puts himself in the actions of spiritual nature, the physical nature stops to react upon him.* Gopanna was self surrendered soul and thus he was above the laws of physical world.

The seemingly diversion of the State funds was never an unlawful act for Gopanna *although for others it was certainly unlawful*. When Gopanna was an ordinary person in his previous birth certainly he was bound by the finer laws of physical world. As such he was incarcerated not for this act of so called misappropriation but actually he was lightly punished for his sinful acts of past life which is mentioned in the story. Ordinary persons who are not in the service of God, may take note of this as to how much sufferings are awaiting them in their future births for all their known and unknown sinful actions. When an action is performed the seed is sown and in due course the actions will mature to result in accordance with the law of Karma. No body is free from the stringent laws of Karma as it is stated in the Brahma Samheeta.

यः तु इन्द्रगोपम् अथवेन्द्रम् अहो स्व कर्म

बन्ध अनुरूप फल भाजनम् आतनोति ।

कर्माणि निर्दहति किन्तु च भक्ति भाजां

गोविन्दम् आदि पुरुषं तमहं भजामि

Beginning from the great King Indra of Heaven down to the ant of the name Indragopa all are bound up the laws of physical nature and are subjected to the reaction of one's own actions. But Govinda the Personality of Godhead relieves His devotees from the actions of the law of Karma. The actions of a devotee do not accrue future reactions. Gopanna was not therefore punished for

his socalled action of misappropriation but he was lightly punished for his past actions and that too in order to raise him in the estimation of all other men.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि-

त्रायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय

नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-

न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

As living being is eternal. He changes his body as a man changes his shirts and coats. His gross body made of earth, fire, air, and sky constitute to form his outward coat and his mind intelligence and false ego constitute internal body like the shirt. He changes his gross body when he is said to have died but the subtle body which is compared with the shirt is carried with him in order to avail a suitable gross body in womb of 84 lacs species of life according to the state of mind at the time of his death.

The seed of action is sure to fructify in due course. The result of all actions passes through different stages of development. Such stages of development are known as the stage of 'Kutasha (nascent) 'Aprarabdha' (accruing) 'Prarabdha' (mature) etc. It is not necessary that the result of one action is reached in the very same body. It takes long time to fructify the real result. Just by sowing a seed of a tree we cannot get immediately full grown tree and the fruits thereof, so also the result of a 'Karma' or action exhibits in due course of time.

Gopanna's punishment was due to his past deeds of encaging a parrot. The act of his unalloyed service to the Personality to Godhead Rama was properly recognized by Rama, other-wise He would not have come to support an ordinary culprit who had misappropriated the public money. This is not God's business. He is neutral in all matters and no body is His enemy or friend. Only those who love Him and therefore worship Him spontaneously are his actual friends—that is verdict of Bhagwat Geeta. Shri Ramchandra approached the Tenesha to release a devotee *and not a culprit*. God has nothing to do with the actions of an ordinary man. He is responsible for his own

action but in the case of a devotee the whole thing has to be viewed from a different angle of vision.

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥

‘Yajna’ means Vishnu. Anything done for and on behalf of ‘Vishnu’ the Supreme Being is free from the law of Karma and therefore not bound by the laws of the physical nature. In this sloka of ‘Bhagwat Geeta’ the ‘Kounteya’ is advised to do everything for Him (the personality of Godhead) which will make him absolutely free from the physical infection.

Perfection of human life is standardized in the intensified loving service of God. That is the natural function of all living being. The highest form of intensified love for God was exhibited by the damsels of ‘Braja’ in their quest for amorous love of God Sri Krishna. In that way of intense love for Sri Krishna they appeared to have broken the established moral codes of family life but they are held still in the highest estimation of all pure devotees. Prahalad Maharaj caused to kill his own father, which is certainly improper in the eyes of the mundaners, but yet Prahalad Maharaj is counted as one of the twelve authorities in the science of devotion. So also Bali Maharaj. He cutoff the connection of spiritual master ‘Sukracharya’ because the latter checked him in the service of God. To disconnect the relation of the spiritual master is an act of sin in the eyes of the mundaner but Bali Maharaj is also one of the authorities.

