

Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



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Expanding Our Love

ALSO:

**Do We Have
Free Will?**

**Bhagavad-gītā:
Five Universal Stages**

**Unity – Within
And Without**

**Two Boys
Who Found God**

**Summary of
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
From the
Nārada Purāṇa**

**Kṛṣṇa, Integrity,
And Us**

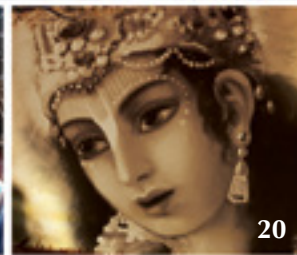
**What's Wrong
With Using
A Crutch?**

**The Dynamics of
Environment**

Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

BACK to GODHEAD

Founded 1944 • Vol. 51, No. 6 • November / December, 2017



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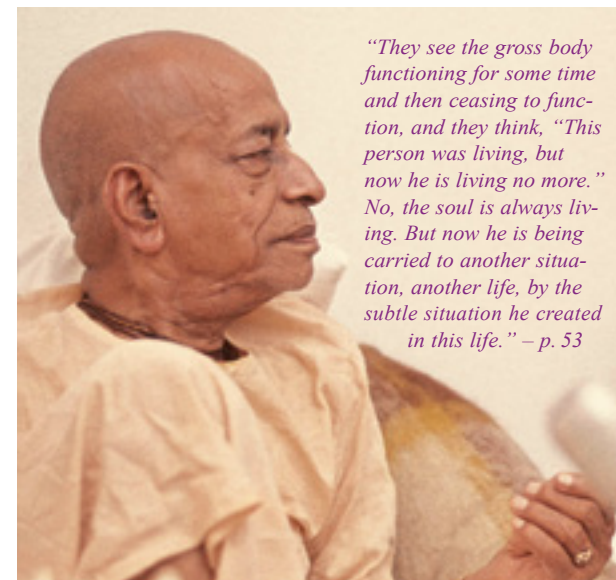
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COVER "If we learn how to love Kṛṣṇa," Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in *The Nectar of Devotion*, "then it is very easy to immediately and simultaneously love every living being." Please see his lecture beginning on page 7. (Detail from a painting by Muralīdhara Dāsa.)



"They see the gross body functioning for some time and then ceasing to function, and they think, 'This person was living, but now he is living no more.' No, the soul is always living. But now he is being carried to another situation, another life, by the subtle situation he created in this life." – p. 53

WELCOME



This issue opens with a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda given at the New Vrindaban farm community, the subject of a feature article in our next issue, honoring its fiftieth

anniversary. In this current issue, Prabhupāda speaks about expanding our love beyond our inner circle – to the whole world.

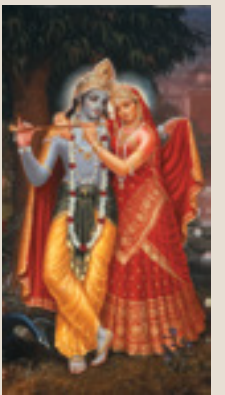
The pursuit of ideals like universal love implies the conviction that human life is meant for personal improvement. *Back to Godhead* aims to help and encourage its readers in the spiritual endeavor, and in this issue Satyarāja Dāsa describes "Five Universal Stages" we can expect to go through when we choose to pursue a spiritual goal. Choice is the subject of Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa's "Do We Have Free Will?" The obvious answer may seem to be "Of course!" But biologists have a different idea.

When we decide to do something, material or spiritual, where we do it can have a greater influence on the outcome than we might expect. Kṛṣṇa Dhana Dāsa, in "The Dynamics of Environment," looks to Vedic history for examples of wise choices about "place." In "What's Wrong with Using a Crutch," Navīna Śyāma Dāsa explains why it's smart to get the help we need.

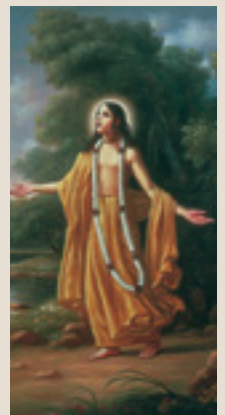
Hare Kṛṣṇa. – *Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.



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Letters

Why We Fear

What is fear, and what are the reasons for it? Please tell me how to overcome it.
Ganesh Bhedas
Via the Internet

Our reply: Fear comes from not understanding that Kṛṣṇa is in control and is working through the material energy to give each of us *jīva* souls exactly what is best for us. We think we must control everything, but that's impossible. We try to make things work out just the way we want them to, thinking we will then be happy, but when we see that we cannot control things, we become fearful.

Each of us has some idea of what things should look like for life to be good. We have a mental list of what God would give to us if He really had our welfare in mind. When we see things happening differently, we try to change the situation. When we can't do that, we become afraid. It is like trying to drive on ice: It is frightening because we can feel that we have no control and anything can happen. We have some idea of where we want to go, but we have lost control.

But in reality God is arranging everything so that we have the realizations and experiences we need to make real progress in human life. He is arranging everything perfectly, and when we understand and accept that, then we become free from fear. We trust the “driver,” and we can relax and leave the driving to Him. This is why Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66): “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.”

If we leave the driving to Kṛṣṇa, then there is no need to fear. If we think we are in control, then Kṛṣṇa will let us drive, and in conjunction with the material energy we will experience again and again that we are on ice and cannot really control anything. Thus people in material consciousness, thinking they are in control of their lives, are always in

anxiety – fearful because although they are trying to achieve some goal, they are not able to remove the obstacles they face or obtain the results they want. Things keep slipping and sliding out of their control.

Driving Our Thoughts

Does the soul (*ātmā*) drive our thoughts – i.e., our intelligence – and our body and its activities?
Vinayaga Murthy
Via the Internet

Our reply: The material body is compared to a chariot. The horses are the senses, and the reigns are the mind. Sitting in the chariot are the intelligence and the *ātmā*, or *jīva* soul. The intelligence is supposed to hold the reigns and keep control of the mind and senses. It is also supposed to take guidance from the passenger in the body, the *jīva* soul. But often the intelligence is weak and the mind is left to do whatever it wants. The horses (senses) pull the mind around and take the *jīva* soul all over the place looking for the immediate and temporary pleasures for the body.

If the intelligence is strong, it can control the mind and senses and engage them in more useful pursuits. And if the intelligence is very strong, it will take direction from the soul and the Supersoul (Kṛṣṇa in the heart). When that occurs, then the *jīva* happily controls the mind and senses and engages them in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

In summary, who or what is driving our thoughts and actions depends on how strong the intelligence is and how able the *jīva* is in directing the intelligence, mind, and senses.

Conflict Between Inner and Outer World

I am losing my internal peace and crying a lot. There is a conflict between my inner and outer worlds. I want to mold myself according to this materialistic world but am unable to do so. Does Hare Kṛṣṇa

have a solution to this problem?
Hetal
Via the Internet

Our reply: You say you want to mold yourself according to this materialistic world. Why do you want to do that? People in the materialistic conception are only seeking happiness from matter and are completely unaware that they are actually spiritual by nature. Therefore they are always unhappy, and always driven by desire, greed, and lust. Why would you aspire for such a position?

Although people in the material world look for happiness and may even appear happy, in reality they are always running after some shadow of happiness and are never satisfied. By aspiring to be like them, you are creating the very situation you are trying to avoid – endless tears and disappointments.

In reality we are all spiritual beings. Our happiness comes from spiritual activities, from our connection with Kṛṣṇa. A fish needs water to be happy. If you give a fish a house, a car, and so on, but no water, the fish will not be happy. We need a spiritual connection to be happy. We require a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa to be fully satisfied, so if we pursue material things, we will run and run but never achieve our goal.

The solution to the problem you are facing is to begin chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare and to seek the company of persons looking for spiritual fulfillment. If you can go to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple and do some service for Kṛṣṇa and the devotees, chant with them and learn from them, this will help you to overcome the sadness you are experiencing.

Actually, that you are unable to fit into the materialistic mold is a sign that you are intelligent and are seeking the true meaning of life. Don't give up, but rather continue your quest. You will find great happiness when you are successful in your quest.

Why We Exist

Why did Kṛṣṇa create us souls?
Swapnil Shrore
Via the Internet

Our reply: First of all, Kṛṣṇa wants to have relationships. His relationships can only be with spiritual entities, and so He expands Himself into many. All of His associates are expansions of Himself, but not all of them become affected by the material energy. The Lord has loving relationships with all the *jīvas*, but some are intimate in their loving exchanges with Him, and some are attracted to the idea of being the Supreme and so have to enter the material sphere. They can reconnect with Kṛṣṇa after understanding their forgotten relationship with Him.

Understanding the nature of the soul is easier if you consider the example of the sun and the sunshine. The sun is the source of the sunshine, and both are made of heat and light and exist simultaneously. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is the source of the *jīva* souls, and they exist simultaneously. Like Kṛṣṇa, we are spiritual, and our relationship with Him is eternal.

The difference is in size. The sun is

large and powerful and can burn your body to ashes in no time, but the sunshine contains only a small part of the sun's power. The relationship between God and the *jīva* is similar; He is all-pervasive and all-powerful, and we are tiny and subordinate to Him.

Some souls want to enjoy like Kṛṣṇa, so He arranges for them to try to be the supreme controller in the material world. This attempt is uncomfortable and problematic for us, but the desire to enjoy is strong, and so in earnest we pursue that desire. Then we suffer because of identifying with whatever body we inhabit. Ultimately we realize our smallness in relation to the Supreme and reinstate ourselves in our natural position of serving Him. So we souls exist to enjoy with Kṛṣṇa in different relationships. Kṛṣṇa wants to have friends, lovers, playmates, parents, and so on, and we exist to fulfill His desire. If we become fixed in that understanding, we can resume our eternal position as His blissful associates. ☺

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.



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Detail from a painting by Yachnan Devi Dasi

Expanding Our Love

With practice, we can become free from limited affection centered on the body and can then realize the ideal of loving everyone.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

*ko grheṣu pumān saktam
ātmanam ajitendriyaḥ
sneha-pāsair dṛḍhair baddham
utsaheta vimocitum*

“What person too attached to household life due to being unable to control his senses can liberate himself? An attached householder is bound very strongly by ropes of affection for his family [wife, children, and other relatives].”

– Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.6.9

THIS MATERIAL life is our bondage. We may be in gold handcuffs or iron handcuffs, but that doesn't matter; in this material world we are handcuffed, imprisoned. Our aim of life should be to get out of this material bondage, or prison house. When Prahlāda Mahārāja, who is speaking this verse, was asked by his father what was the best education he had received from his teachers, he replied *hitvātma-pātaṁ grham andha-kūpaṁ vanam gato yad dharim āśrayeta* (Bhāgavatam 7.5.5). Family life, Prahlāda replied, is *andha-kūpaṁ*, a dark well. If a man has fallen into a dark well, it is sure death, *ātma-ghātam*. Therefore, one should give up that life and take shelter of the Lord.

Unless we are very cautious, family life is very dangerous for spiritual advancement.



Therefore, according to the Vedic system, first of all one is trained as a *brahmacārī* so as not to be attached to sex life. That is *brahmacārī* life – celibacy. These boys here, these children, can be trained. The first training is *brah-*

macarya. They are innocent. As you train them they will learn. To train the children as *brahmacārīs* is essential. The purpose is that they may not to be attached to sex life.

Sex life is allowed only to beget children. The Vedic injunction is that a man accepts a wife only to have good children. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.11) Kṛṣṇa says, *dharmā-viruddho . . . kāmo 'smi*: “I am sex life when it is not against the religious principle.”

According to the Vedic system, sex life is practically denied. But because we are now in the conditioned state, it is very difficult for us to completely deny sex life, so there is regulation. First of all the training is no sex life. If a young man can remain without sex life – *brahmacārī* – that is very good. But if he cannot, then he can get married and live with a wife, but have sex only for progeny, not for sense enjoyment. If the man sticks to one

wife and the wife sticks to one man, that is real married life. Then the husband is called a *brahmacārī* even though he's a *grhashta*, and the wife is called chaste.

This is human civilization. Formerly, if a man lived for a hundred years he would spend twenty-five years as a *brahmacārī*, twenty-five years as a *grhashta*, twenty-five years as a *vānaprastha*, and the last twenty-five years as a *sannyāsī*. In three of these *āśramas* there is no sex life: *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha*, and *sannyāsa*. Only the *grhashta* is allowed sex life. And that is restricted to begetting children.

way or other, then I will have to take birth again in this material world to satisfy that desire. So the training should be how to give up this idea. And it is possible. If training is there, then it is possible. That is the instruction of Prahāda Mahārāja: *kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha (Bhāgavatam 7.6.1)*. From the very beginning, children should be trained up in this line. That is the responsibility of the father and mother. It is the proper use of their affection.

But today the father and mother do not know the aim of life. Nor are they trained in how to train their

mother. Everyone's duty should be to relieve the living entities from the clutches of birth and death. That is ideal civilization.

Sense Control

The whole training is how to control the senses, and the most powerful sense is the tongue. Sense control begins with the tongue. Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura gives a description: *śarīra avidyā-jāla joḍendriya tāhe kāl*. This body is the cage. We are in the prison of this material world. How are we imprisoned? We have been given a material body. That is imprisonment. And we are very happy to keep the body very comfortable without knowing the aim of life. That is *avidyā-jāl*, a network of ignorance. And the senses are our greatest enemies. Unless we control the senses, we are put into this network of ignorance. And out of all the senses, Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura says the tongue is very greedy. *Tā'ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamoy sudur-mati*. To control the senses means to begin with controlling the tongue. That is also a very difficult job. Therefore, to control the tongue the best thing is to take *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. First of all, offer the food to Kṛṣṇa, and then take it. If we vow, "I shall not eat anything not offered to Kṛṣṇa," that will help us.

Spiritual life begins with the tongue. You should restrict your tongue not to talk uselessly. You should simply talk of Kṛṣṇa or chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, read Kṛṣṇa books, and when you are hungry, take *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Then it will be possible to control the tongue. And if you can control the tongue, then you can control the other senses very easily.

Kṛṣṇa Is Present

Kṛṣṇa is so kind that from Vaikuṅṭha He has come here to this remote village in America. He's so kind – just to accept your service He has come here as the deity. Don't think, "Here is a doll." No. Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, on the request of the devotee, has come.

children. But in this age, although training children is a very difficult task, at least if we teach our children to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, then everything is possible. That is the facility of this age. The children will be gradually trained to the highest perfection. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's benediction is there. *Ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra*: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, you'll get perfection of life. (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya 23.78*)

So don't be afraid and think, "Because we are in this age, we cannot be trained; it is very difficult." We can very easily chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. That is a special concession of this age. These children were dancing and chanting. It is the duty of the parents to train the children in such a way that they get liberty in this very life. The father and mother should think, "This child has come to us. Now let us train him in such a way that he will get liberty, no more birth and death." That is the real responsibility of the father and

Everyone's duty should be to relieve the living entities from the clutches of birth and death. That is ideal civilization.

The Value of Practice

So in the Vedic civilization, sex life is actually denied. It is allowed only in *grhashta* life, with restriction. Not that I have sex whenever I like. No. That is bondage. As long as we're attached to sex life, then we have to accept a material body. We should remember this. People are not educated to know the value of life, how life should be conducted, what is the aim of life. But everything can be done in accordance with proper human life. It is not difficult; it just requires practice. For example, you can practice lifting by taking a small calf on your back. You lift it as it grows, and when the calf becomes a very big bull, you can lift it. But all of a sudden, if you want to lift a big bull on your shoulder, that is not possible. But if you practice to take the little calf from the very beginning, it grows and your strength grows. It is a gradual process.

The whole training in Vedic civilization is to avoid sex life. That is liberation. If I desire sex life some

You should always remember this: "Here is Kṛṣṇa personally present."

When Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Jagannātha at the Puri temple, He immediately fainted. "Here is My Lord." That mood requires advanced understanding. But the preliminary understanding is "Here is Kṛṣṇa." Don't think that the deity is a doll. Even if you think that the deity is a doll, still Kṛṣṇa has come to you in the form of a doll so that you can see Him. Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa is always present everywhere, but we cannot see Him. As the deity, Kṛṣṇa allows you to handle Him. Kṛṣṇa is everything, and He is so kind that He has come here to be seen by you, to be touched by you, to be dressed by you, to be decorated by you, to accept whatever you nicely offer with *bhakti*.

Kṛṣṇa is not hungry. Kṛṣṇa has no food in His Vaikuṅṭha? No, He has food. He is supplying everyone food. So He has everything. We should always remember that He has kindly come for our benefit, so let us be always cautious and very respectful and offer the nicest *prasādam*, prepared with great attention.

In this way, if we practice, then our life becomes very successful. Otherwise, we shall be very much attached, because we are *ajitendriya* – we cannot control our senses. That is very difficult. But if we take *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, although apparently we are greedy for eating, by taking *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* our greediness is neutralized.

Spreading Love

Sneha means affection. Everyone has affection. The cats and dogs also have affection. But our affection is wrongly placed. We are affectionate for the skin, for the body. This is wrong affection. Real affection is for the soul. That we do not know. We have no information. We love our child – that is very good. We don't love the soul, however, but the body. If your father is dead, you cry, "Father has gone away." Why do you think your father has gone away? The body,

which you loved, is lying there. We do not know whom to love. If we want to actually love, let us love the soul.

To love means to be concerned for the other person's benefit. That is real love. I love you for your benefit; you love me for my benefit. If I so-called love you for my benefit, that is lust. In this material world there cannot be love. It is not possible, because the so-called love is for our own sense gratification. A young boy loves a young woman for his sense gratification, not for her sense gratification. Similarly, she also. In this material world this cheating is going on. I want to satisfy my lusty desires, but it is going on in the name of love.

There cannot be any love in this material world, because love is between spirit and spirit. But if we try to love the Supreme Spirit, Kṛṣṇa, then we shall understand how our love can be spread. When we come to the spiritual platform, then actual love begins. If we can love Kṛṣṇa, then, through Kṛṣṇa's love, we can expand our love for everyone. It is like when you water the root of a tree, the energy is expanded to the leaves, to the flowers, to the branches. If we actually love Kṛṣṇa, then we can expand our love.

We are trying to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world because of love. Someway or other we have come in contact with Kṛṣṇa. We understand that people are in *māyā*, or in ignorance, and they do not know how to become happy. So our little attempt is "Let them become Kṛṣṇa conscious." This is being done out of love. Everyone is suffering for want of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; therefore we are taking so much trouble. Kṛṣṇa wants to deliver them, and if we work on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, that is love. We love Kṛṣṇa; therefore we work on His behalf.

Everything is explained in our books. Our duty is to accept these books rightly and utilize them properly to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Otherwise we shall be on a platform of false love. We know the (please turn to page 15)

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in **but**, long **ā** like the **a** in **far** (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in **evade**, long **ī** like the **i** in **pique**. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **rim**, and **ṅ** like the **ch** in **chair**. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in **staunch-heart**, **hedge-hog**, and **red-hot**. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

Lord Rāma directs the building of a bridge to Lanka as Hanumān kneels to receive orders.



UNITY— WITHIN AND WITHOUT

When disagreement threatens the unity of a party searching for Sītā, help arrives in an unexpected form.

by Caitanya Carāṇa Dāsa

THE RĀMĀYAṆA features many intriguing group dynamics, among human groups, *vānara** groups, demon groups, and even groups comprising both humans and *vānaras*. In the group of *vānaras* that went south in search of Sītā, divisive and cohesive forces are graphically evident.

