

Subtle Body's Dissolution

Q:

When a soul transitions from the covered and conditioned state in this material world to the brahmajyoti, is the subtle body relinquished?

Ans:

While SB 3.25.33 states that bhakti dissolves the subtle body "without separate endeavor", other references indicate that liberation *per se* results in the soul's no longer having a subtle body (without a qualifying statement indicating that bhakti is the only method by which liberation from the subtle body can be achieved).

One example is this: "Liberation means getting out of the clutches of the subtle body." SB 4.29.61 purport.

Even more explicitly, SB 4.23.15 p indicates that Buddha's followers who attain *nirvana* also reach a state where the subtle body is relinquished, as well as those who enter the brahmajyoti.

See below.

The material body is composed of five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—and three subtle elements—mind, intelligence and ego. When one attains liberation, he is freed from these material coverings. Indeed, success in yoga involves getting free from these material coverings and entering into spiritual existence. Lord Buddha's teachings of *nirvāṇa* are based on this principle. Lord Buddha instructed his followers to give up these material coverings by means of meditation and yoga. Lord Buddha did not give any information about the soul, but if one follows his instructions strictly, he will ultimately become free from the material coverings and attain *nirvāṇa*.

When a living entity gives up the material coverings, he remains a spirit soul. This spirit soul must enter into the spiritual sky to merge into the Brahman effulgence. Unfortunately, unless the living entity has information of the spiritual world and the Vaikuṅṭhas, there is a 99.9 percent chance of his falling down again into material existence. There is, however, a small chance of being promoted to a spiritual planet from the Brahman effulgence, or the brahmajyoti. This brahmajyoti is considered by impersonalists to be without variety, and the Buddhists consider it to be void. In either case, whether one accepts the spiritual sky as being without variety or void, there is none of the spiritual bliss which is enjoyed in the spiritual planets, the Vaikuṅṭhas or Kṛṣṇaloka. In the absence of varieties of enjoyment, the spirit soul gradually feels an attraction to enjoy a life of bliss, and not having any information of Kṛṣṇaloka or Vaikuṅṭhaloka, he naturally falls down to material activities in order to enjoy material varieties.

No explanation is offered as to *how* the rare 0.1% merged jiva attains Vaikuntha.