There are innumerable examples of such dealings of the Personality of Godhead with His devotees and we have the instruction from those instructions from those incidents that every thing done by a pure devotee for the satisfaction of Godhead is an act of devotional service which is properly recognized by the Personality of godhead. The impersonalist hovering in the speculative plane of the mind cannot understand all these and as they do not believe in the Person of Godhead, so also they cannot conceive of His Absolute power.

Even a neophyte devotee who may be used to so many nefarious acts by long practice is also esteemed as a ‘Sadhu’ in the language of ‘Bhagawat Geeta’. The only qualification of a pure devotee is to serve God for His satisfaction. This is called spontaneous love of Godhead. Such devotee also cannot prolong with his bad habits for a long period and Simultaneously with the beginning of his unalloyed service, liquidation of his bad habits also begins and very soon all the qualities of gods overtake him.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्ष्यसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

सन्न्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

A pure devotee is therefore not bound up by any law of physical world. He is completely free to serve the Personality of Godhead without any care to the manmade moral principles. *But a devotee never violates any moral codes for his own self gratification.* In rare cases only he does so for the service of Godhead. And in doing so he is not at all bound by the man-made laws. Gopanna's intensive love for God and God's reciprocation and recognition of his service is confirmed in following way

“ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्”

(Ref: Shri Sajjanatoshani Patrika, August, 1955)

Ethical Problems on Gopanna's Devotion

(By Abhay Churn Bhattacharya)

An interesting story under the heading *Bhadrachalam*, has appeared in the *Hindustan Times*. Extracts from the above story as follows will be read with interest by persons engaged in the transcendental loving service of God.

"There is a temple on the hill dedicated to Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. The images lay concealed in the earth for ages. In course of time, a pious lady called Danuska who was a devotee of Rama, had a dream in which she was told the exact whereabouts of the images and was asked to unearth and install them and offer worship till such time as a great Rama Bhakta would appear on the scene and bestow his attention. Danuska carried out the behest.

"Bhadrachalam, which was a Jagir under the Moghul rule, became subject to the Golkonda Nawab about the middle of the 17th century. One of the Golkonda rulers was a man called Abdullah who had two Hindu ministers called Akanna and Madanna. Their sister's son was called Gopanna who from time to time of his infancy was lost in the worship of Sri Rama and the repetition of His Name. In course of time and of course due to the court influence of his uncle, he was appointed the Tahsil-dar of Bhadrachalam.

"It is this Gopanna who subsequently became known as the great Ramdas of Bhadrachalam."

"The lesson to be drawn from the history of his life is a bit complicated. We have something like a riddle in ethical properties and

standard of public virtues. In short the story is this. Gopanna was prepared to do anything for his God. He wanted to renovate the temple in Bhadrachalam, he took the permanent images and propitiate images with costly and dazzling jewels of precious stones, perform festivals galore and feed the public without distinction of caste and creed to their heart's content on every holy occasion. He utilised the revenue of the tahsil for these purposes and though the temple became prosperous and beautiful, the Nawab's treasury fell short of six lakhs of Varahas or gold molaras.

"When accounts were taken..... Gopanna was brought to Golkonda as a prisoner and incarcerated. He was subjected to every kind of torture..... Gopanna did not mind the tortures inflicted on him as sometimes they did not affect him very much.

"Nearly 12 years passed in this manner before actual orders were issued by the Nawab for his decapitation.

"The Teneha was sleeping with queen in the harem and he had a dream. Two resplendent young men asked him to hasten up to receive all moneys due from Gopanna and issue a receipt so that he may be released forthwith. The Teneha was dazed at the sight and when asked for the money the two people poured the amount in first of him on the floor. He asked them who they were and they said they belonged to the Surya Vansh or Solar race and were known as Ramjee and Lakshmanjee, friends and adherents of Ramdas (Gopanna).

Ethical Problems on Gopanna's Devotion

41

"The Teneha could not restrain his surprise. He went to the prison house himself accompanied by the youngmen, acknowledged receipt of the moneys and directed Gopanna's immediate release. Ramjee and Lakshmanjee accompanied him. Gopanna found himself in a dream and woke up as from a dream. The gold coins were there. He directed Gopanna to be brought and he appeared before him. He praised to the skies his good fortune and devotion to God and sent him back to Bhadrachalam as Tahsil-dar with six lakhs of Varahas to be spent by him for the temple as he pleased. He also proclaimed that from that day the pious tahsil-dar was to be known as Ramdas or the devotee of Sri Ram."