The Search and the Schism

Rāma and Sugrīva, leader of the *vānaras*, had formed an alliance: Rāma would help Sugrīva regain his wife and kingdom, and Sugrīva would help Rāma regain Sītā, who had been abducted by the demon-king Rāvaṇa. Rāma had done His part, and the now-enthroned *vānara* monarch Sugrīva had started doing his part. He had organized his leading *vānaras* into four groups and instructed them to go in the four directions to search for Sītā. The search parties were asked to return within a month, with latecomers liable for severe punishment. Among the groups, the southbound group was most likely to locate Sītā – Rāvaṇa had been seen carrying her southwards. This group had as leaders three great *vānara* generals: Aṅgada, Hanumān, and Jāmbavān. Rāma gave Hanumān a signet ring that he was to show Sītā on finding her; the ring would assure her that its bearer was an authorized messenger of Rāma.

The southbound group searched vigorously for over six weeks, braving many dangers, but couldn't

* A humanlike monkey species.

find any clue to Sītā's whereabouts. And amidst the consequent disappointment, concealed tensions within the group came to the fore. The group's three leaders had different things to commend them: age, lineage, and empowerment because of blessings. Jāmbavān was the senior by age and was accorded due deference. But his age had lessened his physical prowess. Aṅgada was a valiant prince of a noble lineage, the son of the previous *vānara* monarch, Vāli. But he was young, impetuous, and inexperienced. The fortunate Hanumān had received from the gods many extraordinary powers. But when he was still a mischievous child, those powers had made him into an innocent menace for forest

better than returning only to be executed in disgrace in front of their loved ones.

On hearing Aṅgada's apprehension, the *vānaras* responded variously, discussing to and fro, until they split into two groups. One group agreed with Aṅgada and resolved to fast to death. The other group sided with Hanumān, who underscored Sugrīva's fairness and assured that no one would be penalized for the delay.

Seismic Fault Lines In Relationships

Were Aṅgada's doubts about Sugrīva justified? Yes and no. Sugrīva had undoubtedly arranged to kill Vāli. But he had done so not because he

Tārā and Aṅgada to stay under Sugrīva's shelter and serve him as they had served Vāli earlier. So the animosity between the two brothers had been fully dissolved before Vāli's death.

Even after gaining the kingdom, Sugrīva had shown no glee. Quite the opposite. Vāli's death had filled him with such deep remorse that he had desired to enter the funeral pyre with his brother's corpse. He had been dissuaded only by the words of his well-wishers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, who had reminded him of, among other things, his duty to his citizens. After reluctantly ascending the throne, Sugrīva had carefully honored his dying brother's request by being consistently considerate towards Aṅgada.

Moreover, presently, Sugrīva had sent them on a mission to serve Rāma, who would certainly not allow the unjust execution of anyone, let alone the prince.

Unfortunately, none of this reasoning could allay Aṅgada's suspicions, disheartened as he was at their fruitless search. He chose unilaterally the extreme measure of suicidal self-mortification.

It's revealing that Aṅgada's suspicions came to the fore when their mission met with a reversal that bordered on failure. The mind often magnifies problems. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.6) cautions that our mind is presently our enemy. One of the ways it acts inimically is by distorting our perception – sometimes it trivializes big problems and sometimes it magnifies small problems. Sometimes, when faced with one big problem, it becomes so pessimistic and paranoid as to imagine other problems to be bigger than what they are. Thus does the mind escalate minor relationship issues.

Relationships are often so subtle and multilevel that some small tensions can exist even in the closest relationships. But the mind transforms these tensions into seismic fault lines that if unresolved can give rise to a relationship-shattering quake.

craved power, but because Vāli had left him with no alternative. Vāli had blown out of proportion an unfortunate misunderstanding with Sugrīva. Without giving his brother any chance to clarify things, Vāli had driven him to the forest, stripping him of all royal status and taking his brother's wife for himself. Worse still, Vāli had chased Sugrīva far and wide with murderous intent. He had given up only when Sugrīva sought refuge near a hermitage that Vāli couldn't approach due to a sage's curse. Sugrīva had tried repeatedly to reconcile with Vāli, but Vāli had instead rebuffed, rebuked, and threatened him. Seeing no other way to guarantee his life and regain his family, Sugrīva had felt constrained to arrange for Vāli's death.

Significantly, before his death Vāli had reconciled with Sugrīva, seeking his forgiveness and requesting him to treat Tārā (Vāli's wife) and Aṅgada kindly. Moreover, Vāli had requested

A Predator Turns Benefactor

Hanumān found himself in a delicate situation. Aṅgada, the prince and heir, was leading the *vānaras* to mass suicide. Moreover, he was voicing serious accusations against the king. Still, Hanumān exhibited maturity in not going off the handle and counter-accusing Aṅgada of treason. He understood that the prince's words came from a hurting heart – he was still a youth, a bereaved son who had unexpectedly lost his father just a few months before and was now burdened by his failure in the leadership responsibility entrusted to him. That he had even accepted such a responsibility was laudable.

With gentle words and sound arguments, Hanumān tried to persuade Aṅgada. But, despite his best efforts, he couldn't make any headway.

Often when we do the best we can, God helps us do what we can't. And His help may well come in the least expected ways – sometimes in ways that don't look like help at all. For the arguing *vānaras*, divine help came in a scary form.

While the *vānaras'* talks had come to an impasse, suddenly a giant vulture emerged from a nearby cave. On beholding the *vānaras* sitting in a posture meant for fasting until death, he declared that he would soon feast on these *vānaras*.

Aṅgada saw this giant bird's arrival as providence's punishment for his failing to serve Rāma's purpose. Seeing this vulture reminded Aṅgada of another vulture, Jatāyu, who had died while trying in vain to stop Rāvaṇa from kidnapping Sītā. The despondent prince mentioned to a neighboring *vānara* that in their service to Rāma, they seemed fated to die unsuccessfully, as had the heroic Jatāyu.

On hearing the mention of Jatāyu, the vulture froze. Recovering after a few moments, he asked about Jatāyu, stating that he was Jatāyu's older brother, Sampati.

Relieved and intrigued, Aṅgada told the story of how Jatāyu had

attained martyrdom while trying to stop Rāvaṇa from abducting Sītā. Sampati cried in agony and anger, lamenting that he hadn't been able to protect Jatāyu and couldn't even avenge his death because he no longer had wings.

Seeing that the *vānaras* were hearing sympathetically, he told how he had lost his wings. Long ago, the two bird brothers had in their youthful impetuosity decided to fly to the sun. When the sun's heat started scorching them, Sampati shaded Jatāyu with his wings. The heat burnt his wings and he fell to the earth, wingless and separated from Jatāyu. While he grieved, a sage named Candrama solaced him with timeless spiritual knowledge and assured him that his adversity would give him an opportunity to serve the Lord, who would descend in the future.

As Sampati fell silent, Aṅgada contemplated his words. It struck him that the far-flying Sampati might know the location of Rāvaṇa's kingdom. When he asked Sampati, the vulture perked up, excitedly realizing that his destined opportunity had arrived: The *vānaras* were servants of Rāma, the Lord's current incarnation.

Further, by helping Rāma's servants in finding Rāvaṇa, he could contribute to the cause of avenging Jatāyu.

Sampati told them that several months earlier he had seen Rāvaṇa carrying a beautiful woman southward through the sky. Informing the *vānaras* that despite his age he still had keen sight, he drew himself to his full height. Focusing his eyes across the ocean, he announced that Sītā was there in Rāvaṇa's kingdom, Lanka.

The *vānaras* became elated. Their mutual differences forgotten, the two groups of *vānaras* jubilantly embraced and started planning their next move. Aṅgada too put aside his suspicions. He had always wanted to serve Rāma and hadn't abandoned his devotion to Rāma, even when doubts about Sugrīva had overwhelmed him. Now that an avenue to succeed in his service to Rāma had opened, he was able to push back his doubts about Sugrīva.

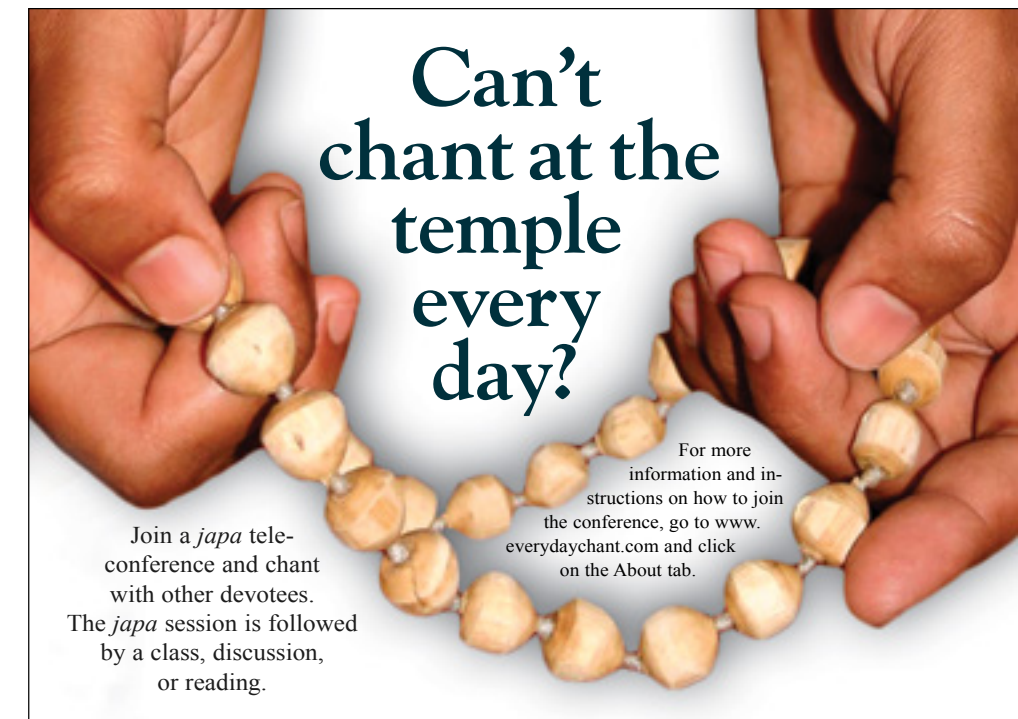
After this incident, Aṅgada never succumbed to similar doubts about his uncle. In the climactic war, he fought faithfully under Sugrīva, heroically felling many dreadful

The mind often magnifies problems. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.6) cautions that our mind is presently our enemy.

sages, who cursed him to forget his powers until he would be reminded of them at a later, more opportune moment. Therefore, up to this point in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Hanumān hadn't done anything extraordinarily heroic.

Their search for Sītā having drawn a blank, the disheartened *vānaras* discussed their next strategy: Should they keep searching? Or should they return, report their failure, and seek further orders?

Aṅgada, Vāli's son, had pent-up resentment against Sugrīva, who he felt had conspired to kill Vāli. So the *vānaras'* current predicament triggered residual suspicions in him. Aṅgada said that Sugrīva would use their failure to find Sītā and their delay in returning as justification for executing them. Venting his suppressed anger, he said that such excess wouldn't be beyond someone who had conspired to kill his own brother. Aṅgada concluded that fast- ing to death in the forest would be



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demons. And the other *vānaras* too never mentioned *Āṅgada's* accusations. Leaving the past behind them, they worked unitedly and successfully in *Rāma's* service.

A Big Problem Solved Through a Bigger Problem

The specifics of this story may not seem relevant to us when we face divisive tensions in our daily lives. But if we look beyond the specifics of the narrative to generic patterns, we can discern four stages that may well resonate with our experience:

1. A group of strong individuals come together for a challenging cause.
2. A reversal aggravates underlying tensions, creating a schism.

When we face problems while serving the Lord, we can't know when and how a turning point may come. Even if things seem grim, we never lose until we lose hope. And even if we lose hope, our Lord doesn't. He can work in the most inconceivable ways to give us hope and direction.

While we work together, as we often must to achieve anything big, differences of opinion are inevitable. Focusing on the cause that brings us together rather than the factors that push us apart is vital for the group's success or even survival. If we can voluntarily maintain this focus, that is the best. But if we somehow lose focus, problems seem to balloon. They compel us to choose

beings, parts of God.

We have a lower side that prods us towards shortsighted actions. And we have a higher side that inspires us towards nobler, farsighted actions that are truer to our essential nature and core values. Devotion to God activates and strengthens our higher side, gradually elevating and uniting our self-conception with our spiritual self.

However, our lower side tends to minimize devotion, making us believe that worldly exigencies are far more important and urgent than any spiritual cause. And as such exigencies keep coming, one after another, they leave us spiritually disoriented and de-centered. Thus, we become vulnerable to divisive

influences that aggravate worldly exigencies, thereby trapping us in a circle of spiritual distraction and worldly

obsession. To avoid this trap, we need to use our intelligence, sharpened by regular study of scripture, to keep our devotion at the center of our heart and our relationships.

When we keep ourselves devotionally grounded, we get the inner security to act maturely in outer relationships. We can firmly resist unwarranted suspicions and agreeably resolve warranted concerns. And adversities that could rupture unity can instead strengthen it if we see those adversities as spurs for focusing on God and the common cause of serving Him. 🌸

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We never lose until we lose hope. And even if we lose hope, our Lord doesn't. He can work in the most inconceivable ways to give us hope and direction.

3. A bigger problem appears, bringing the group together.

4. In working unitedly, the group tackles the bigger problem along with the original problem.

The turning point for the *vānaras* was an incidental, distress-triggered reference to *Jatāyu*. Significantly, their comparing themselves with *Jatāyu* revealed that they were still committed to *Rāma*. And that casual expression of their devotion turned out to be life-saving and mission-saving. Hearing *Jatāyu's* name, *Sampati* turned from predator to benefactor and told *Sītā's* whereabouts.

Still, even that turning point had initially looked like a worsening point. *Sampati* hadn't seemed god-sent; he had seemed devil-sent, being bent on devouring the *vānaras*. But despite appearances, behind the scenes things were moving by divine arrangement to assist them. And when they persevered, that assistance manifested itself.

between correcting course by uniting around the common cause or being ripped apart by the problem and the consequent exacerbated divisive forces.

The best common cause is the cause of devotion to God, for He is the well-wisher of everyone, as the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29) states. And He engages His devotees as agents of His wisdom, helping them find their way through obstacles.

Interactions and Inner Actions

Successful teamwork rests on not just the interactions between individuals but also the inner actions within the individuals' minds. This is seen from how *Āṅgada's* internal suspicion caused external dissension. Pertinently, devotion to God can unify us not only with others, but also with ourselves. That is, devotion can unite our present consciousness with our pure consciousness as spiritual

EXPANDING OUR LOVE

(continued from page 9)

platform of false love: today a couple is married, but because their love is on the false platform, tomorrow they divorce. That is not love. That kind of love has no meaning; that kind of affection has no meaning. It is simply bondage.

Our aim is to become free from this material bondage. Real *sneha* – real affection, real love – should be spread. And that can be done through *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. Otherwise, it is all false.

Māyā is so strong that we are taking this false thing as reality. It is very difficult to give it up. That is explained by *Kṛṣṇa*:

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te*

“This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” (*Gītā* 7.14) This – surrender to God – is the only religion. If we become pure devotees of *Kṛṣṇa*, then our love will be extended to everyone. Not only to my society, but to everyone. It is not that one thinks, “These are my children; those are others' children.” No. All children. All human beings. Not only my countrymen – all other countrymen. Not only human beings, but even animals. That is *sneha*. It is not that I think, “I am safe, and let the animals be killed in the slaughterhouse.” No, that is not love. Love means for everyone.

Real Love

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* says, *samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu* – equality for all living entities. That is real love. That is real concern, *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. A lover of *Kṛṣṇa* will hesitate to kill even one ant. This child – if I like I can kill him without difficulty. But

does it mean that I shall kill him? No. Similarly anyone can kill a small ant. But the ant is a living entity, part and parcel of *Kṛṣṇa*, and therefore he should not be unnecessarily killed.

We should be careful and not think, “Trample over the ants and let them be killed.” No. Everything should be carefully done. Of course, we cannot stop this, but we should be careful, and if it is done, then if we remain *Kṛṣṇa* conscious *Kṛṣṇa* will excuse us. Therefore, if we walk, we shall walk for *Kṛṣṇa*. Then if some ants are killed – not knowingly, but unknowingly – then we are untouched by the sinful activities. Otherwise, it is immediately noted: “Here is a man who has killed an ant.” Nature's law is enforced so minutely. Every minute the account is kept. But if you remain in the business of *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness, then you are excused for such accidental killing.

Otherwise, everyone is becoming obliged. If I take one cent from you,

I have to pay you, say, four cents – with interest, compound interest. This is the law. We are taking money from others. Unless we spend it for *Kṛṣṇa*, then we shall be obliged to return that money.

We have so many obligations, beginning with obligation to the demigods and the great sages of the past. The great sage *Vyāsadeva* has given us this literature. So we are obliged to him, indebted to him. We are indebted to the demigods. The sun is giving sunshine, at night the moon is giving its shine, and the cloud, controlled by *Indra*, is giving us water. So we are all indebted. Therefore there are many types of *yajñas*, or sacrifices, mentioned in the Vedic literature. But if you perform one *yajña* – the *sankīrtana-yajña* of chanting *Kṛṣṇa's* names – then you become cleared of all debts. In this way we have to execute the *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness movement very carefully, and the simple process is to chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa*.

Thank you very much. 🌸



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Do We Have Free Will?

Modern biology suggests that free will is an illusion and that belief in it is similar to a religious belief. What does the Bhagavad-gītā say on this point?

by Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa

Biology and Free Will

THE BIOLOGICAL behavior of human beings is currently thought to be due to their genes, which encode proteins, which form functional blocks of neurons and other cell types, which form the brain and other tissues of the human body.¹ Free will, or the capacity to make an independent choice, from a biological point of view is therefore an illusion given that behavior is not under the control of the person. In fact, in biology a person is not an independent entity, but a collection of genes, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and water. How does it make sense to talk about free will of, say, a nitrogen atom or a bowl of pasta?

Even biologists have a tough time acting like they don't have free will, as Anthony Cashmore at the University of Pennsylvania astutely points out in a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.² He argues that belief in free will is equivalent to a belief in vitalism,* which is embarrassing for

*A doctrine that ascribes the functions of a living organism to a vital principle distinct from chemical and physical forces.

“One who engages in full devotional service, unflinching in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.”

– *Bhagavad-gītā* 14.26

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biologists who “proudly reject vitalism.”

Even if there is something called free will, science cannot test the hypothesis “free will exists,” because free will means unpredictability. In a comment on Cashmore's paper, Konrad Hinsen from the Centre de Biophysique Moléculaire in France wrote,

The scientific method that we apply today, which is based on the formulation of hypotheses that are then tested by observation and experiment, cannot accommodate unpredictability. The statement that “property X is unpredictable” cannot be tested by observation and is thus not a scientific hypothesis. Moreover, even if property X itself is observable, its supposed unpredictability makes it impossible to formulate scientific hypotheses about it. As a consequence, free will cannot be integrated into any scientific model.³

The trouble with the concept of free will is that free will cannot obey physical laws or models – that is, it's not a causal outcome of molecular events (if it were, it wouldn't be “free”). Cashmore responds to Hinsen that as free will is not a testable property obeying physical laws, it is similar to a religious belief, definitely not something that ought to be accepted by scientists.

Furthermore, according to Cashmore, our justice system is inherently flawed because it is based on free will. He writes,

An individual cannot be held responsible for either his genes or his environment. From this simple analysis, surely it follows that individuals cannot logically be held responsible for their behavior. Yet a basic tenet of the judicial system and the way that we govern society is that we hold individuals accountable on the assumption that people can make choices that do not simply reflect a summation of their genetic and environmental history. As de Duve has written, “If . . . neuronal events in the brain determine behavior, irrespective of whether

they are conscious or unconscious, it is hard to find room for free will. But if free will does not exist, there can be no responsibility, and the structure of human societies must be revised.”⁴

It is my belief that, as more attention is given to the mechanisms that govern human behavior, it will increasingly be seen that the concept of free will is an illusion, and the fallacy of a basic premise of the judicial system will become more apparent.⁵

How does the process of evolution explain this illusory notion of free will? According to Cashmore, consciousness provides us with an apparent sense of responsibility, which benefits society even though it is a burden on the individual. Cashmore recognizes that punishment is meaningless given that an offender has no free will, but suggests that justice should be based on what's necessary to maintain a degree of orderliness in society.

Various scientists commented on Cashmore's article, and he appears to convincingly rebut them. In one reply, he writes, “Thus Richard Dawkins writes scathingly⁶ about religious beliefs and yet in numerous interviews expresses his belief in free will. . . . The reality is that in this instance, the process of evolution has conned us into believing in free will.” This idea that we trick ourselves into thinking we made a “choice” was first proposed by Harvard psychologists Wegner and Wheatley nearly twenty years ago,⁷ with mounting recent experimental evidence that seems to support it (for example, Note 8).

The trouble is that neither theists nor atheists can operate without “believing” in their free will. Otherwise the entire act of living becomes superfluous. This is the sorry state of affairs that a human being is stuck with in the world.

Explanation of Free Will In the Gītā and Bhāgavatam

Somewhat similar to the biological worldview, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* the

body is likened to a machine. A machine such as a car needs fuel to run. Similarly, the bodily machine needs food, drink, and a favorable environment to survive. But the *jīva*, being nonmatter, is distinct from the body and does not need the body to survive. The driver of a car doesn't drink gasoline, and the *jīva* in the body doesn't need food and water. Yet we (souls) all have the strong experience of thirst and hunger. The *Gītā* explains that we are hallucinating that we are the bodily machine and therefore consider its needs our own. But this hallucination is far from the truth.

The mind receives inputs from the senses (eyes, ears, nose, skin, and tongue). An intrinsic quality of sense objects (form, smell, taste, touch, and sound) is that they elicit attachment or repulsion in the mind. The mind desires to possess sense objects imagined to produce pleasure (attachment) and detests those that come in the way of that possession (repulsion). Incorrectly thinking that it is the body (this misidentification is called *ahankāra*), the *jīva* considers these desires its own although they are actually born in the mind, which is separate from the *jīva*. The *jīva* is not enjoying or suffering, but rather thinking that the suffering and happiness born in the mind are its own.

All actions are carried out by the body (which includes the senses) and the mind. The person is not mechanically causing the body to work; that is, the *jīva* neither runs the heart nor flexes the muscles. Being nonmatter, the *jīva* is aloof. All these activities are carried out by the body alone (under the supervision of Paramātmā, a partial expansion of Kṛṣṇa).

When the body feels thirsty, it seeks out water. But the *jīva*, or soul, is not thirsty – it cannot actually taste the water, which is material. Rather, it is having an “experience” of tasting the water because the mind registers a sensory event and the *jīva* considers that event to be

happening to itself. So long as the *jīva* is in the body and thinks it is the body, it is forced to be in this “hallucinatory” state.

The *jīva*'s hallucination is vividly demonstrated in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with the allegory of Purañjana. There the *jīva* is shown to be directly under the control of the intelligence. The intelligence decides the appropriate course of action for the *jīva* by accepting or rejecting different actions proposed by the mind. A weak intelligence follows the mind's whims easily, resulting in destructive behavior (such as immoral acts), while a strong intelligence enables resistance to the mind's tempting proposals. But so long as the *jīva* identifies with the intelligence, it has no capacity to make independent decisions – i.e., it has no free will. We will call the control of the *jīva* by the intelligence in this way “outside-in” control.

If we take the term free will to mean “inside-out control” – that is, the capacity of the *jīva* to control the intelligence – then a requirement for this is that the *jīva* has to recognize itself as separate from the intelligence.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*

sheds some light on the question of free will. *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.33 goes like this:

*sadṛśam ceṣṭate svasyāḥ
prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni
nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*

“Even the man in knowledge of scripture acts according to his desires. All men act according to their desires. What can instruction or threat of punishment accomplish?” This verse is somewhat similar to the question of judiciary punishment that Cashmore raises. Are men punishable for following their desires, given that these desires are born in the mind and are not the *jīva*'s own? As even scripturally knowledgeable persons are driven by their desires as if without free will, what can instruction or threat of punishment accomplish?

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary reads as follows:

Even a person who knows the punishment stated in the scriptures acts according to his evil nature – his sinful impressions which have been present since beginningless time. What then to speak of
(please turn to page 46)

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*Lord Kṛṣṇa guides Arjuna –
and through him, all of us – in the quest to
conquer “the dweller on the threshold.”*

BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

Five Universal Stages –
From Existential Agony
To Love of God

by Satyarāja Dāsa

THE *BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ* is not just another religious text; nor is it merely a Hindu scripture. Rather, it provides what can be called applied spiritual technologies, or systematic procedures by which anyone of any religious faith can advance toward the ultimate goal of life. In other words, the *Gītā* transcends its natural associations with India and with the sectarian boundaries within which most people would place it.

Historically, the devastating battle referred to in its pages centers on two royal families and their dynastic concerns. Philosophically, how-

ever, the battle is our own – our true self’s ongoing struggle against all our lower desires and passions.

Arjuna, the hero of the *Gītā*, represents all individual “selves,” or souls, and his dilemma, as depicted in the text, brings to mind the proverbial “dweller on the threshold,” made famous in Edward B. Lytton’s Rosicrucian novel *Zanoni* (1842). This “Dweller” is characterized as a hideous creature with monstrous features, appearing before the book’s protagonist just as the latter enters an unknown, mysterious land. The creature tries to shake him

*With Lord
Kṛṣṇa’s help
we can defeat
the figura-
tive monster
within us
that threatens
our higher
aspirations.*

up, to make him lose hope, and our hero, we know, will succumb if he is not fully prepared.

The same is true for Arjuna. His lower nature tries to subdue his higher nature, as we see in the *Gītā*'s initial chapters. Arjuna's doubts and hesitancy are like a creature comparable to the Dweller, and his more noble nature, seen throughout his life, is the hero – both exist in the same body, as they do in all of us.

The monster, then, is merely figurative, trying to defeat each person's inner spirit and the higher aspirations of each human heart. The difference here, however, is that both Arjuna and we are real.

Like the temptations that came to both Buddha and Jesus, Lytton's

crisis of Arjuna, who represents all steadfast practitioners. Seekers tend to reach a point of intense dismay as they realize there must be something beyond the day-to-day, and feel overwhelming incompleteness. They gradually come to realize that this feeling will not go away without the presence of God in their lives. And so they embark on a spiritual journey. (The *Gītā* lists three other mindsets that can lead to the spiritual quest: the desire for wealth, the thirst for higher knowledge, and wisdom.)

2. Preliminary Surrender

Such inner anguish leads to a rudimentary form of surrender – a preliminary faith that inspires the will

to make certain life changes and engage in corresponding practices that awaken devotion to God. Without that, one cannot progress on the path.

At this point, as Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, one would do well to find a spiritual master, someone more experienced in the procedures of devotion. It is at this point, in fact, that Arjuna says: "Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me." (2.7) Kṛṣṇa's first instructions, and all that follow, clarify one's existence apart from the body: The living being is a spirit soul, encased in a material body, and his main function is to serve the Supreme Lord with love and devotion.

3. Passionate Search and Sincere Inquiry

Such surrender is in itself liberating, and the spiritual aspirant begins to make substantial progress by approaching the teacher with pertinent questions, rendering service, and developing love for God by developing love for His dedicated servant, the spiritual master. At this level the science of spirituality begins to unfold. One learns how to read signs of advancement, as well as signs of faltering.

Here, prayer and chanting the holy names of God become more meaningful too, and one is now able to effectively use attendant practices that nourish pure chanting.

4. The Dawn of True Knowledge

The intricacies of God consciousness, including insight into the nature of the Supreme, gradually arise in the hearts of sincere practitioners. When Arjuna submits to Kṛṣṇa on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, the Lord reveals transcendental knowledge to him that few will ever attain. Arjuna learns how to see God in natural phenomena, as Kṛṣṇa explains how all things exist only because of His presence. Overall, such knowledge reveals that God manifests Himself impersonally as Brahman; pervades everything, from living beings to atoms, as Paramātmā, His localized Super-soul expansion; and remains distinct as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who cherishes intimate relationships of love with His devotees.

5. Love of God

The *Gītā* (18.66) finally promotes full dedication, for having pursued the science of transcendence, one finally is *able to fully surrender* – for one now knows what or whom one is surrendering to. This is not surrender in the negative sense, where one relinquishes free will and potentially becomes subject to abuse or exploitation. This is surrender to

our own inner bliss, our natural, constitutional position as an eternal, loving servant of the Lord.

The New "Dweller"

Kṛṣṇa says:

I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts. The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me. To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance. (10.8–11)

This is the *Gītā*'s ultimate teaching, in which a new "dweller" emerges in the life of the spiritual practitioner. The sincere soul gradually comes in touch with the Personality of Godhead, his eternal friend and ever well-wisher.

By the *Gītā*'s purifying principles, Lytton's monster quickly disappears. He is replaced by Kṛṣṇa, the supreme dear one whose love we have long forgotten. We now learn to love Him again, and start to remember that His love for us knows no bounds. 🙏

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This article was adapted from the author's book Krishna's Song: A New Look at the Bhagavad Gita, by Steven J. Rosen, available at amazon.com.

Arjuna's doubts and hesitancy are like a creature comparable to the Dweller, and his more noble nature is the hero.


monster attacks when we want it least – when we try to pursue higher reality. The *Gītā* addresses the specific obstructions that deter our progress and systematically educates us in how to defeat the creature, Lytton's monster, rendering him ineffectual and impotent.

Guidance to the Goal

But, more, the text guides us, through pertinent instruction, to live in that higher, magical realm of the spirit, where negative "dwellers of the threshold" no longer exist. It is this that the *Gītā* bequeaths to its most sincere readers, and it does so through five universal stages that all aspiring transcendentalists must one day go through, in one form or another:

1. Existential Agony

As the *Gītā* opens, we are introduced to the psychological and spiritual



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Lord Viṣṇu appears before Dhruva, pleased with his intense devotional practice.

TWO BOYS WHO FOUND GOD

Two histories among many from the Vedic literature that show the material and spiritual benefits of bhakti.

by Akshay Gupta



THE VEDIC literature presents many stories meant to enlighten us with transcendental knowledge and help us proceed along our spiritual path. One such story deals with a five-year-old boy named Dhruva.

Dhruva's father, King Uttānapāda, had two wives, Sunīti and Suruci. Dhruva was the son of Sunīti, but his father preferred Suruci. One day, Dhruva wanted to sit on his father's lap, but Suruci forbade him, claiming that only her son – Dhruva's stepbrother, Uttama – could sit on the king's lap. Suruci said that if Dhruva wanted to sit on the throne, he would have to worship God and take his next birth from her womb. When Dhruva heard this, he breathed heavily out of anger, and when he saw that his father was silent, he ran to his mother and told her what had happened.

Greatly aggrieved, but not knowing a remedy for the situation, Sunīti said, "My dear son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pains upon others suffers himself from that pain." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.17)

This is a valuable lesson we can all learn. Even if people offend or anger us, we still shouldn't wish anything inauspicious for them. Śrīla

Prahlāda offers a garland to Lord Nṛsimha, who has just killed his demoniac father.



Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, said, “Let me not wish anything but the highest good for my worst enemy.” Thus, regardless of the situations we find ourselves in, we should strive to have a compassionate spirit and wish the best for others. Besides, according to the laws of karma, whenever we harm someone, we are liable to experience that same harm so that we can learn to treat others more respectfully.

Off to the Forest

After some deliberation, Sunīti confirmed what Suruci had told Dhruva: if he wanted to sit on the same

circumstantial happiness and distress resulting from pious or impious activities, if we want to get out of the clutches of this nescience, then whatever position we are put in by the will of the Lord we should accept. Thus if we simply surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, we shall get out of the clutches of this material existence.”

Despite Nārada’s instruction to tolerate his condition, Dhruva insisted on pursuing his plan to worship God in the forest. Nārada told Dhruva that he should indeed take to the process of devotional service to the Lord, for by doing so one can fulfill all one’s desires. Nārada then described the beautiful form of the Lord and gave Dhruva the mantra

opulence of having a kingdom greater than his father’s, he ultimately became disgusted with that desire. We can approach God to fulfill our material desires, but if we approach Him out of pure love, then we can experience an even greater sense of happiness and love. Moreover, the Lord is so merciful that even if we initially approach Him with a material desire, He will purify us, and we will come to the stage of being able to approach Him out of pure love.

Even though Dhruva no longer cared about his previous material desires, the Lord fulfilled them nonetheless. He told Dhruva that he would receive not only his father’s kingdom but an entire planet. The Lord then returned to His abode, and Dhruva returned home, where his family members embraced him in great joy. As the Lord had promised, Dhruva came to inherit the throne of his father, who set out for the forest for spiritual life.

Satisfying Our Material Needs

Dhruva’s story shows that by taking to devotional service, we don’t miss out on having our material needs taken care of. There are also examples in history of saints who approached the Lord not, like Dhruva, for material gain, but out of pure love, yet by the Lord’s mercy they also received ample material facilities.

One such story deals with another boy, named Prahlāda, who was very devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Unlike Dhruva’s father, Prahlāda’s father, Hiranyakaśipu, was not a pious man. He terrorized the world and abused his own child. Hiranyakaśipu was so strongly opposed to Prahlāda’s worshiping the Lord that he tried to kill him in many ways, including having his assistants stab Prahlāda with sharp weapons, throw him from a cliff, and poison him. But the Lord always protected Prahlāda, and finally, in His form as Nṛsiṁhadeva – His half-man, half-lion incarnation

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya to meditate on, along with other instructions on devotional service.

Nārada then visited King Uttānapāda, who was aggrieved because of his neglect of his own son. But Nārada assured him that Dhruva would be taken care of in the forest while executing devotional service.

Meanwhile, Dhruva was undergoing austerities so intense that they made the world shake, and the Lord Himself descended to stop Dhruva’s austerities. He appeared before Dhruva and broke his meditation. Upon seeing the Lord in front of him, Dhruva was overwhelmed with ecstasy so great that it made all forms of material happiness seem completely insignificant. He lamented having approached the Lord for material gain, and said that he had wanted a few pieces of broken glass but instead had come upon a diamond.

Even though Dhruva originally approached the Lord for the material

throne as Uttama, he had to worship God. Hearing this, Dhruva set out for the forest with great determination to worship God and acquire a kingdom even greater than his father’s. Along the way, Dhruva encountered the sage Nārada, who gave him valuable instructions and spiritual guidance. Nārada initially tested Dhruva’s determination by urging him to tolerate his distress:

*yasya yad daiva-vihitam
sa tena sukha-duḥkhaḥ
ātmanam toṣayan dehī
tamasah pāram ṛcchati*

“One should try to keep himself satisfied in any condition of life – whether distress or happiness – which is offered by the supreme will. A person who endures in this way is able to cross over the darkness of nescience very easily.” (Bhāg. 4.8.33) Śrīla Prabhupāda comments: “Instead of being attached to the

Dhruva was overwhelmed with ecstasy so great that it made all forms of material happiness seem completely insignificant.

– He killed Hiranyakaśipu.

The Lord then requested Prahlāda to ask for a benediction. Prahlāda was a pure devotee of the Lord, however, so he didn’t ask for any material benediction. He instead asked that his father be excused for his sins. The Lord fulfilled this desire, and He also gave Prahlāda his father’s vast kingdom to rule for the rest of his life.

From this story we can see that God will ensure that our material needs are met if we simply try to love Him. We can also learn that even though we may be going through difficulties or trials, God is always our friend and well-wisher. Kṛṣṇa tells His devotee Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.31), *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*: “O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.” Thus, a devotee of the Lord has nothing to fear even in the midst of dangers or obstacles, because Kṛṣṇa assures His devotees that He will ensure that they never perish.

We can also learn from Prahlāda’s example how to practice tolerance and forgiveness. Even if someone harms us or acts maliciously toward us, we can learn to tolerate these wrongdoings and wish the best for the perpetrator.

Success Through Bhakti

From the examples of these great saints who exemplify *bhakti-yoga*, or linking oneself with God through love and devotion, we can glimpse how bright our future can be if we take to the practice of *bhakti-yoga*. We will get all our material necessities taken care of by the grace of the Lord and begin to relish the spiritual happiness that comes from an exchange of love with Him.

This spiritual happiness grows gradually. First, one has some initial faith in the process of *bhakti-yoga* and in God, and one starts to associate with those on the path. Then one seeks spiritual guidance from someone who is spiritually advanced, just as one goes to the university to learn

from experts in various subjects. One begins to feel internal purification from the practice of *bhakti-yoga* and becomes cleansed of unwanted things in the heart. One becomes steady on the path of *bhakti-yoga* and relishes performing devotional activities. Soon after, one becomes attached to the Lord and experiences great ecstasy by serving Him. Ultimately, one feels such intense bliss that it is like swimming in an ocean of ecstasy.

We can easily practice *bhakti-yoga*; we don’t have to enter the forest like Dhruva. The most basic element of *bhakti-yoga* is to chant the holy names of God, especially the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. One can chant anywhere at anytime. By chanting we “cleanse the mirror of the mind” so that the pure happiness that lies within us can shine through.

When a mirror is covered by dirt, it no longer shines, but when the mirror is cleaned, it regains its clarity. Similarly, our mind may be covered with different desires, fears, and misconceptions, but when we chant the *mahā-mantra* those impurities are cleansed and our originally pure consciousness is revived.

We can learn a lot from the stories of great *bhakti-yogis* like Dhruva and Prahlāda. The most important lesson is that we should not neglect to take care of our souls. While caring for the body is important, only nourishing the needs of the soul will make us truly happy. Through *bhakti-yoga* our material needs will be met and we can develop the endless love for God that lies within us, and thus become eternally happy. 🌟

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The Origin Of Our Family Business

“Our family” refers to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, and our business is to inform as many people as possible about Kṛṣṇa and His teachings.

by Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa

THE FORDS and Disneys of America, and the Tatas and Birlas of India, are successful family dynasties. The businesses owned and operated by these families have been around for generations. When it comes to longevity, however, Japan’s Hoshi family, which runs the Hoshi Hotels, is the oldest. The Hoshis opened for business in 718 AD, making their business the oldest family-run business in the world. They are fifty generations in!

But is their hospitality business really the oldest? According to Vedic histories, Lord Kṛṣṇa started His family business at the beginning of creation when He poured Vedic wisdom into the heart of Brahmā and empowered him with the knowledge to create a universe, where *jīvas* could rectify their consciousness and return to Him. This was, of course, trillions of years before the Hoshi Hotel opened its doors. Brahmā expanded his family and taught and empowered each of its members to learn what he



had been taught and then to pass that Vedic knowledge on, intact, to subsequent generations. Brahmā’s son, Nārada, for example, became the mentor of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, who compiled, edited, and expanded the *Vedas* through his son and many disciples.

Vyāsadeva, eager to broadcast to the people of Kali-yuga the knowledge that would alleviate their miseries, engaged a scribe to write the *Vedas* down. He understood through his mystic vision and scriptural knowledge that the people of Kali-yuga would suffer from a variety of hardships caused by the maleficent influence of Kali, including diminished memory. He knew that in Kali-yuga, in order to remember and follow the *Veda*’s sacred teachings, humankind would need them in written form.