The writer of the above narration Sri N. Chakrabarti Sahaya Aiyar has raised some ethical problems in regard to the above. They are as follows:-

"However intense might have been the devotion of Ramdas to his Lord, however pure and selfless his motives were, was it proper on his part to appropriate the public revenue in this manner and divert them to purposes for which they were never intended? It is not as though Ramdas was not warned about the propriety. Some of his friends, according to the story, appear to have done so but he did not pay any heed. This makes the offence more serious.

"The answer which may be attempted but which is unconvincing, is that as it is the duty of the king to take care, maintain, protect and renovate temples and tanks and object of public utility within the limits of his state, it was up to the Teneha to have done this himself and therefore there was nothing wrong in

a representative like Ramdas having undertaken on his shoulders this duty in the performance of which the royal patron was silent.

"But was it not the duty of Ramdas to ask the King's permission for the diversion of the funds? Why was Ramdas subjected to so much sufferings and misery? The answer given in the story is that in previous birth he had taken hold of a parrot and caged it and that it was an act of cruelty for which he had to pay his retribution in subsequent birth by undergoing imprisonment.

"Is it necessary, however, to go to a previous birth at all? Good or evil deeds done intensively and in large scale bear fruit immediately and the results are not delayed till future births. Such colossal appropriation of state revenue for other purpose, however legitimate, was it not self sufficient to entail such punishment? Five questions about the absence *mens rea* do not arise in such matters. Judging by the standard of public duty, the conduct of Ramdas was not justified but in the supermundane fields where faith and intuition, God's mercy and justice have their place, our poor judgement are more often likely to be more wrong than right.

"It may be asked why all these questions of conduct and moral propriety should be raised when the Teneha himself was not only satisfied with what had happened but praised Gopanna for what he had done. This is no doubt one aspect. It is a consoling thought but it is by no means an argument in defence of Gopanna. Whatever one's judgement may be there is no doubt that Gopanna as *Bhakta* Ramdas is adored by thousands as a prince among devotees.

Ethical Problems on Gopanna's Devotion

42

In the above statement of the story of Gopanna, many intricate questions have been raised and we shall try to answer them one by one in accordance with the verdict of the scriptures. No amount of imaginative judgement will help us unless we refer the matter in terms of Shastras.

We first deal with the points of what is the real position of devotee of God, in this mundane world? A devotee's position is not relative. Because he is fixed up in the service of the Absolute he does not live in the relative world by all his activities although apparently he seems to remain among us. Being situated in the Absolute, a devotee is not to be conditioned by the laws of physical world.

इहा यय हरेदाये कमेष्टा मनसा मिर ।
निस्त्राण्यपवर्त्तयामु जीवमुक्तः स उच्यते ॥

A person who is in all respects and in all conditions of life, engaged cent per cent in the service of the Lord, is to be considered a liberated soul. A liberated soul cannot be judged by another conditioned soul. As the position which was held by Gopanna in his dealings with the State service or in respect of crossing the threshold of ethical principles conceived by conditioned souls, were beyond the conception of human power—it is better to conclude the actions of Gopanna in the manner as Mr. Chandrasekhar has done in the following words namely, "our poor judgement are often likely to be more wrong than right."

Every action of a devotee is considered as good because it is targetted towards the service of all-good. God is all-good. He is Absolute knowledge. There is no difference between

Him, His pure devotee and all devotional activities. Gopanna was a pure devotee of God and therefore all his activities were good. That was the verdict of Shastras. That was the reason why ultimately Gopanna was adored even by the Teneha although he committed a criminal act of misappropriation of public money—in the eyes of the mundaners. There are many instances where not only the devotee but also God himself have committed this so called criminal act of theft for the pleasure of the devotee. Sree Gopinathjee at Reminna (in the district of Balasore, Orissa) is still famous as Gopinathjee who had committed theft for Sree Madhendra Purī—His pure devotee. The thief Gopinathjee is equally adored by His devotee as Ramdas of Bhadrachalam is adored. Therefore these acts of criminality by God or His devotees are not the subject matter of material jurisprudence. This is confirmed in the Bhagbat by the following sloka.

यस्यासि भक्तिर्गोचरकिञ्चन
सर्वेणैतत्तत्र समासेन युगः ।
हरावभक्त्यश्च श्रुतमश्नुगुण
मनेयेनासि चापतो वहिः ॥

If a person has got unflinching faith and devotion upon the Personality of Godhead—all the good qualities of the Suras (the most enlightened living beings) do overtake him. But a non-devotee cannot have any good quality whatsoever because he is sustained in the subtle activities of physical nature—which is always inferior than the spiritual nature.

A house made of iron however decorated with workmanship is always much inferior in quality than a grain of gold. Mundane ethical and moral codes which are manufactured in the

Ethical Problems on Gopanna's Devotion

43

laws of physical nature, are certainly always inferior in quality than the spiritual act of theft. Spiritual world being Absolute there is no difference between such acts of theft and honesty. Every thing coincide in the act of transcendental loving service of Godhead.

In the Bhagbat Geeta difference between the qualities of spiritual and material nature is defined as follows:-

युर्मिराणोऽनलो वायुः स्वं मनोवुद्धिरेव च ।
यहकारदतीये मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टया ॥
धारयन्मनसवया प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवमूला महाबाहो यदेदं धारयन्ते जगत् ॥

Earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind intelligence and false ego all these eight gross and subtle elements of physical nature are different separated energies of Godhead. All of them are insentient matters and therefore inferior in quality than the other spiritual nature of which living entity is an infinitesimal fragment. Being superior in nature the living entity although small particle can partially lord it over the inferior material nature.

Such being the difference between the above two natures, superior action of the spiritual nature cannot be judged from the level of physical nature. God is all spirit and the living entities are all of spiritual nature. Both of them are eternally related in the spiritual plane as the eternal servitor and served. Impersonal monist are unable to realise the significance of this eternal spiritual nature. Reciprocal activities of God and devotees are all spiritual. The physical nature is controlled by spiritual nature and not the vice versa and as such the laws of physical nature stops to act when spiritual nature begins to work.

त्रिविगुलमर्थमविरिभेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
माहितं नामि ज्ञानाति भासिभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥
देवीष्टे वा गुणमयो मन नाया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रत्यन्ते मायमितान्तरन्ते ते ॥

Every one is illusioned by the captivating energy of physical nature and thus no body is able to know how the spiritual nature works. It is very difficult to surmount the laws of physical nature undoubtedly but one who puts himself in the actions of spiritual nature, the physical nature stops to react upon him Gopanna was self surrendered soul and thus he was above the laws of physical world.

The seemingly diversion of the State funds was never an unlawful act for Gopanna although for others it was certainly unlawful. When Gopanna was an ordinary person in his previous birth certainly he was bound by the finer laws of physical world. As such he was incarcerated not for this act of so called misappropriation but actually he was lightly punished for his sinful acts of past life which is mentioned in the story. Ordinary persons who are not in the service of God, may take note of this as to how much sufferings are awaiting them in their future births for all their known and unknown sinful actions. When an action is performed the seed is sown and in due course the actions will mature to result in accordance with the law of Karma. No body is free from the stringent laws of Karma as it is stated in the Brahma Samheta.

यस्मिन्वद्रागोपमयधेन्द्रमदो स्वकम्
वयानुरूपकलमजमनादतोति ।
कर्मणि निरद्वैति किन्तु च भक्तिभावात्
मोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमर्हं भजामि ॥

Beginning from the great King Indra of

Heaven down to the ant of the name Indragopa all are bound up by the laws of physical nature and are subjected to the reaction of one's own actions. But Govinda the Personality of Godhead relieves His devotees from the actions of the law of Karma. The actions of a devotee do not accrue future reactions. Gopanna was not therefore punished for his panna was not therefore punished but he was lightly punished for his past actions and that too in order to raise him in the estimation of all other men.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिद् यः
मूलाभविता वा न भूयः ।
अशोभितः शरीरतोऽयं पुराणो,
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥
वासोऽसि कीर्णानि तथा विहाय ।
नवानि गृहादि नरोऽपराधि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय
जीर्णान्मनानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

As living being is eternal. He changes his body as a man changes his shirts and coats. His gross body made of earth, fire, air, and sky constitute to form his outward coat and his mind intelligence and false ego constitute internal body like the shirt. He changes his gross body when he is said to have died but the subtle body which is compared with the shirt is carried with him in order to avail a suitable gross body in the womb of 84 laes species of life according to the state of mind at the time of his death.