The *Veda* was originally a single book, the *Atharva Veda*. To make it easier to teach and learn, Vyāsadeva divided it into four parts – the *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*. He then gave different disciples different parts of the *Veda* to teach. Some



Yamarāja Dāsa

Excerpted from *Our Family Business: The Great Art of Distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Books*, available from the Krishna.com Store. The original material included three footnotes, and we’ve added a few here to aid newer readers.

of them divided their parts further to facilitate their students’ learning and teaching.

Later, Vyāsa wrote the *Vedānta-sūtras* “with a view to presenting just the cream of Vedic knowledge.”¹ He also compiled the *Purānas*, Vedic histories that explain the *Vedas*. And he composed a “bridge book” to the *Vedas*, the *Mahābhārata*, which

caters to Kali-yuga’s less philosophically inclined populace but also contains the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a digestible and succinct summary of Vedic philosophy. The *Gītā*, after taking the reader through a step-by-step process of self-realization, finally reveals the goal of Vedic knowledge, *bhakti-yoga*, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure love of God.

So from Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā to Nārada to Vyāsadeva to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī sitting at Ter Kadamba² and writing his books to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with his Vaiṣṇava Depository to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and his own use of the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*³ to our Śrīla Prabhupāda writing his Bhaktivedanta purports – all are in



the same family business. Visit any BBT⁴ office around the world and you will find devotees who share in Vyāsadeva's mood and work ethic, and in Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire that Kṛṣṇa consciousness be made

accessible to everyone in every walk of life. In fact, the BBT is translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* into so many languages that almost anyone in the world can read it – a feat Śrīla Vyāsadeva would praise,

because it fulfills the purpose of his work.

In telling of Vyāsadeva's despondency after his having written down the *Vedas*, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes Vyāsadeva's purpose.

When his guru, Nārada Muni, appeared on the scene, Vyāsadeva asked about the reason for his despair. Nārada told him, "You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Person-

ality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless. Please, therefore, describe the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa more vividly."

Vyāsa accepted his guru's advice at once. After attaining the perfection of meditation (*samādhi*) and directly seeing Kṛṣṇa, His potencies, and His pastimes, Śrīla Vyāsadeva produced the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, or *Bhāgavata Purāna*. This text is his own commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* and is thus the distilled essence of everything he had written before. In it he purely described the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His activities in vivid detail.

Vyāsadeva taught *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to his liberated son, Śukadeva, and Śukadeva in turn spoke it publicly to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, who was sitting on the bank of the Ganges after having been cursed to die by a *brāhmaṇa* boy. Sūta Gosvāmī, who was present while Śukadeva spoke, later repeated the *Bhāgavatam* to an assembly of learned *brāhmaṇas* and sages in the Naimiṣāraṇya forest. While introducing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to those sages, Sūta said: "Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto him [Śuka], the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross over the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of Vedic knowledge, after having personally assimilated it by experience."⁵

Today's distributors of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, in that same mood of compassion, venture door to door or onto the street, to fairs, rock concerts, and shopping centers – anywhere they can find people in need of spiritual enlightenment – to join in the family business of presenting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to society. When they do so, they are serving an ancient line of succession of great souls that comes down from Śrī Kṛṣṇa through Brahmā, Nārada, Vyāsadeva,

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His spiritual descendants, down through His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and his disciples and their descendants.

All of these personalities are actually spiritual entrepreneurs. Those devotees who today follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's example and exhaustive instructions to expand book publication and distribution will be successful in their entrepreneurship, because they are backed by all of Kṛṣṇa's eternal family members.

Value Added

Everyone loves a success story, especially a true rags-to-riches tale, in which someone starts with no money and no friends, but has a great idea and the determination to create a thriving enterprise. We come from spiritually humble beginnings, but with our family's blessings, we can become spiritual entrepreneurs and make ourselves and others spiritually wealthy beyond anything we could imagine.

I live in Silicon Valley, home of legendary successes like Hewlett-Packard's William Redington Hewlett and David Packard and Apple's Steve Jobs and Steven Wozniak. Both of these legendary success stories feature a couple of bright young people with a fresh idea and a desire to bring it out into the world. Both pairs of entrepreneurs started in dusty garages, emerging a few years later with a product that not only became a household name but also earned their inventors billions of dollars.

Success stories like these provide impetus for thousands of would-be entrepreneurs who want to change the world and, while doing so, net themselves remarkable wealth and fame. Catering to the public's taste for such romantic quests, in November 2010, *Newsweek* ran a story entitled "Amazing Late Bloomers," chronicling thirteen luminaries who attained startling success after the age of sixty. Among these standout

achievers was His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The article recounts how at the age of sixty-nine “Swami Prabhupāda” came alone to the United States on a freighter. He had no money (he had only seven dollars worth of unspendable rupees in his pocket) and no backers. Within twelve short years he circled the globe fourteen times, developed a worldwide spiritual movement, opened 108 temples, and wrote and published seventy books.

Great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Śrīla Prabhupāda, whether they start their mission at the dawn of their lives or when they are older, are the premier entrepreneurs. Why? Because they bring to market the most valued product of all: the process for awakening love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Like conventional entrepreneurs, these *ācāryas* often begin their campaigns in obscurity, sometimes even in isolated garagelike rooms. But instead of designing the gadgets of the future, these compassionate world teachers write books of profound spiritual wisdom; instead of writing complex computer code, they assemble the spiritual formulas found in the *Vedas* into contextualized *sūtras* – mantras that free people from the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease and transport them back to the spiritual world.

Five thousand years ago, the venerable sage Vyāsadeva sat meditating in a lonely mountain cottage surrounded by berry trees. In his solitude he compiled the epic *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the hearing of which purifies the hearts of even its most downtrodden readers and quickly brings them to spiritual perfection.

We have already mentioned Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as carrying on Vyāsadeva’s spiritual entrepreneurship, but there are also Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and the other Vṛndāvana *gosvāmīs*. These *ācāryas* barely slept, and when they did, it was as mendicants under a different tree each night. But they wrote timeless

spiritual instructions on palm leaves, divine poetry and prayers, works so practical yet sublime that they are able to touch the hearts of both refined scholars and simple laborers alike.

The famous Vaiṣṇava teacher and reformer Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also sat alone for nearly ten years in a jungle hut in Māyāpur, West Bengal. There he completed a vow to chant one billion names of Kṛṣṇa. He emerged from this vow to travel and speak throughout India, establishing a network of sixty-four temples and spiritual communities. He also wrote hundreds of texts.

But the most dramatic example of spiritual entrepreneurialism is on *Newsweek*’s list: Śrīla Prabhupāda. Starting from a small, bare, stone-floored room in the rustic village of Vṛndāvana, he actualized what he’d been meditating on since meeting his guru: writing and publishing the books that would enlighten the people of the West (and beyond) using Lord Caitanya’s teachings and then showing them how to practice those teachings – something no one before him had done. Working alone, with barely enough money to clothe himself, he poured out the contents of his devotional heart on a dilapidated typewriter. As mentioned in “Amazing Late Bloomers,” Śrīla Prabhupāda’s legacy is now world famous.

From his early days at 26 Second Avenue to his phenomenal success at growing an international spiritual organization in twelve short years, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accomplishments are legendary. Establishing the BBT is one of those accomplishments. The BBT helped fund the Matsya Project, which, along with grants from The Smithsonian Institute, saved thousands of translations of Vedic and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava scriptures from deteriorating and being lost forever. Matsya’s collection of treasured texts was stored on microfilm for future reference in the Vedic Library and Research Cen-

ter, also funded by the BBT. The thousands of microfilms collected by the Matsya team are now in the care of the Bhaktivedanta Archives. BBT trustees also helped support Yamunā Devī’s writing of her award-winning cookbook, *The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking*.

Today, decades after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure, the BBT remains vibrant and committed to publishing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in as many languages and formats as possible. As Nelson Mandela famously said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, he hears with his head; if you talk to him in his language, it goes to his heart.” The BBT strives to give people Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in their native tongue as often as possible.

The BBT demands state-of-the-art, eco-friendly technologies and materials from its printers. It works to serve the needs of thousands of book distributors worldwide, and as of this writing, publishes in eighty-six languages. Many of these translations are available both in print and as eBooks. In 2015, the BBT completed its translation, editing, and publishing of all of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in the Russian language.

Besides printing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, the BBT has also brought out a number of editions of important translations of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava texts, such as the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, the *Tattva San-*

darbha, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava*, and the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

The BBT also funds scientific research projects, has held art seminars and international symposiums on book publishing and distribution, taught courses in book production skills, and especially, through its full-service website, *krishna*.

com, fostered young talent interested in various aspects of publishing and Internet outreach. The BBT is home to the Bhaktivedanta Archives, whose mission it is to “collect, preserve, protect, and allow dissemination of” Śrīla Prabhupāda’s “teachings, images, and life’s work.” The Archives is constantly updating

the media on which Śrīla Prabhupāda’s audio is stored and cataloguing and digitizing the literally thousands of photos of Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON’s activities that have been collected since 1965. The Archives also offers both an online and offline version of the VedaBase, updating it regularly as more of



Ananta Vṛndāvana Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters are discovered or his audio digitally enhanced to fill in what was too hard to hear on tape.

The global BBT has contributed substantially each year to help the construction of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium (TOVP) in Māyāpur, one of the largest temple construction projects in the world. In fact, the BBT funded land purchases that have facilitated ISKCON's growing communities. It has also funded the printing and free distribution of inspirational books, such as *This Is My Request*.

The BBT has, in the past, given grants for the strategic distribution of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books in third-world countries – one year the BBT

I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.

As is true of all great spiritual entrepreneurs, Śrīla Prabhupāda had full confidence in the product he was carrying, the transcendental incarnation of the Lord in the form of sound. He confirms this fact as his prayer aboard the *Jaladuta* continues:

The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives them with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message.

receiving donations of time and money and devotion in exchange, are expressions of his love for the fallen souls, his spiritual master, and ultimately Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. In a letter to Satsvarūpa Mahārāja dated January 5, 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda discloses his mind to his faithful followers about the family business he left for us to manage:

Our first business is this book distribution. There is no need of any other business. If this book distribution is managed properly, pushed on with great enthusiasm and determination and at the same time if our men keep spiritually strong, then the whole world will become Kṛṣṇa conscious. 🌍

NOTES

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.3, purport.
2. A small forest in Vrindavan, near the village of Nandagram.
3. Literally “great drum.” Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura coined this term to refer to the printing press. The sound of a drum accompanying public chanting of the holy names reverberates a short distance, but the “sound” of books can spread around the world and gain the attention of millions of people.
4. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.
5. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.3
6. *Civilization and Transcendence*, chapter 12, “How to Love God.”

Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa moved into the ISKCON temple in San Francisco at the age of sixteen and, with the blessings of his parents, became a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He and his wife, Nirākulā Devī Dāsī, also a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, have developed an ISKCON spiritual community of three hundred families in Silicon Valley. He is an initiating guru and travels widely to teach the tenets of devotional service and the great art of distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books.

Prabhupāda and the other ācāryas in our line carry a burden: they can see the degree to which people are suffering.

shipped 150,000 books to French-speaking Africa so that distributors there could get them out to the people in the cities and villages.

Spiritual entrepreneurs such as Śrīla Prabhupāda and the other ācāryas in our line carry a burden: they can see the degree to which people are suffering. They feel the responsibility and especially the compassion to try to relieve that suffering. Their teachings are authorized and empowered by Kṛṣṇa; when their writings go to press and hit the streets, people who read them begin to sing Kṛṣṇa's names and practice devotional service.

In this passage from a prayer Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to Kṛṣṇa aboard the *Jaladuta*, just before disembarking on American soil, he disclosed to the world that he felt the burden to save people from their suffering:

How will I make them understand this message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

One last point about Śrīla Prabhupāda's “transcendental plot”: the word *plot* comes from the Old French *complot*, “secret project.” Śrīla Prabhupāda's project to distribute his books is a kind of secret project, because his books reveal to the world Lord Kṛṣṇa's “most secret of all secrets.” What's more, Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports reveal to the world the confidential secrets in his own heart. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī tells us that spiritual disclosure is one of the six loving exchanges between devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “If you love somebody, you must give him something, and you must accept something from him. You must disclose your mind to him, and he should disclose his mind to you.”⁶ So Śrīla Prabhupāda's “plot” to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to suffering humanity, his disclosure of the meaning of Kṛṣṇa's teachings through his own “ecstasies,” his Bhaktivedanta purports, and his

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa*, or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

INDRA INTRODUCES COUNTERFEIT SANNYĀSA

Lord Brahmā arrives at King Pṛthu's Vedic sacrifice to put a halt to Indra's misbehavior.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 19

23 यानि रूपाणि जगृहे इन्द्रो हयजिहीर्षया
तानि पापस्य खण्डानि लिङ्गं खण्डमिहोच्यते

*yāni rūpāṇi jagṛhe
indro haya-jihīṛṣayā
tāni pāpasya khaṇḍāni
liṅgam khaṇḍam ihocyate*

yāni – all those which; *rūpāṇi* – forms; *jagṛhe* – accepted; *indraḥ* – the King of heaven; *haya* – the horse; *jihīṛṣayā* – with a desire to steal; *tāni* – all those; *pāpasya* – of sinful activities; *khaṇḍāni* – signs; *liṅgam* – the symbol; *khaṇḍam* – the word *khaṇḍa*; *iha* – here; *ucyate* – is said.

Whatever different forms Indra assumed as a mendicant because of his desire to seize the horse were symbols of atheistic philosophy.

PURPORT: According to Vedic civilization, *sannyāsa* is one of the essential items in the program of the *varṇa-āśrama*

institution. One should accept *sannyāsa* according to the *paramparā* system of the ācāryas. At the present moment, however, many so-called *sannyāsīs* or mendicants have no understanding of God consciousness. Such *sannyāsa* was introduced by Indra because of his jealousy of Mahārāja Pṛthu, and what he introduced is again appearing in the age of Kali. Practically none of the *sannyāsīs* in this age are bona fide. No one can introduce any new system into the Vedic way of life; if one does so out of malice, he is to be known as a *pāṣaṇḍī*, or atheist. In the Vaiṣṇava *Tantra* it is said:

*yas tu nārāyaṇam devam
brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva vikṣeta
sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*

Although it is forbidden, there are many *pāṣaṇḍīs* who coin terms like *daridra-nārāyaṇa* and *svāmi-nārāyaṇa*, although not even such demigods as Brahmā and Śiva can be equal to Nārāyaṇa.

24 एवमिन्द्रे हरत्यश्वं वैन्ययज्ञजिघांसया
तद्गृहीतविसृष्टेषु पाखण्डेषु मतिर्नृणाम्

25 धर्म इत्युपधर्मेषु नग्नरक्तपटादिषु प्रायेण सज्जते भ्रान्त्या पेशलेषु च वाग्मिषु

evam indre haraty aśvam
vainya-yajña-jighāmsayā
tad-grhīta-visr̥ṣṭeṣu
pākhaṇḍeṣu matir nṛṇām

dharmā ity upadharmeṣu
nagna-rakta-paṭādiṣu
prāyeṇa sajjate bhrāntyā
peśaleṣu ca vāgmiṣu

evam – thus; indre – when the King of heaven; harati – stole; aśvam – the horse; vainya – of the son of King Vena; yajña – the sacrifice; jighāmsayā – with a desire to stop; tat – by him; grhīta – accepted; visr̥ṣṭeṣu – abandoned; pākhaṇḍeṣu – towards the sinful dress; matiḥ – attraction; nṛṇām – of the people in general; dharmāḥ – system of religion; iti – thus; upadharmeṣu – towards false religious systems; nagna – naked; rakta-paṭa – red-robed; ādiṣu – etc.; prāyeṇa – generally; sajjate – is attracted; bhrāntyā – foolishly; peśaleṣu – expert; ca – and; vāgmiṣu – eloquent.

In this way, King Indra, in order to steal the horse from King Pṛthu's sacrifice, adopted several orders of sannyāsa. Some sannyāsīs go naked, and sometimes they wear red garments and pass under the name of kṛpālika. These are simply symbolic representations of their sinful activities. These so-called sannyāsīs are very much appreciated by sinful men because they are all godless atheists and very expert in putting forward arguments and reasons to support their case. We must know, however, that they are only passing as adherents of religion and are not so in fact. Unfortunately, bewildered persons accept them as religious, and being attracted to them, they spoil their life.

PURPORT: As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, men in this age of Kali are short-lived, devoid of spiritual knowledge, and susceptible to accept false religious systems due to their unfortunate condition. Thus they always remain mentally disturbed. ① The Vedic śāstras practically prohibit the adoption of sannyāsa in the age of Kali because less intelligent men may accept the sannyāsa order for cheating purposes. ② Actually the only religion is the religion

- 1) Why do the Vedic śāstras practically prohibit the adoption of sannyāsa in the age of Kali?
- 2) What is the only religion?
- 3) How should heads of state follow in the footsteps of King Pṛthu?

of surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We must serve the Lord in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All other systems of sannyāsa and religion are actually not bona fide. In this age they are simply passing for religious systems. This is most regrettable.

26 तदभिज्ञाय भगवान् पृथुः पृथुपराक्रमः इन्द्राय कुपितो बाणमादत्तोद्यतकार्मुकः

tad abhijñāya bhagavān
pṛthuh pṛthu-parākramah
indrāya kupito bāṇam
ādattodyata-kārmukah

tat – that; abhijñāya – understanding; bhagavān – the incarnation of Godhead; pṛthuh – King Pṛthu; pṛthu-parākramah – celebrated as very powerful; indrāya – upon Indra; kupitah – being very angry; bāṇam – an arrow; ādatta – took up; udyata – having taken up; kārmukah – the bow.

Mahārāja Pṛthu, who was celebrated as very powerful, immediately took up his bow and arrows and prepared to kill Indra himself, because Indra had introduced such irregular sannyāsa orders.

PURPORT: It is the duty of the king not to tolerate the introduction of any irreligious systems. Since King Pṛthu was an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, certainly his duty was to cut down all kinds of irreligious systems. ③ Following in his footsteps, all heads of state should themselves be bona fide representatives of God and should cut down all irreligious systems. Unfortunately they are cowards who declare a secular state. Such a mentality is a way of compromising religious and irreligious systems, but because of this citizens are generally becoming uninterested in spiritual advancement. Thus the situation deteriorates to such an extent that human society becomes hellish.

27 तमृत्विजः शक्रवधाभिसन्धितं विचक्ष्य दुष्प्रेक्ष्यमसह्यरंहसम् निवारयामासुरहो महामते न युज्यतेऽत्रान्यवधः प्रचोदितात्

tam ṛtvijaḥ śakra-vadhābhisandhitam
vicakṣya duṣprekṣyam asahya-rāmhasam
nivārayām āsur aho mahā-mate
na yujyate 'trānya-vadhaḥ pracoditāt

tam – King Pṛthu; ṛtvijaḥ – the priests; śakra-vadha – killing the King of heaven; abhisandhitam – thus preparing himself; vicakṣya – having observed; duṣprekṣyam – ter-

rible to look at; asahya – unbearable; rāmhasam – whose velocity; nivārayām āsur – they forbade; aho – oh; mahā-mate – O great soul; na – not; yujyate – is worthy for you; atra – in this sacrificial arena; anya – others; vadhaḥ – killing; pracoditāt – from being so directed in the scriptures.

When the priests and all the others saw Mahārāja Pṛthu very angry and prepared to kill Indra, they requested him: O great soul, do not kill him, for only sacrificial animals can be killed in a sacrifice. Such are the directions given by śāstra.

PURPORT: ④ Animal killing is intended for different purposes. It tests the proper pronunciation of Vedic mantras, and an animal being put into the sacrificial fire should come out with a new life. No one should ever be killed in a sacrifice meant for the satisfaction of Lord Viṣṇu. How then could Indra be killed when he is actually worshiped in the yajña and accepted as part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Therefore the priests requested King Pṛthu not to kill him.

28 वयं मरुत्वन्तमिहार्थनाशनं ह्वयामहे त्वच्छ्रवसा हतत्विषम् अयातयामोपहवैरनन्तरं प्रसह्य राजन् जुहवाम तेऽहितम्

vayam marutvantam ihārtha-nāśanam
hvayāmahe tvac-chravasā hata-tviṣam
ayātayāmopahavair anantaram
prasahya rājan juhavāma te 'hitam

vayam – we; marut-vantam – King Indra; iha – here; artha – of your interest; nāśanam – the destroyer; hvayāmahe – we shall call; tvac-śravasā – by your glory; hata-tviṣam – already bereft of his power; ayātayāma – never before used; upahavaiḥ – by mantras of invocation; anantaram – without delay; prasahya – by force; rājan – O King; juhavāma – we shall sacrifice in the fire; te – your; ahi-tam – enemy.

Dear King, Indra's powers are already reduced due to his attempt to impede the execution of your sacrifice. We shall call him by Vedic mantras which were never before used, and certainly he will come. Thus by the power of our mantra, we shall cast him into the fire because he is your enemy.

PURPORT: By chanting the Vedic mantras properly in a sacrifice, one can perform many wonderful things. ⑤ In Kali-yuga, however, there are no qualified brāhmaṇas who can chant the mantras properly. Consequently no attempt should be made to perform such big sacrifices. ⑥ In this

age the only sacrifice recommended is the saṅkīrtana movement.

29 इत्यामन्त्र्य क्रतुपतिं विदुरास्यत्विजो रुषा स्रुग्घस्ताशुह्वतोऽभ्येत्य स्वयम्भूः प्रत्यषेधत

ity āmantrya kratu-patiḥ
vidurāsyartvijo ruṣā
sruḡ-ghastāñ juhvato 'bhyetya
svayambhūḥ pratyāṣedhata

iti – thus; āmantrya – after informing; kratu-patiḥ – King Pṛthu, the master of the sacrifice; vidura – O Vidura; asya – of Pṛthu; ṛtvijaḥ – the priests; ruṣā – in great anger; sruḡ-hastāñ – with the sacrificial ladle in hand; juhvataḥ – performing the fire sacrifice; abhyetya – having begun; svayambhūḥ – Lord Brahmā; pratyāṣedhata – asked them to stop.

My dear Vidura, after giving the King this advice, the priests who had been engaged in performing the sacrifice called for Indra, the King of heaven, in a mood of great anger. When they were just ready to put the oblation in the fire, Lord Brahmā appeared on the scene and forbade them to start the sacrifice.

30 न वध्यो भवतामिन्द्रो यद्यज्ञो भगवत्तनुः यं जिघांसथ यज्ञेन यस्येष्टास्तनवः सुराः

na vadhyo bhavatām indro
yat yajño bhagavat-tanuḥ
yam jighāmsatha yajñena
yasyeṣṭās tanavaḥ surāḥ

na – not; vadhyaḥ – ought to be killed; bhavatām – by all of you; indraḥ – the King of heaven; yat – because; yajñah – a name of Indra; bhagavat-tanuḥ – part of the body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; yam – whom; jighāmsatha – you wish to kill; yajñena – by performing sacrifice; yasya – of Indra; iṣṭāḥ – being worshiped; tanavaḥ – parts of the body; surāḥ – the demigods.

Lord Brahmā addressed them thus: My dear sacrificial performers, you cannot kill Indra, the King of heaven. It

- 4) What are the purposes of animal killing in Vedic sacrifices?
- 5) Why should no attempt be made to perform big Vedic sacrifices in Kali-yuga?
- 6) What is the only sacrifice recommended in this age?

is not your duty. You should know that Indra is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indeed, he is one of the most powerful assistants of the Personality of Godhead. 7 You are trying to satisfy all the demigods by the performance of this yajña, but you should know that all these demigods are but parts and parcels of Indra, the King of heaven. How, then, can you kill him in this great sacrifice?

31 तदिदं पश्यत महद्भ्रमव्यतिकरं द्विजाः
इन्द्रेणानुष्ठितं राज्ञः कर्मैतद्विजिघांसता

*tad idam paśyata mahad-
dharma-vyatikaram dvijāḥ
indreṇānuṣṭhitam rājñah
karmaitad vijighāmsatā*

tat – then; *idam* – this; *paśyata* – just see; *mahat* – great; *dharma* – of religious life; *vyatikaram* – violation; *dvijāḥ* – O great brāhmaṇas; *indreṇa* – by Indra; *anuṣṭhitam* – performed; *rājñah* – of the King; *karma* – activity; *etat* – this sacrifice; *vijighāmsatā* – desiring to impede.

In order to make trouble and impede the performance of King Pṛthu’s great sacrifice, King Indra has adopted some means that in the future will destroy the clear path of religious life. I draw your attention to this fact. If you oppose him any further, he will further misuse his power and introduce many other irreligious systems.

32 पृथुकीर्तेः पृथोर्भूयात्तर्होकोनशतक्रतुः
अलं ते क्रतुभिः स्वष्टैर्यद्भवान्मोक्षधर्मवित्

*pṛthu-kīrteḥ pṛthor bhūyāt
tarhy ekona-śata-kratuḥ
alam te kratubhiḥ sviṣṭair
yad bhavān mokṣa-dharma-vit*

- 7) According to Brahmā, what is the relationship between Indra and the demigods?
- 8) Why did Indra want to stop King Pṛthu from performing one hundred horse sacrifices?
- 9) Why did Lord Brahmā personally appear in the sacrificial arena?
- 10) Why was it unnecessary for King Pṛthu to perform the prescribed Vedic ritualistic ceremonies?
- 11) Why, on the other hand, was it King Pṛthu’s duty to perform sacrifices?

pṛthu-kīrteḥ – of wide renown; *pṛthoḥ* – of King Pṛthu; *bhūyāt* – let it be; *tarhi* – therefore; *eka-ūna-śata-kratuḥ* – he who performed ninety-nine yajñas; *alam* – there is nothing to be gained; *te* – of you; *kratubhiḥ* – by performing sacrifices; *su-iṣṭaiḥ* – well performed; *yat* – because; *bhavān* – yourself; *mokṣa-dharma-vit* – the knower of the path of liberation.

“Let there be only ninety-nine sacrificial performances for Mahārāja Pṛthu,” Lord Brahmā concluded. Lord Brahmā then turned towards Mahārāja Pṛthu and informed him that since he was thoroughly aware of the path of liberation, what was the use in performing more sacrifices?

PURPORT: Lord Brahmā came down to pacify King Pṛthu regarding his continual performance of one hundred sacrifices. 8 King Pṛthu was determined to perform one hundred sacrifices, and King Indra took this very seriously because Indra himself was known as the performer of one hundred sacrifices. Just as it is the nature of all living entities within this material world to become envious of their competitors, King Indra, although King of heaven, was also envious of King Pṛthu and therefore wanted to stop him from performing one hundred sacrifices. 9 Actually there was great competition, and King Indra, to satisfy his senses, began to invent so many irreligious systems to obstruct King Pṛthu. To stop these irreligious inventions, Lord Brahmā personally appeared in the sacrificial arena. 10 As far as Mahārāja Pṛthu was concerned, he was a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore it was not necessary for him to perform the prescribed Vedic ritualistic ceremonies. Such ceremonies are known as karma, and there is no need for a devotee in the transcendental position to execute them. 11 As the ideal king, however, it was King Pṛthu’s duty to perform sacrifices. A compromise was therefore to be worked out. By the blessings of Lord Brahmā, King Pṛthu would become more famous than King Indra. Thus Pṛthu’s determination to perform one hundred sacrifices was indirectly fulfilled by the blessings of Lord Brahmā.

33 नैवात्मने महेन्द्राय रोषमाहर्तुमर्हसि
उभावपि हि भद्रं ते उत्तमश्लोकविग्रहौ

*naivātmāne mahendrāya
roṣam āhartum arhasi
ubhāv api hi bhadraṁ te
uttamaśloka-vigrahau*

[Continued in the next issue.]

The Conceivability of Consciousness

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Thoudam Singh, PhD, took place in Bhubaneswar, India, on February 3, 1977.

Dr. Singh: Many of my scientific colleagues say that intelligence is simply a molecular interaction within the brain.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Some molecular interaction may be occurring, but the interaction is not simply molecular. Intelligence has to do with the soul, not simply with the brain.

Dr. Singh: They say the brain is the source of intelligence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No. Take electricity, for example. Electricity moves between gross elements and through a gross wire. But the electricity itself – it is not those elements, not that wire. It is subtle.

Dr. Singh: Yes, it is subtle, but . . .

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You cannot see this subtle thing directly; you can see it only when it interacts with something gross. But the subtle thing is independent and distinct from the gross things.

Dr. Singh: That is actually true. That’s a fact. For example, when we speak of Newton’s law of gravitation, we can establish a mathematical formula, but we do not know how gravitation acts.

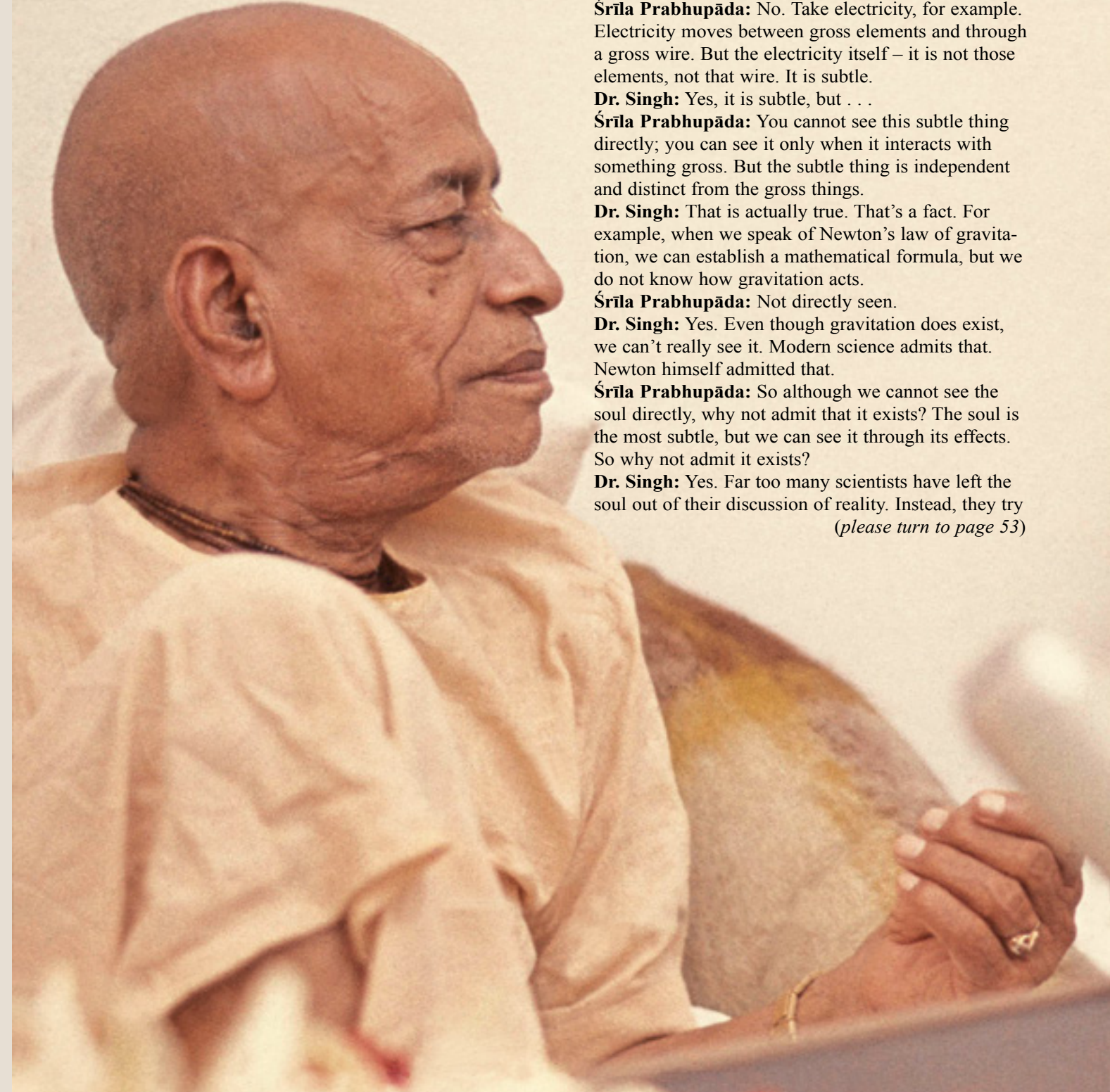
Śrīla Prabhupāda: Not directly seen.

Dr. Singh: Yes. Even though gravitation does exist, we can’t really see it. Modern science admits that. Newton himself admitted that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So although we cannot see the soul directly, why not admit that it exists? The soul is the most subtle, but we can see it through its effects. So why not admit it exists?

Dr. Singh: Yes. Far too many scientists have left the soul out of their discussion of reality. Instead, they try

(please turn to page 53)



Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION:

ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes
with “drama”). To hear Śrīla Prabhu-
pāda chanting, go to krishna.com/hare-krishna-maha-mantra.



Summary of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from the Nārada Purāṇa

Translation by Jan Mareš; from *Śrī Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa, Pūrva-bhāga* (“fore part”), *Bṛhad-upākhyāna* (“the larger episode”), Part 4, Chapter 96.

(1)

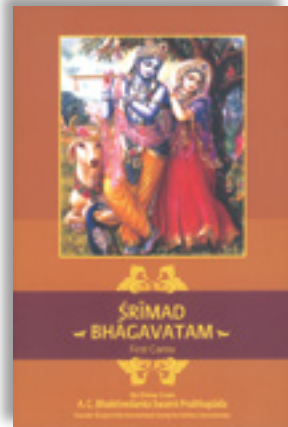
*brahmovāca
marīce śṛṇu vakṣyāmi
vedavyāseṇa yat kṛtam
śrīmad-bhāgavatam nāma
purāṇam brahma-sammitam*

Brahmā said: Listen, O Marīci [a son of Brahmā]. I will tell you about the *Purāṇa* named *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, devoted to the subject of Brahman [with focus on Śrī Kṛṣṇa] and rendered by Vedavyāsa.

(2)

*tad aṣṭādaśa-sāhasraṁ
kīrtitam pāpa-nāśanam
sura-pādapa-rūpo 'yam
skandhair dvādaśabhir yutaḥ*

Its eighteen thousand glorious verses in twelve cantos have the form of a wish-fulfilling tree and destroy sins.



(3)

*bhagavān eva vipreṇdra
viśva-rūpī samīritah
tatra tu prathama-skandhe
sūta rṣiṇām samāgame*

O best of *brāhmaṇas*, in the First Canto, in the meeting of Sūta with the sages, the universal form of Bhagavān is described.

(4)

*vyāsasya caritam puṇyam
pāṇḍavānām tathaiva ca
parīkṣitam upākhyānam
itīdam samudāhṛtam*

The virtuous [i.e., bestowing *puṇya*, or pious merit] stories of Vyāsa, the Pāṇḍavas, and Parīkṣit are narrated there [in the meeting] in detail.

(5)

*parīkṣic-chuka-saṁvāde
sṛṣṭi-dvaya-nirūpaṇam
brahma-nārada-saṁvāde
devatā-caritāmṛtam*

The conversation between Parīkṣit and Śukadeva [in the Second Canto] describes two types of creation, and the conversation between Brahmā and Nārada describes the nectar of the Lord's activities.



Painting by Dīrghā Devī Dāsī



(6)

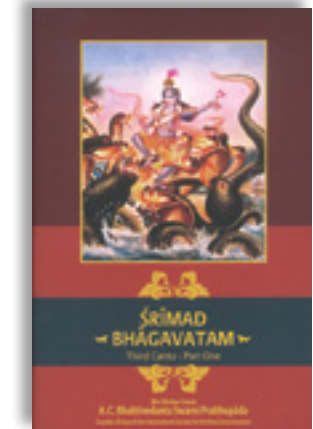
*purāṇa-lakṣaṇam caiva
sṛṣṭi-kāraṇa-saṁbhavaḥ
dvitīyo 'yam samuditaḥ
skandho vyāseṇa dhīmatā*

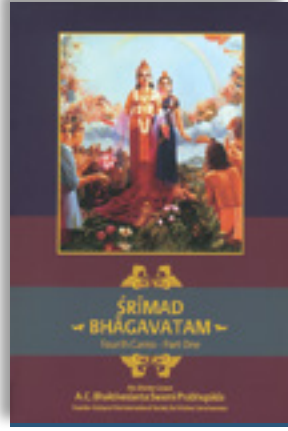
The Second Canto of very intelligent Vyāsa also describes the characteristics of the *Purāṇas* and the process of creation.

(7)

*caritam vidurasyātha
maitreyeṇāsya saṁgamaḥ
sṛṣṭi-prakaraṇam paścād
brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ*

[The Third Canto tells of] the meeting between Vidura and Maitreya. It has a section on creation and ends with descriptions of Brahman and Paramātmā.



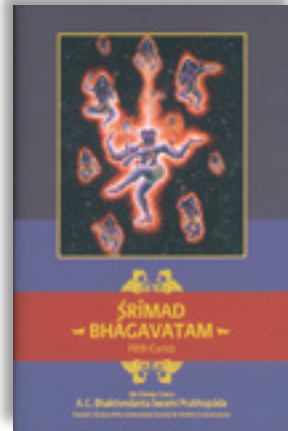


(8–9)

*kāpilam sām̐khyam apy atra
tṛtīyo 'yam udāhṛtaḥ
satyās caritam ādau tu
dhruvasya caritam tataḥ*

*pṛthoḥ puṇya-samākhyānam
tataḥ prācīnabarhiṣam
ity eṣa turyo gadito
visarge skandha uttamaḥ*

The Third Canto also describes the [original] Sāṅkhya of Kapila. Beginning with the story of Sañī and the virtuous story of Dhruva, the supreme Fourth Canto narrates the virtuous stories of Pṛthu and Prācīnabarhiṣat, and of the *visarga* [the secondary creation, by Brahmā and others].



(10)

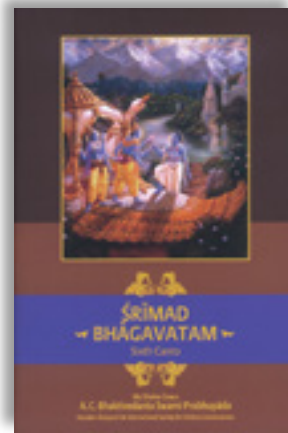
*priyavratasya caritam
tad vaṁśyānām ca puṇya-dam
brahmāṇḍāntargatānām ca
lokānām varṇanam tataḥ*

[The Fifth Canto narrates] the virtuous story of Priya-vrata and his dynasty, as well as the description of the universe with its *lokas* [worlds].

(11–12)
*naraka-sthitir ityeṣa
samsthāne pañcamo mataḥ
ajāmilasya caritam
dakṣa-sṛṣṭi-nirūpaṇam*

*vṛtrākhyānam tataḥ paścān
marutām janma puṇyadam
ṣaṣṭho 'yam uditāḥ skandho
vyāseṇa pari-poṣaṇe*

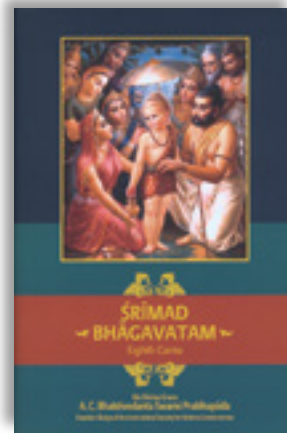
The Fifth Canto also describes the stay in hell. The story of Ajāmila, the progeny of Dakṣa, the story of Vṛtra, and, at its end, the virtuous birth of the Maruts are spoken about by Vyāsa in the Sixth Canto, which concerns the Lord's comprehensive mercy.