The seed of action is sure to fructify in due course. The result of all actions passes through different stages of development. Such stages of development are known as the stage of

'Kutasha' (nascent) 'Aprarabdh' (accruing) 'Prarabdh' (mature) etc. It is not necessary that the result of one action is reached in the very same body. It takes long time to fructify the real result. Just by sowing a seed of a tree we cannot get immediately full grown tree and the fruits thereof, so also the result of a 'Karma' or action exhibits in due course of time.

Gopanna's punishment was due to his past deeds of enraging a parrot. The act of his unalloyed service to the Personality of Godhead Rama was properly recognized by Rama, otherwise He would not have come to support an ordinary culprit who had misappropriated the public money. This is not God's business. He is neutral in all matters and no body is His enemy or friend. Only those who love Him and therefore worship Him spontaneously—are His actual friends—that is the verdict of Bhagwat Geeta. Shri Ramechandra approached the Tenebra to release a devotee and not a culprit. God has nothing to do with the actions of an ordinary man. He is responsible for his own action but in the case of a devotee the whole thing has to be viewed from a different angle of vision.

यज्ञाधीनमण्डपं ज्ञेयं कर्मवन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥

'Yajna' means Vishnu. Anything done for and on behalf of 'Vishnu' the Supreme Being is free from the law of Karma and therefore not bound by the laws of the physical nature. In this sloka of 'Bhagwat Geeta' the 'Kounteya' is advised to do everything for Him (the personality of Godhead) which will make him absolutely free from the physical infection.

Perfection of human life is standardised in

the intensified loving service of God. That is the natural function of all living being. The highest form of intensified love for God was exhibited by the damsels of 'Braja' in their quest for amorous love of God Sri Krishna. In that way of intense love for Sri Krishna they appeared to have broken the established moral codes of family life but they are held still in the highest estimation of all pure devotees. Prahlad Maharaj caused to kill his own father, which is certainly improper in the eyes of the mundaners, but yet Prahlad Maharaj is counted as one of the twelve authorities in the science of devotion. So also Bali Maharaj. He cutoff the connection of his spiritual master 'Sukracharya' because the latter checked him in the service of God. To disconnect the relation of the spiritual master is an act of sin in the eyes of the mundaner but Bali Maharaj is also one of the authorities.

There are innumerable examples of such dealings of the Personality of Godhead with His devotees and we have the instruction from those incidents that every thing done by a pure devotee for the satisfaction of Godhead is an act of devotional service which is properly recognized by the Personality of Godhead. The impersonalist hovering in the speculative plane of the mind cannot understand all these and as they do not believe in the Person of Godhead, so also they cannot conceive of His Absolute power.

Even a neophyte devotee who may be used to so many nefarious acts by long practice is also esteemed as a 'Sadhu' in the language of the 'Bhagwat Geeta'. The only qualification of a pure devotee is to serve God for His satisfaction. This is called spontaneous love of Godhead. Such devotee also cannot prolong with his bad habits for a long period and Simulta-

neously with the beginning of his unalloyed service, liquidation of his bad habits also begins and very soon all the qualities of gods overtake him.

यत्करोषि यद्वदन्ति यत्सुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्पश्यसि कौन्तेय तत् कुरुष्व मदयुगम् ॥
शुभाशुभं तत्तेरेषं मोक्षये कर्मवन्धनम् ।

सन्ध्यायोगकुक्कुटा विमुक्तोऽमोदयसि ॥
समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽन्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥
अपि च सुदुर्गारभजते मामनन्यमाक ।

साधुरेषु स मन्तव्यः सम्यक्पश्यसि हो हि सः ॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मो मां शस्वच्छान्तिनिराश्रयम् ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

A pure devotee is therefore not bound up by any law of the physical world. He is completely free to serve the Personality of Godhead without any care to the man-made moral principles. But a devotee never violates any moral codes for his own self gratification. In rare cases only he does so for the service of Godhead. And in doing so he is not at all bound by the man-made laws. Gopanna's intensive love for God and God's reciprocation and recognition of his service is confirmed in the following way

“ये यदामां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजन्महे”