(13)

*prahlāda-caritam puṇyam
varṇāśrama-nirūpaṇam
saptamo gadito vatsa
vāsanā-karma-kīrtane*

The virtuous story of Prahlāda and a description of *varṇ-āśrama* based on material desires are narrated in the Seventh Canto, O dear child, which concerns the description of materially motivated activities.

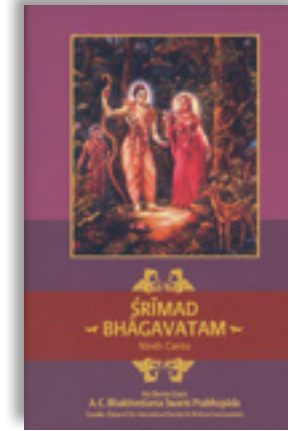


(14)
*gajendra-mokṣaṇākhyānam
manvantara-nirūpaṇe
samudra-mathanam caiva
bali-vaibhava-bandhanam*

[The Eighth Canto] describes Gajendra's liberation, the *manvantaras* [periods ruled by the Manus], the churning of the ocean, and the bondage of the opulent Bali.

(15)
*matsyāvatāra-caritam
aṣṭamo 'yam prakīrtitaḥ
sūrya-vaṁśa-samākhyānam
soma-vaṁśa-nirūpaṇam*

The Eighth Canto provides the story of Matsya as well as the story of the Sūrya-vaṁśa [the dynasty of the sun-god] and gives the description of the Soma-vaṁśa [the dynasty of the moon-god].



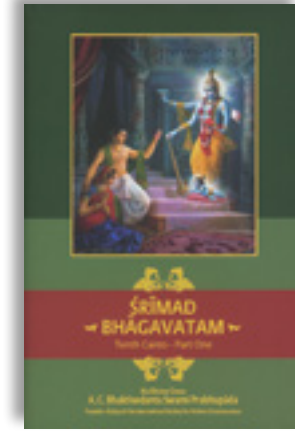
(16–17)

*vaṁśyānucarite prokto
navamo 'yam mahāmate
kṛṣṇasya bāla-caritam
kaumāraṁ ca vraja-sthitiḥ*

*kaiśoraṁ mathurā-sthānam
yauvanaṁ dvārakā-sthitiḥ
bhū-bhāra-haraṇam cātra
nirodhe daśamaḥ smṛtaḥ*

The Ninth Canto, concerning a description of dynasties, speaks of various *vaṁśas* and their characteristics, O great sage. The story of Kṛṣṇa's childhood, His life in Vraja as a young boy, His life in Mathurā as an older boy, His life in Dvārakā in His youth, and His removal of the earth's burden are remembered in the Tenth Canto in regard to the topic of annihilation.

(18–21)
*nāradena tu samvādo
vasudevasya kīrtitaḥ*



*yadoś ca dattātreyaṇa
śrī-kṛṣṇoddhavasya ca*

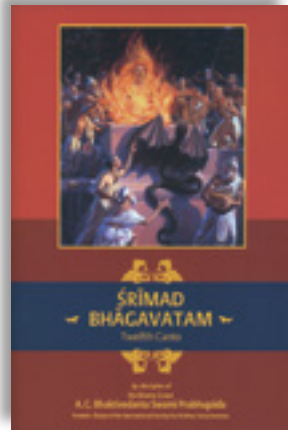
*yādavānām mithontas ca
muktāv ekādaśaḥ smṛtaḥ
bhaviṣya-kali-nirddeśo
mokṣo rājñah parikṣitaḥ*

*veda-sākhā-praṇayanam
mārkaṇḍeya-tapaḥ kriyā
saurī vibhūtir uditā
sātvaī ca tataḥ param*

*purāṇa-samkhyā-kathanam
āśraye dvādaśo hy ayam
ity evaṁ kathitaṁ vatsa
śrīmad bhāgavataṁ tava*

The talks between Nārada and Vasudeva, between Yadu and Dattātreya [as an *avadhūta brāhmaṇa*], and between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Uddhava, as well as the mutual end and liberation of the Yadus, are remembered in the Eleventh Canto. The future of Kali-yuga, the liberation of King Parīkṣit, the expansion of Vedic branches, the austerities of Mārkaṇḍeya, and the transcendent supreme glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa are described along with the enumeration of the *Purāṇas* in the Twelfth Canto. Thus I have narrated to you, O dear child, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which concerns the ultimate shelter.





(22)

vaktuḥ śrotuś copadeṣṭur
anumoditur eva ca
sāhāya-kartur gaditam
bhakti-bhukti-vimukti-dam

One who speaks, hears, teaches, appreciates, and follows this summary narration will get devotion to the Lord, enjoyment in this world, and liberation.

(23–24)

prauṣṭhapadyām pūrṇimāyām
hema-simha-samanvitam

deyam bhāgavatāyedaṁ
dvijāya prīti-pūrvakam

sampūjya vastra hemādyair
bhagavad bhaktim icchatā
yo 'py anukramaṇīm etām
śrāvayec chṛṇuyāt tathā
sa purāṇa śravaṇa jam
prāpnoti phalam uttamam

If on the full-moon day of the month of Bhādra one places *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* on a golden throne, gives it as a gift to a *brāhmaṇa* with loving affection, worships him, and offers him clothes, gold, and other gifts, one will get the desired devotion to the Lord. Even by reciting or listening to this enumeration, one will achieve the supreme fruit of listening to that *Purāṇa*.

iti śrī bṛhan nārādīya purāṇe pūrva bhāge bṛhad
upākhyāne caturtha pāde
śrīmad bhāgavatānukramaṇī nirūpaṇam nāma
ṣaṇṇavatitamo 'dhyāyaḥ

This is *Śrī Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa, Pūrva-bhāga, Bṛhad-upākhyāna*, fourth part, named “The Description of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,” chapter 96. 🌐

Bhakta Jan Mareš, born in Prague, Czech Republic, has been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness since 1993. He is a translator and editor for the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust.

DO WE HAVE FREE WILL? (continued from page 19)

the person who does not even know about the punishment? All people follow their sinful desires, even though those desires cause destruction of the very goals they pursue – *artha, dharma, kāma*, and *mokṣa*. For a person devoid of association of saintly persons, even if he has knowledge of scripture, what can punishment accomplish? He will not be able to destroy the strong influence of those bad desires.

The next verse is an injunction:

indriyasyendriyasyārthe
rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet
tau hy asya paripanthinau

“Attachment and repulsion are firmly fixed in each of the sense objects. Therefore one should not come under control of attachment and repulsion.

They are the two obstacles.” Bala-deva Vidyābhūṣaṇa comments:

If the actions of men were under the control of their sinful natures, then the positive and negative injunctions of scripture would be useless. . . . The scriptures, which direct one to associate with the saintly persons, will turn one away from, and make one detest, what is forbidden, even though it is pleasurable to the mind, by making one understand the undesirable consequences of the forbidden act. And they will also make one have attraction for and engage in acts prescribed by scripture by making one understand their favorable results, even though these may be unpleasant for the mind. Thus the positive and negative injunctions of scripture are not useless.

If the *jīva* had no capacity to understand the consequences of harmful and beneficial actions, and to direct its intelligence accordingly, there

would be no need for the knowledge of the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam*. Thus, the *jīva* has the capacity to choose (inside-out), but it is limited by the information it receives (outside-in) to make that choice. When it receives the knowledge of *bhakti* it is presented, then the *jīva* learns about its identity as separate from the mind, intelligence, and body. It now has the option to choose between material activities and *bhakti*'s activities. The *jīva* of course does not become free from the body, but the mind, intelligence, and body now become vehicles in the *jīva*'s acquiescing to *bhakti*'s instructions. Now begins the struggle. The *jīva* has to make a daily choice to either serve Kṛṣṇa – i.e., to perform *bhakti* – or to serve Kṛṣṇa's material energy, *māyā*.

By steadily progressing on this path, the *jīva* becomes transcendental to the *guṇas* – that is, free from the agitation caused by the material body, mind, and intelligence. Then the

jīva is free from outside-in control; this is called the stage of liberation. In this stage the *jīva* is completely indifferent to (i.e., not controlled by) material happiness, distress, criticism, praise, friend, foe, activity, confusion, and illumination.

The easiest way to become free from the tyranny of the body that suppresses the *jīva*'s capacity for inside-out control is to perform *bhakti*, as Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Gītā* (14.26):

mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

“One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman.” Performing *bhakti* not only frees one from the control of the *guṇas* but also makes one a surrendered associate of Kṛṣṇa. In this state the devotee is now controlled by *prema*, or love for Kṛṣṇa. The devotee still has the capacity to choose, but the choices available in the spiritual world are in the context of how to make Kṛṣṇa happy. Thus the *jīva* is dependent in its capacity to choose, whether in the material world or the spiritual world. In fact, in all of existence the only independent person with complete free will to do as He likes is Kṛṣṇa Himself. 🌐

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- (1) Cashmore, A. R. (2010), “The Lucretian swerve: The biological basis of human behavior and the criminal justice system.” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 107:4499–4504.
- (2) Ibid.
- (3) Hinsin, K. (2010), “A scientific model for free will is impossible.” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 107:E149.
- (4) de Duve, C. (1995), *Vital Dust* (Basic Books, New York).
- (5) Cashmore, A. R. (2010), “Reply to Hinsin: Free will, vitalism, and distinguishing cause from effect.” *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2010 107 (38) E150.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.vaisnavacalendar.com.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Keśava

(November 5 – December 3)

NOVEMBER

14 – Utpannā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans.

30 – Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

Fasting from grains and beans. The anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Month of Nārāyaṇa

(December 4 – January 2)

DECEMBER

7 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

- (6) Dawkins, R. (2006), *The God Delusion* (Bantam Press, London).
- (7) Wegner, Daniel M. and Wheatley, Thalia (1999), “Apparent mental causation: Sources of the experience of will.” *American Psychologist*, Vol. 54(7): 480–492.
- (8) Bear, Adam and Bloom, Paul

13 – **Saphalā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.

19 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

21 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

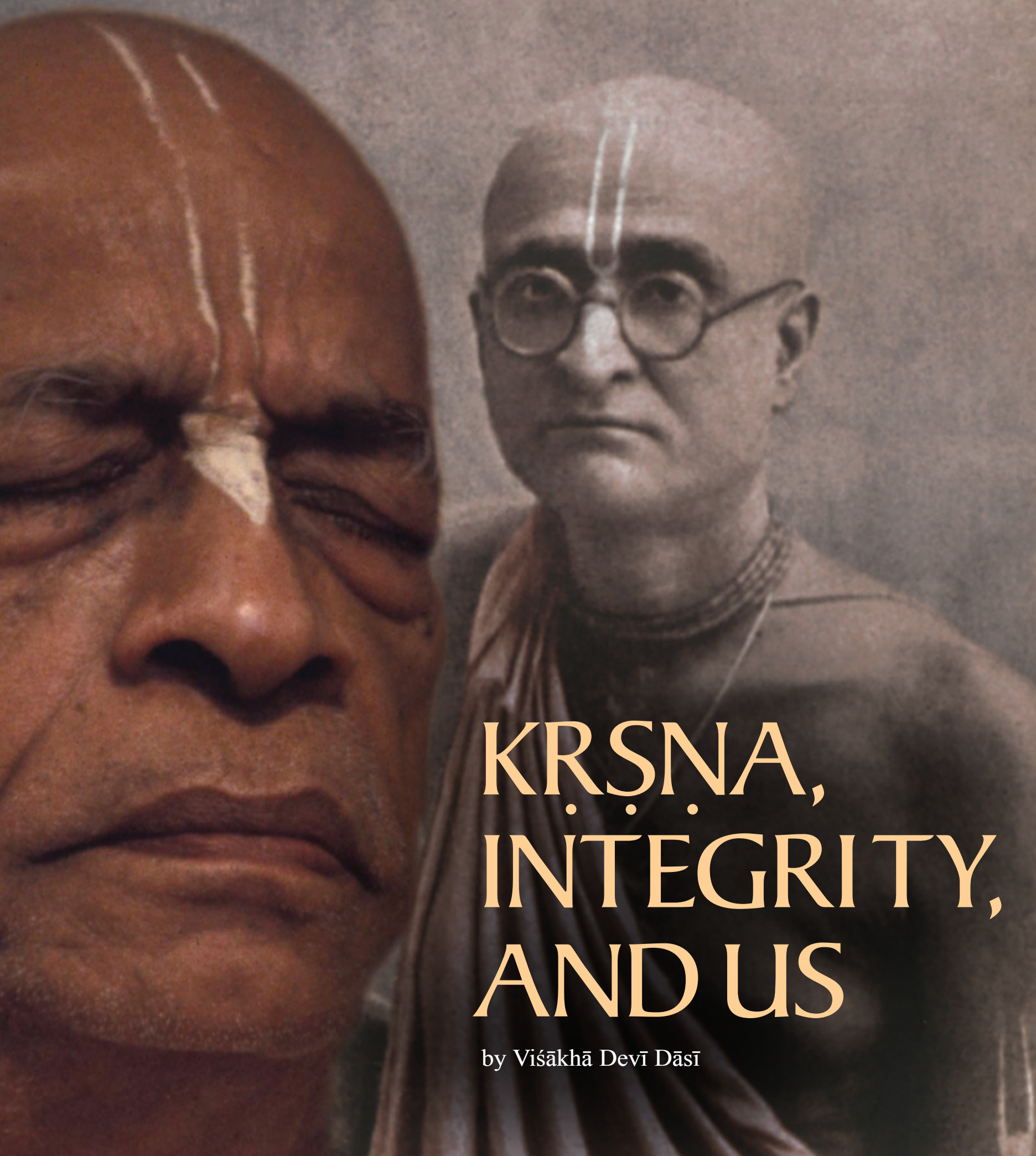
29 – **Putradā Ekādaśī**
Fasting from grains and beans.



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

(2016), “A simple task uncovers a postdictive illusion of choice.” *Psychological Science*, 27(6).

Hari Parāyaṇa Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Rādhā Govinda Mahārāja. He lives in Alachua, Florida, with his family.



KṚṢṆA, INTEGRITY, AND US

by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

*Inner and outer integrity are essential
to our individual practice of bhakti-yoga and
to our devotional communities as well.*

INTEGRITY IS DEFINED as (1) honesty and fairness, (2) adhering to moral principles and values, and (3) being whole. It also means (4) being sound and unimpaired, as in “the structural integrity of a building.” Here I focus on the third meaning of integrity, one that’s integral to the root of the word, namely, the state of being complete or whole, of being unified and undivided.

The word *integrity* comes from the Latin root *integer*, meaning “whole.” Words with the same root as *integrity* are *integer* (a whole number as opposed to a fraction), *integrate* (to combine one thing with another so they become whole), and *integral*. *Integral*, interestingly, means “necessary to make a whole complete.” Look at how Śrīla Prabhupāda uses *integral* in his introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*:

Sanātana-dharma refers to that activity which cannot be changed. For instance, liquidity cannot be taken from water, nor can heat be taken from fire. Similarly, the eternal function of the eternal living entity cannot be taken from the living entity. *Sanātana-dharma* is eternally integral with the living entity.

As spiritual beings, part of Kṛṣṇa, we are perfect and complete. This is established in the Invocation to the *Īsopaniṣad*:

The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself.

Since we, as spiritual sparks, come from the complete person, Kṛṣṇa, we are also complete in ourselves. But when we’re separated from Him we feel incomplete; when we’re not separated from Him, complete. Not being separated from Kṛṣṇa means always serving Him with devotion. This service is called *sanātana-dharma* and is our eternal occupation. Thus, Prabhupāda writes, “*Sanātana-dharma* is eternally integral with the living entity.” Devotional service, or *sanātana-dharma*, is the eternal function of the soul, and when we spirit souls perform *sanātana-dharma* we experience our innate wholeness. So, *sanātana-dharma* is necessary to make a whole complete; it’s necessary for us to feel our completeness. *Sanātana-dharma* is integral to us.

In other words, we, as *jīvas*, are already complete and whole, but in the absence of *sanātana-dharma* we’re unable to feel that completeness and wholeness. And this is the unfortunate situation with the vast majority of the billions of people

A key component of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s integrity was his uniting his heart and mind with the heart and mind of his preceptor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

who inhabit this planet. This is why there's rampant dissatisfaction and emptiness among people, dissatisfaction and emptiness that is unsuccessfully countered with material agendas, sometimes with violence, and is too often accompanied by boredom. People are bored by their work or studies and counter that boredom with entertainment that soon also becomes boring. What's actually missing is the ultimate adventure: an exploration of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, God. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

Seekers of the Absolute Truth are never allured by unnecessary engagements in sense gratification because the serious students seek-

– the words; *cittete* – with your heart; *koriyā aikya* – making one; *ār* – anything else; *nā* – do not; *koriho mane* – consider in the mind; *āsā* – desires.

“Make the teachings emanating from the lotus mouth of our spiritual master one with your heart, and do not desire anything else.” (From *Śrī Guru-vandanā*, by Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Thākura)

If I don't sway from this place of devotional service to guru and Kṛṣṇa, I can begin to feel some inner integrity, some inner completeness, and feel a unique and deep satisfaction. This feeling is my birthright, as I am – each one of us is – a spiritual being with this sort of inner integrity. We evoke our organic and

commentary on this verse written by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura. Prabhupāda said he was so moved by this commentary that it further fixed him in his resolve to follow Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura's order.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura writes,

Of all kinds of intelligence, the best is intelligence focused on *bhakti-yoga*. In *bhakti-yoga*, one's intelligence becomes single-pointed, or fixed in determination. One thinks, “The instructions of my spiritual master to worship the Personality of Godhead by chanting, remembering, serving His feet, and so on are my only *sādhana* [practice, means], my only *sādhya* [perfection, end], my only livelihood. I am incapable of giving up these instructions either in the stage of practice or in the stage of perfection. They alone are my object of desire and my only responsibility. Besides them I can desire no other responsibility, not even in my dreams. It is all the same to me whether I feel happy or unhappy, or whether my material existence is eradicated or not.”

Commenting further on this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that accepting transcendental loving service to the Lord is our prime duty. (*Bhāgavatam* 2.4.3–4, Purport) He also writes that, as souls who are not yet integral with the Lord (i.e., conditioned souls), we do not know “what is to be done and what is not to be done, but a person who acts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is free to act because everything is prompted by Kṛṣṇa from within and confirmed by the spiritual master.” (*Gītā* 18.58, Purport)

By acting freely in this way, in a way that's confirmed by God and guru, one develops unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and then all exalted qualities such as religion, knowledge, and renunciation become manifest in that person. In this way, by per-

forming *sanātana-dharma* – the practice of becoming whole or complete persons through inner integrity (using the third definition of integrity) – we also become honest and moral persons (the first definition). A person with inner integrity has certain symptoms, like the twenty-six qualities of a devotee listed in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.78–80). Among other qualities, that person is self-disciplined, responsible, friendly, courageous, perseverant, honest, loyal, and faithful to guru, God, and their servants.

Developing this inner integrity also means that our external lives become sound – we develop outer integrity (its second definition).

Outer Integrity

Each one of us is a spiritual being who's temporarily living in a particular body with a particular mind. At some point along the road to complete integrity, we must become rigorously honest with ourselves. And then we must embrace all parts of ourselves with forgiveness and compassion (two attributes of one who has inner integrity). Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Everyone has to cleanse his heart by a gradual process, not abruptly.” (*Gītā* 3.35, Purport)

This is corroborated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–28):

Having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result, and he sincerely repents such activities.

To put it differently, real beauty is in understanding one's material position and acting accordingly for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, or in the words of

the *Bhāgavatam* (11.21.2), “Steadiness in one's own position is declared to be actual piety, whereas deviation from one's position is considered impiety. In this way the two are definitely ascertained.”

As inner integrity has its symptoms, so does outer integrity, such as: one feels peaceful, content and satisfied with one's position in life; one is interested in others and respectful and tolerant of them; one is cooperative and eager to share with others; and one has a feeling of belonging. This sort of integrity leads gradually to authenticity, or a oneness between one's values and actions.

Communal Integrity

Going from inner to outer integrity, one naturally wants to progress to communal integrity, or unity in community. That, however, is not easy. Prabhupāda explains, “The whole atmosphere of the Age of Kali is magnified by the deluding energy, and the proportion of measurement is inexplicable.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.17.23, Purport) These are difficult times for promoting harmony in society.

Yet there is cause for hope: “When there is sufficient austerity, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness, naturally mother earth is completely satisfied, and there is very little chance

for Kali to infiltrate the structure of human society.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.17.42, Purport) Prabhupāda says that these four – austerity, cleanliness, mercy, and truthfulness – are the basic principles of religion and they prepare the ground for advancement in spiritual life. These principles develop from following the regulations that Prabhupāda requested all his followers to accept at the time of their initiation: no eating meat, fish, or eggs; no illicit sex life; no intoxication; and no gambling. With such a foundation, and with the purifying effects of chanting the holy names of God, there is hope for a unified community.

These are some of the symptoms of integrity in a community:

- Problems are acknowledged and dealt with.
- All can express their feelings and thoughts.
- Each person is valued.
- Communication is direct, concrete, and specific.
- Members get most of their needs met.
- Members are free to be different.
- Members do what they say they will do.
- Rules require accountability and consequences.
- Violation of others' values leads to repentance.

I can experience my wholeness, my integrity, by making Kṛṣṇa's and His representative's teachings one with my heart.

ing the Absolute Truth are always overwhelmed with the work of researching the Truth. In every sphere of life, therefore, the ultimate end must be seeking after the Absolute Truth, and that sort of engagement will make one happy because he will be less engaged in varieties of sense gratification. (*Bhāgavatam* 1.2.10, Purport)

So inner integrity means understanding that I am a spiritual being and that I can experience my wholeness, my integrity, by making Kṛṣṇa's and His representative's teachings one with my heart, that is, by engaging in serving Kṛṣṇa, by engaging in devotional service (*bhakti*).

The Path to Inner Integrity

guru-mukha-padma-vākya
cittete koriyā aikya
ār nā koriho mane āsā

guru-mukha-padma – from the lotus mouth of the spiritual master; *vākya*

ecstatic feeling of integrity by uniting our hearts and minds with the heart and mind of our *ācārya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

And this, indeed, is what Prabhupāda himself did – he united his heart and mind with the heart and mind of his preceptor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura. Verse 41 of chapter two in the *Bhagavad-gītā* says in part,

vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha

vyavasāya-ātmikā – resolute in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *ekā* – only one; *īha* – in this world.

“Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that before he came to America to fulfill the desire of his spiritual master to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the people in the Western world, he had read the

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- Mistakes are forgiven and are learning tools.

- The group exists for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.

- All know they make mistakes and so are humble.

- Fun and spontaneity abound.

Such a community of devotees is pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, for He says, "My dear sons of the King, I am very much pleased by the friendly relationships among you. All of you are engaged in one occupation – devotional service. I am so pleased with your mutual friendship that I wish you all good fortune. Now

you may ask a benediction of Me." (*Bhāgavatam* 4.30.8)

Sources of Guidance

People who lack inner integrity also lack humility and are fragile. Their pride is bloated and sensitive. Others are never treating them as respectfully as they think they deserve. They become consumed with resentments. They treat life as a battle and wall themselves off to information and feedback. In the words of the *Bhāgavatam* (3.29.8): "Devotional service executed by a person who is

envious, proud, violent, and angry, and who is a separatist, is considered to be in the mode of darkness."

Devotees with inner and outer integrity, however, build trust and enduring personal relationships with others. That means they themselves are fair, empathetic, honest, and trustworthy. They listen well. And it means they turn to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa for guidance and mercy. The *Bhāgavatam* (4.11.13) tells us, "The Lord is very satisfied with His devotee when the devotee greets other people with tolerance, mercy, friendship, and equality."

The best way to learn how to have inner, outer, and communal integrity is emulate a person who truly has those qualities.

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tat tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute
lokas tad anuvartate*

"Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues." (*Gītā* 3.21) 🌟

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī has been writing for BTG since 1973. Visit her website at our-spiritual-journey.com.

ENVIRONMENT

(continued from page 60)

"Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same, for such devotees are interested only in the service of the Lord." (*Bhāgavatam* 6.17.28)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was a "Vaikuṅṭha Man" (a description he used for his own guru), carried his own spiritual environment with him; wherever he would go, his spiritual consciousness permeated the atmosphere and entered the hearts of others, often transforming them into devotees. Thousands of disciples

from Western countries are evidence of this.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.65) Lord Kṛṣṇa, revealing the topmost secret, asks us to become His devotees:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me*

"Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." These four limbs of devotional service can best be practiced if we choose the right place. And what better place than a temple?

Among Śrīla Prabhupāda's many great contributions, his temples and devotional communities are very important because they facilitate the practice of devotional service for many spiritual aspirants. We can take advantage of them for our spiritual practices, such as chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, and associating with devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda said the temples were identical to Vaikuṅṭha. Let each of us take full advantage of these Vaikuṅṭha temples created for everyone by a "Vaikuṅṭha man," transport our consciousness to Vaikuṅṭha, and make our life perfect. 🌟

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SPEAKS OUT

(continued from page 39)

to reduce reality to matter. And yet we see the existence of the soul. It is beyond our comprehension, but it exists. We should not ignore the soul simply because it is inconceivable. **Śrīla Prabhupāda:** Actually the soul is conceivable, because we can understand much about it by observing the way it interacts with matter. Yet largely the soul is outside our experience.

Dr. Singh: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So the soul is not inconceivable. It is conceivable.

Dr. Singh: Oh, yes. Again, if we take the example of physical phenomena and laws, we can perceive that they exist, but precisely how they exist we do not know.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is another thing. But you have to admit they exist. And we have to accept that the soul exists.

Dr. Singh: Yes. That is the missing point in modern science.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The mind exists, the intelligence exists, the sense of ego exists, the soul exists – although they are not entirely perceivable by our gross senses.

Dr. Singh: So consciousness, the soul, exists – independent and distinct from matter.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. This you have to bring into the scientists' discussion. Now they should begin to inquire, How does the soul enter the subtle material situation? How does the soul create and enter a subtle or mental body? And how does this subtle body create the gross situation, the gross body?

At the present moment, the scientists are stressing the gross situation. But the subtle situation – they have no knowledge. And yet the subtle situation can be perceived.

Dr. Singh: Yes, that is true.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: So you have to convince other scientists. This subtle mental, intellectual, and psychological situation is so very important. It can carry the soul to the spiritual world. But one has to make himself

fully spiritualized, fully devoted to the Lord. At the time you pass from your gross body, if you have made your subtle body fully spiritualized then it will carry you to the spiritual world.

So just consider how critically important is this Kṛṣṇa conscious culture, this spiritual culture. Just consider. And yet these so-called scientists who are setting society's cultural tone – they know nothing of this true culture. Nothing.

We can perceive two energies – *parā* and *aparā*, the higher and lower – spirit and matter. And we get confirmation from Lord Kṛṣṇa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* He discusses His two energies in these very terms, *parā* and *aparā*: higher and lower – spirit and matter. So the soul in the material world is situated between this *aparā*, or inferior, material energy and the *parā*, or superior, spiritual energy. This subtle situation, his subtle body, is his medium back to the spiritual world. If the soul makes his subtle body – his mind, intelligence, and self-identification, or ego – spiritualized, then he goes to the spiritual world.

You see? If the soul spiritualizes his mind and intelligence and ego – if he focuses them on his actual, spiritual identity and his loving rela-

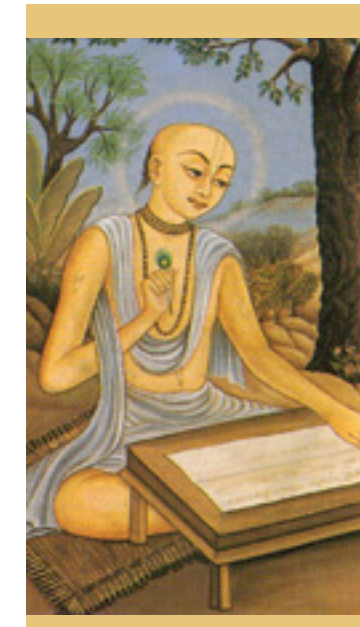
tionship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Spirit – then he will be transferred to the spiritual world. This you have to prove or demonstrate in scientific terms. These pseudoscientists are seeing simply the gross situation, the gross body. That's all.

They see the gross body functioning for some time and then ceasing to function, and they think, "This person was living, but now he is living no more." No, the soul is always living. But now he is being carried to another situation, another life, by the subtle situation he created in this life.

These pseudoscientists are thinking, "This gross situation, this gross body, is finished – everything is finished." That's not the fact. Kṛṣṇa confirms, *tathā dehāntara prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*: "As the soul passes, in this lifetime, from a childhood body to a teenage body to an old-age body, so at the time of death he passes into still another body."

Dr. Singh: That is a drawback in modern science.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Without this spiritual perspective, everything they say is a drawback. Simply bluffing. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ*; anyone who does not use his human intelligence to spiritualize himself, to become a devotee of the Lord – his whole life is a drawback. 🌟



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INSTRUCTOR: Cārucandra Dāsa (Chandrakant P. Giri, PhD) is a disciple of His Holiness Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and a graduate of the Teacher Training Course taught by the Vrindavan Institute for Higher Education (VIHE). He has been teaching "Thematic Essence" courses on Śrīla Prabhupāda's books for the past thirteen years.

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH USING A CRUTCH?

When atheists decry religion as a crutch, most believers bristle. Perhaps we should agree instead.

by Navīna Śyāma Dāsa

WHILE RIDING in the elevator at my workplace the other day, I noticed that one of my fellow passengers was supporting himself with a pair of crutches. I asked him why, and he responded that he had broken his leg while skiing. After the interaction, I found myself reflecting on the view that many people have of religion as a crutch. They mean it, of course, as a slight, implying that religion is for the weak, whereas the strong have no need for such artificial support. But I hadn't viewed the man in the elevator with any disgust or rep-

robation, despite his use of crutches; rather, I thought it a most wise and appropriate measure. This realization prompted me to reconsider my standard response to the accusation about religion: instead of denying the charge, perhaps I could accept it, and just go on to explain how, under the right circumstances, a crutch might be just what the doctor ordered.

So who needs crutches? By and large it's those who have injured themselves in such a way that they can no longer function properly on their own. Thus they need some temporary help while

they regain their natural, normal state. In the case of physical crutches, the injury is some fall or impact that damages a leg, and the crutches help one move about until the leg is healed. But what about the metaphorical crutch of religion? What is the injury that necessitates it? What does it help us do? And what is the healthy state that we hope to return to? Let's address these questions in turn.

First, the injury. Just because we look whole and healthy on the outside doesn't mean we're that way on the inside too. And the Vedic scriptures teach that



something is indeed not right with us residents of this mortal realm – namely, our consciousness. We once lived happily in the kingdom of God as His sublimely satisfied but subordinate associates. When this dependent status became distasteful to us – for whatever reason – we then entered the material universe, free to pursue the goal of becoming minigods. Here, by virtue of our identification with matter, however, we are corrupted by all manner of vices – lust, anger, greed, pride, envy, illusion – and subject to all manner of limitations – old age, disease, death – that we never knew back home. Thus stunted by self-centered jealousy and all that it engenders, we

Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches, the positive activities – such as praying, reading about the dealings of God with His servants and devotees, and discussing topics of divine philosophy – all help restore us to our original state of constant absorption in Him. And the negative activities – such as giving up overindulgence, be it in food, sex, or sleep – are meant to protect us from disruptions to such absorption.

Śrīla Prabhupāda once offered a different but equally apt analogy to illustrate this point:

Sometimes the car becomes blocked. But some fellow pushes it. We have got this experience. What is that called? Chocked up? Then you get down and push the

By virtue of our identification with matter, we are corrupted by all manner of vices – lust, anger, greed, pride, envy, illusion.

mortals truly are disabled, at least as measured against our original glorious position. We’ve broken our ability to love God and, by extension, all of His creatures.

Walking with Help

So what does religion offer? The rules and regulations of scripture keep us from hurting ourselves more and help us gradually resume our normal activity of serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Following them may at times feel forced, artificial, or uncomfortable, but what else can an injured person expect? The very symptom of injury is that routine tasks become challenging. Think, for example, of people trying to walk for the first time after an accident: What was otherwise an effortless and fluid activity suddenly becomes stilted and awkward. But at least the crutches get them walking again. In like manner, religious practices get us loving again. As Śrīla

car and – *brut-brut-brut-brut-brut* – it goes. Similarly the *bhakti-rasa* [feeling of devotion] is there in everyone’s heart. *Nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. Because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. . . . So the fact is that we have got devotion for Kṛṣṇa. That is a fact. But some way or other we are separated and we have forgotten. So as soon as, by this regulative principle, by the order of the spiritual master, by the injunction of the *śāstras*, we begin devotional service. . . . Just like our students do here. They are offering *ārātrika*. They’re offering dress, offering garland. These are the items of *arcana* – deity worship – hearing about Him, chanting about Him. This devotional service is the pushing process. And as soon as the energy comes, then automatically – *brut-brut-brut*. No more pushing. Automatically. This pushing process is required.

(Lecture on *The Nectar of Devotion*, December 28, 1972, Bombay)

In the spiritual world, our love flows toward God incessantly and automatically, like rivers flowing toward the sea. But here we’ve lost that natural inclination and need the various prescriptions and prohibitions of religion to jump-start our stalled hearts.

What about when we’re fully recovered? Crutches, after all, are temporary and can – indeed should – ultimately be discarded. Can the same be said of religion? The answer (perhaps surprisingly) is yes. Just as physical crutches become superfluous once an injured leg has healed, so too can the metaphorical crutch of religious formalities be left behind when our hearts have healed. This progression is captured in Vaiṣṇava theology in the distinction between *vaidhi-bhakti*, devotional service according to regulation, and *prema-bhakti*, devotional service in pure love of God. In the latter healthy and fully restored state, we serve God in spontaneous love during this lifetime and return to Him in the next. We no longer require any external aids or impetus.

In fact, both types of crutches get in the way of normal functioning. The same regimens and restrictions that purify our consciousness and enable us to once again love God eventually become impediments to the purest and fullest expression of that love. Lord Kṛṣṇa pondered this paradox shortly before He descended as Caitanya Mahāprabhu, noting that practicing *vaidhi-bhakti* cannot fill one’s heart with the superlative mood of His associates in Vṛndāvana. Rather, He longs for fervid devotion untempered by formality. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 3.15–16)

Acknowledging Our Need

That said, however, the actions of one in the highest stages of devotion still tend to be in external conformity with religious rules. (After all, even people freshly off crutches spend most of their time walking in

straight lines, neither running marathons nor doing cartwheels.) For one thing, “the learned Kṛṣṇa conscious person” voluntarily serves as an example and role model for those in less developed stages of spiritual life. (*Gītā* 3.26, Purport) For another, expressing rarefied emotions does not, by and large, require deviating from scriptural norms. But advanced *bhakti-yogis* no longer have to struggle to redirect their hearts and minds away from matter and toward the divine; as a result, they no longer have to be conscious of the rules and can focus instead – exclusively and directly – on God Himself, trusting that whatever happens as a result is sure to be wholesome, auspicious, and in no way untoward. In short, the neophyte deliberately practices proper behavior to evoke the right mood,

whereas the expert behaves properly as a matter of course because of having already attained the right mood.

Religion then can be seen as analogous to crutches in terms of what necessitates its use, what purpose it serves, and when it can be left behind. Both help participants in some damaging misfortune to overcome their consequent disability and become healthy and independent once again. If in spite of this obvious utility, one disregards the rules and regulations of scripture, what can be said? If I were to see the man in the elevator prematurely cast aside his crutches and start dragging his leg, what would I think? He might claim that he was being strong and self-reliant, but I would think only that he was stubborn and shortsighted. After all, his rash act would merely

aggravate his injury and delay his recovery. Similarly, what can we gain by denying the nature of our present fallen condition and rejecting the only real remedy? Only prolonged suffering and frustration. Instead of ignoring the guidance of scripture out of pride and immaturity, better that we humbly acknowledge our need for assistance and gratefully follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions until we are once again walking – and even dancing – with Him in pure love. 🌸

Navīna Śyāma Dāsa is a disciple of His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami who lives in ISKCON’s Rādhā-Kālachandī community in Dallas. He is a trial attorney with the US Department of Labor, and his daughters attend TKG Academy, a Hare Kṛṣṇa school where his wife teaches language arts.

A Pause for Prayer



Painting by Rāmaprasāda Dāsa

O Gopālaka (cowherd boy), O Kṛpā-jalanidhi (ocean of mercy), O Sindhukanyāpati (husband of Lakṣmī), O Kāmsāntaka (killer of Kāmsa), O Gajendra-karūṇa-parīṇa (merciful savior of Gajendra), O Mādhava (husband of Lakṣmī), O Rāmānuja (younger brother of Balarāma), O Jagat-traya-guru (master of the three worlds), O Puṇḍarīkākṣa (lotus-eyed), O Gopījana-nātha (master of the *gopīs*), please protect me. I do not accept anyone as the Supreme except for You.

O Śrī Nārāyaṇa, O Puṇḍarīka-nayana (lotus-eyed one), O Śrī Rāma, O Sītā-pati (husband of Sītā), O Govinda, O Acyuta (infallible one), O Nandanandana (son of Nanda) O Mukunda (giver of liberation), O Ānanda (personified transcendental bliss), O Dāmodara (whose waist Mother Yaśodā bound with a rope), O Viṣṇu, O Rāghava (descendant of Raghu), O Vāsudeva (son of Vasudeva), O Nṛhari (Nṛsiṃha), O Devendra-cūḍāmaṇi (crest jewel of the demigods), O Saṁsārāṇava-karṇadhāraka (captain of the boat for crossing the ocean of repeated birth and death), O Hari, O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I offer my respectful obeisances to You.

– Śrī Vaiṣṇava (from *Śrī Padyāvalī*)

The Dynamics of Environment

A Factor for Assuring Success

Spiritual teachers in the Vedic tradition have often shown great care in selecting the site of their endeavors.

by Kṛṣṇa Dhana Dāsa

RECENTLY VISITED Sringeri, situated on the Tunga River amid picturesque mountains in the South Indian state of Karnataka. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the eighth-century philosopher who propagated Advaita Vedānta and unified India culturally and religiously, chose the idyllic setting of Sringeri as the spot for his first *maṭha* (monastery). While I was there, far from the conveniences of life in a modern city, I wondered what made Śaṅkarācārya choose this place? My curiosity led me to the secret, revealed by some of his followers as well as the spiritual mentors with whom I was traveling.

Tradition has it that Śaṅkarācārya was on the lookout for a convenient holy place where he could establish an institution to spread his philosophy. When he came to Sringeri, he saw a cobra on the bank of the river Tunga spreading its hood over a suffering frog, shading it from the scorching midday sun. Struck by the uncommon sight of a predator safeguarding its prey, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya was convinced that Sringeri, where divine love ensured mutual coexistence between natural adversaries, was the right place to establish the first of his four monasteries. His subsequent accomplishments are witnessed by history, hundreds of books, and thousands of disciples. From Śaṅkarācārya's example we can learn an important lesson: Wisely choose an environment

favorable for your activity.

Environment is an invisible hand that shapes human behavior. We tend to believe our habits are a product of our motivation, talent, and effort. Certainly these qualities matter, but surprisingly, our personal characteristics tend to get overpowered by our environment, especially over a long period. Imagine trying to grow tomatoes outside in a Canadian winter. You could be the most talented farmer in the world, but it won't make a difference. Snow is a very poor substitute for soil.

If you want to maximize your odds of success, then you need to operate in an environment that accelerates your results rather than hinders them. Even a small change in environment can matter greatly. For example, a study by Brian Wansink at Cornell University found that people eat twenty-two percent less food by switching from twelve-inch dinner plates to ten-inch plates.

Life is a game, and if you want to guarantee better results over a sustained period, the best approach is to play the game in an environment that favors you. Choosing a conducive environment for your activities, whether yoga, study, meditation, writing, cooking, or playing, can assure success. This is evident in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.11–12), where Lord Kṛṣṇa advises those who want to progress in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* to choose a proper place and seat for practice.



Yamarāja Dāsa

Devotees gather for the annual Festival of the Holy Name at New Raman Reti (Alachua, Florida).

*śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya
sthiram āsanam ātmanah
nāty-ucchritam nāti-nīcam
cailājina-kuśottaram*

*tatraikāgram manah kṛtvā
yata-cittendriya-kriyah
upaviśyāsane yuñjyād
yogam ātma-viśuddhaye*

“To practice yoga, one should go to a secluded place and should lay *kuśa* grass on the ground and then cover it with a deerskin and a soft cloth. The seat should be neither too high nor too low and should be situated in a sacred place. The yogi should then sit on it very firmly and practice yoga to purify the heart by controlling his mind, senses, and activities and fixing the mind on one point.”

is significant. He did not want a compromise between the cousins and brothers, and he wanted to be sure of the fate of his sons on the battlefield. Because the battle was arranged to be fought at Kurukshetra, which is mentioned elsewhere in the *Vedas* as a place of worship – even for the denizens of heaven – Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very fearful about the influence of the holy place on the outcome of the battle. He knew very well that this would influence Arjuna and the sons of Pāṇḍu favorably, because by nature they were all virtuous. (*Gītā* 1.1, Purport)

Explaining the importance of Naimiṣāraṇya, the forest where Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī spoke the *Bhāgavatam* to an assembly of sages, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

“The battle was arranged to be fought at Kurukshetra, which is mentioned elsewhere in the *Vedas* as a place of worship – even for the denizens of heaven.”

Historical Examples

We often find in the Vedic scriptures that a particular place or environment is chosen for greater effect.

Kurukshetra was selected for the *Mahābhārata* war because it was a holy place. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

The word *dharmakṣetra* (a place where religious rituals are performed) is significant because, on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was present on the side of Arjuna. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the father of the Kurus, was highly doubtful about the possibility of his sons’ ultimate victory. In his doubt, he inquired from his secretary Sañjaya, “What did they do?” He was confident that both his sons and the sons of his younger brother Pāṇḍu were assembled in that Field of Kurukshetra for a determined engagement of the war. Still, his inquiry

In the *Vāyavīya Tantra*, it is said that Brahmā, the engineer of this particular universe, contemplated a great wheel which could enclose the universe. The hub of this great circle was fixed at a particular place known as Naimiṣāraṇya. Similarly, there is another reference to the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya in the *Varāha Purāṇa*, where it is stated that by performance of sacrifice at this place, the strength of demoniac people is curtailed. Thus *brāhmaṇas* prefer Naimiṣāraṇya for such sacrificial performances. (*Bhāgavatam* 1.1.4, Purport)

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gives five potent items of devotional service: residing in Mathurā, worshiping the deity of the Lord, reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, associating with devotees, and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. These are so potent that a small attachment for any one of them can arouse devotional ecstasy

even in a neophyte. One of these items is residing in Mathurā, and its importance is mentioned in various scriptures. For example, “In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* it is said that all the results of traveling on all the pilgrimages within the three worlds can be achieved simply by touching the holy land of Mathurā.” (*The Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 12)

It is also evident from the scriptures that formerly not only devotees of the Lord but even demoniac people were aware of the importance of choosing a proper environment for success. For example, Hiranyakṣipu chose Mandara Mountain to perform austerity, and Rāvaṇa performed austerity on Kailāsa Mountain.

Of course, while the environment matters, what you do there is equally

important. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes the scandalous activities of Nalakūvara and

Maṅgīrva in a holy atmosphere.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: “O King Parīkṣit, because the two sons of Kuvera had been elevated to the association of Lord Śiva, of which they were very much proud, they were allowed to wander in a garden attached to Kailāsa Hill, on the bank of the Mandākinī River. Taking advantage of this, they used to drink a kind of liquor called Vāruṇī. Accompanied by women singing after them, they would wander in that garden of flowers, their eyes always rolling in intoxication. (*Bhāgavatam* 10.10.2–3)

We also need to note that for a pure devotee of the Lord, environment doesn’t matter much.

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve
na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv
api tulyārtha-darsinaḥ*

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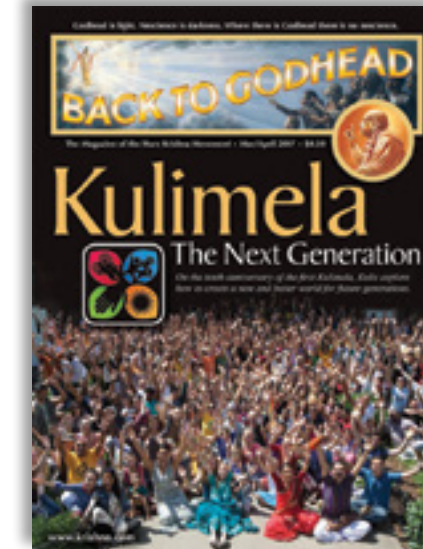
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Relish the Bhāgavatam

IN MAY 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested the editors of *Back to Godhead* to run a serialized excerpt from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in each issue. Two years later, when some disciples expressed concern about the editorial direction of the magazine, he reiterated that request. Also, when encouraging his disciples to write for BTG, he told them to read the *Bhāgavatam* and express in their own words what they understood.

We've published a summary of the *Bhāgavatam* in this issue to encourage you to take the time to read this "ripened fruit of the Vedic literature." This phrase appears in the third of Śrīla Vyāsadeva's three invocation verses to the *Bhāgavatam*. The first line of the verse reads, *nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalam*: ["This *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is] the fully matured fruit of the desire tree of the Vedic literature."

The voluminous Vedic literature contains books dealing with all the categories of knowledge required for progressive human life. It is compared to a tree, a coherent organism with a purpose (and not, as the less informed might conclude, an aimless, motley collection of books). From this "desire tree" one can pick various kinds of fruit according to one's wishes.

All the parts of the Vedic tree serve to produce the prized fruit high at the top. While other parts of the Vedic literature serve their purpose by emphasizing karma (good works for material rewards) and *jñāna* (higher knowledge), the *Bhāgavatam* regards these as subordinate pursuits and focuses on *prema*: pure love of God.

Verse three describes the *Bhāgavatam* fruit as *drava*, "semisolid and soft and therefore easy to swallow," Vyāsadeva tells us to drink its nectar, and Vaiṣṇava commentators say that this fruit is unique in that it has no skin or seed.

The main narrator of the *Bhāgavatam* is Vyāsadeva's son Śukadeva Gosvāmī. After hear-

ing the *Bhāgavatam* from his father, Śukadeva repeated it without change to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. And just as some fruits ripen better when a bird breaks the skin with its beak, causing oxidation, the *Bhāgavatam* became even sweeter when spoken through the lips of the aptly named Śukadeva (*śuka* meaning "parrot").

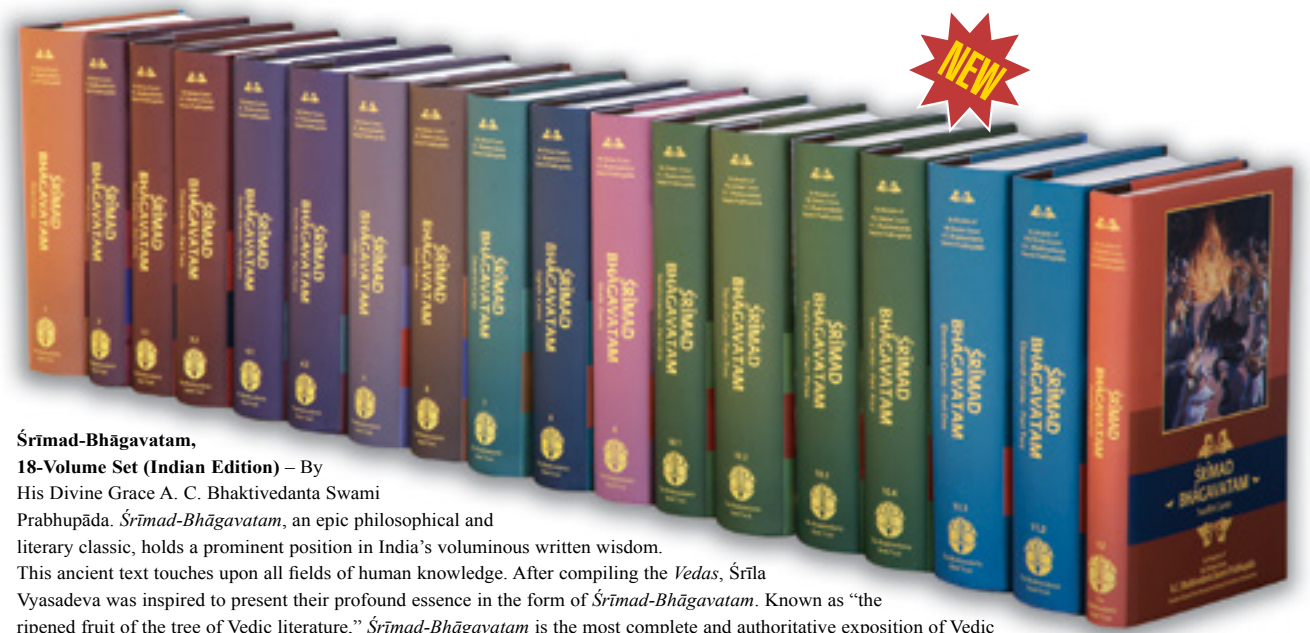
Śukadeva's *Bhāgavatam* is available to us today in English – and many other languages – only because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's compassion and dedication. He arrived in America with three-volume sets of the First Canto and continued working on his translation and commentary until his passing in 1977. In a poem addressed to Lord Kṛṣṇa on arriving in America, Prabhupāda wrote: "The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives it with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message."

Lord Kṛṣṇa's central message in the *Bhāgavatam* is the revelation of the soul's intimate relationship with Him. The *rasa* (juice) of the fruit of the *Bhāgavatam* is the various flavors of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* tasted by devotees in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

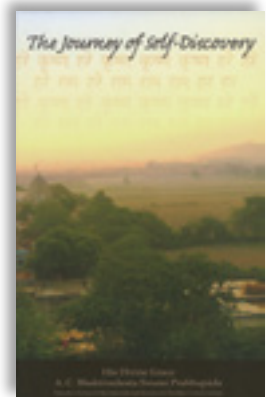
While this succulent fruit is available to all, it has to be received in the right way. A person standing on the ground receives a prized fruit from the top of a tree after it is passed down carefully from one person to another. Similarly, to access the sweet taste of the *Bhāgavatam*, one must receive it in *paramparā* – that is, from the authorized lineage of Kṛṣṇa's devotees.

The name *Bhāgavatam* means that it is about Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees (*bhāgavatas*). Also, it's a gift from Kṛṣṇa to His pure devotees, so only they can legitimately deliver it to others. Śrīla Prabhupāda was perfectly qualified to relish it and pass it on to us, and we can gratefully accept it to our eternal good fortune. – *Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda



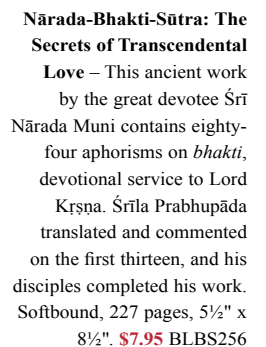
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 18-Volume Set (Indian Edition) – By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, an epic philosophical and literary classic, holds a prominent position in India's voluminous written wisdom. This ancient text touches upon all fields of human knowledge. After compiling the *Vedas*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva was inspired to present their profound essence in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Known as "the ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge – covering everything from the nature of the self to the origin of the universe. The first verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* makes clear that because the book is intended for people serious about spiritual progress, it will not deal with sectarian religious ideas, philosophical conjecture, or worldly concerns. The second text promises that anyone who reads the book systematically will achieve the spiritual success meant for all human beings. Published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT). Hardbound, 15,000 pages, index, dust-jackets, bookmarks, 6" x 9". Printed in India. ~~\$399~~ SALE: \$275 BLBM803 (Email store@krishna.com to get an accurate shipping quote.) **Note on this Edition:** This is the only English BBT edition currently in print. The content is unchanged from the previous edition. The books are slightly smaller, with redesigned dust-jackets and a new typeface. The paper and binding are good quality.



The Journey of Self-Discovery – A collection of transcribed conversations and lectures by Śrīla Prabhupāda on a variety of subjects, including the means for achieving global unity, the myth of scarcity, spiritual economics, superior evolutionary models, and predictions of the future state of the world. Hardbound, 300 pages, 7 color plates, 5½" x 8½". ~~\$5.95~~ BLBH242



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Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtra: The Secrets of Transcendental Love – This ancient work by the great devotee Śrī Nārada Muni contains eighty-four aphorisms on *bhakti*, devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda translated and commented on the first thirteen, and his disciples completed his work. Softbound, 227 pages, 5½" x 8½". ~~\$7.95~~ BLBS256

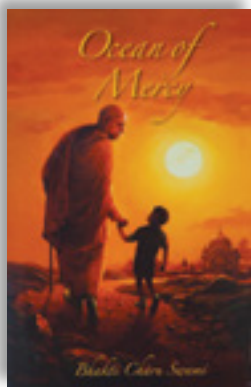


The Beginning – In the very early days of Śrīla Prabhupāda's work in the USA, he kept a journal and recorded his lectures. *The Beginning* is Prabhupāda's diary from his first year in America, along with notes, photos, letter excerpts, and transcriptions of recordings from that time period. Hardbound, 240 pages, 8 color plates, 35 b&w photos, 9¾" x 10¼". ~~\$24.95~~ SALE \$9.99 B6BH272

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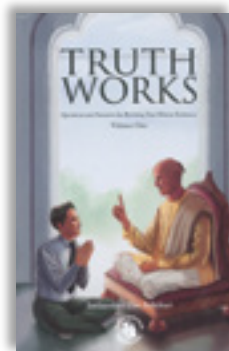
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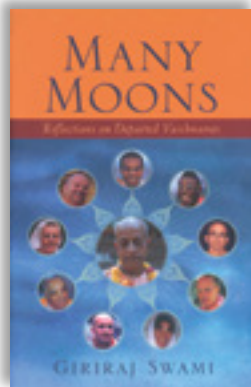
Ocean of Mercy – By Bhakti Chāru Swami. One of the leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement shares this long-awaited memoir of his childhood, spiritual quest, and meeting his guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda. A Calcutta boy's world turns upside down when his mother dies and his family falls into poverty. Seeking adventure, friendship, education, and a better life, he manages to travel by land and sea to Europe, only to experience unexpected homesickness, which beckons him back to India on a quest for self-realization. After an arduous search for a spiri-

tual teacher, he happens upon a copy of *The Nectar of Devotion*. He is so struck by the clarity, conviction, and erudition with which the book presents the Supreme Person that he's convinced beyond doubt that the author – Śrīla Prabhupāda – is the teacher he's been looking for. Soon afterwards, he finds himself part of Śrīla Prabhupāda's traveling retinue, serving as his cook and secretary for India and accepting responsibility for translating his books into Bengali. He is also among the fortunate few who were with Śrīla Prabhupāda to hear his final instructions before his passing from this world. *Ocean of Mercy* is for anyone dissatisfied with "life as usual," curious about life's higher possibilities, or hungry for genuine self-knowledge. To those already on the spiritual path, it is extremely valuable and historically significant, as it documents the last days on earth of one of the world's greatest teachers. Published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, *Ocean of Mercy* is Bhakti Chāru Swami's first book. Hardbound, 250 pages, 6½" x 9½". **\$19.95** BLBH125

Our Family Business – By Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa. In this very readable book, Vaiṣeṣika Dāsa discusses both why members of ISKCON should join the family business of distributing transcendental knowledge through the written word and how book distribution benefits distributors, the devotional community, and all those who receive one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Learn about the history of book distribution in ISKCON, how book distribution is literary *kīrtana* and perfectly links one to the *yuga-dharma*, and how performing book distribution is high *sādhana* and instills a taste for hearing and chanting. Learn the four laws of book distribution – proven principles guaranteed to improve and increase your book distribution. Discover fun and practical ways to involve your whole devotee community in *sankīrtana*. Every devotee serving in ISKCON is part of the mission to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and can expect to be enlightened, encouraged, and enlivened by reading this book. Published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Hardbound, 544 pages, 8½" x 5½". **\$19.95** BLBH111



Truth Works – By Sankarshan Das Adhikari. A collection of questions and answers from Sankarshan Das Adhikari's online Ultimate Self Realization Course from 2003 through 2007. He offers insights based on Vedic wisdom on a wide variety of subjects, including reincarnation, demigods, gurus, spiritual food, and how to lead a spiritual life in the material world. Hardbound, 314 pages, 16 color photos, keyword index, 5½" x 8½". **\$19.95** S9BH780



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VEDIC THOUGHTS

Modern men want to see everything with their eyes, although they are not sufficiently qualified. Consequently, they disbelieve in the existence of the demigods or of the Supreme God. They should see through the pages of authentic scriptures and should not simply believe their unqualified eyes. Even in these days, God can also be seen by qualified eyes tinged with the ointment of love of God.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.29, Purport

Actions performed only out of a sense of duty have their effect only on the mind, intelligence, and false ego, whereas actions done in love and devotion, with attachment to the Supreme, have their effect on the soul. Pure attachment, devotional service, emanates from the soul.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Uncommon Conversations, Conversation 7

Learned Uddhava, those who fix their consciousness on Me, giving up all material desires, share with Me a happiness that cannot possibly be experienced by those engaged in sense gratification.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.12

Association with a devotee, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and the nature of devotional service help one to give up all undesirable association and gradually attain elevation to the platform of love of Godhead.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 24.104

In an assembly of pure devotees, there is no question of discussing material subjects like politics and sociology. In an assembly of pure devotees, there is discussion only of the qualities, forms, and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is praised and worshiped with full attention. In the association of pure devotees, by constantly hearing such topics respectfully, even a person who wants to merge into the existence of the Absolute Truth abandons this idea and gradually becomes attached to the service of Vāsudeva.

Jaḍa Bharata
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.12.13

Let the poets continue to rave about poetry, and let the Vedic scholars incessantly praise the nectar derived from Brahman realization. I myself will take shelter of a beautiful youth who is decorated with a garland made of wildflowers, holding a flute to His blossoming lips.

Śrīla Īśvara Purī
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvālī*

He is neither large nor infinitesimal; yet He is larger and smaller than everything else. He is said to be devoid of color; yet He is dark blue, and the corners of His eyes are reddish. By the play of His personal powers, the Supreme Lord is known by contradictory designations. Yet He is the Supreme, and faults should never be ascribed to Him. In Him all contrary qualities combine.

Kūrma Purāna
Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.179, Commentary

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