

Revealed Truth



His Divine Grace
Swāmī B. S. Govinda

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

Revealed Truth

The essence of revelation can be summarised in one word: *om*, which means, “Yes! What you are searching for does exist!”

Who am I? Who is the Lord? What is our relationship? What is true fulfilment? The fundamental need of every soul is to find the answers to these questions.

Revealed Truth explains how the ancient seers of the Vedic culture realised these truths and preserved their practices in writing. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is the culmination of such scriptures. Its author, Śrīla Vyāsadev, has compared the Vedas to a wish-fulfilling tree, and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to the tree’s fruit. It was spoken by Śrīla Śukadev Goswāmī, who is likened to a parrot that has pecked and released the fruit’s nectar.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam’s beauty has been shown to the world in unprecedented depth by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He taught that every soul is by nature a servant of the Lord, devotion to the Lord is the soul’s natural calling, and love for the Lord is the soul’s true fulfilment. By reading *Revealed Truth* one will develop a comprehensive understanding of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings and be able to put the essence of revealed truth into practice.

The author, Swāmī B. S. Govinda, illuminates Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s paramount ideal of divine love with heart-touching clarity and sweetness. Drawing upon the teachings of the Āchāryas in Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu’s succession, as well as his own experience and realisation, Swāmī B. S. Govinda captivates readers with wisdom and joy that will ensure their spiritual journey is crowned with success.

Join the devotees beneath the tree of divine revelation and nourish your soul with its nectar.



*Revealed
Truth*



All glory to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

Revealed Truth

A compilation of discourses
illuminating the essence of
Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings

by

His Divine Grace
Swāmī B. S. Govinda

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Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and his dear disciple Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj.

Dedication

Offered to the lotus hands of Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj
on the occasion of Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj's divine appearance day, 30 December 2012.

Preface

I begin by offering my obeisance to the lotus feet of my Divine Master, Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, praying that this offering may satisfy his heart and that by his grace I may make it with all the chastity, sincerity, love, and affection that he desires from his disciples. Next I offer my obeisance to all the aspiring servitors of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's lotus feet, as it is by their mercy that I am so fortunate as to have a connection with His Divine Grace and the opportunity to make this offering. Finally, I offer my obeisances to all the readers who open their hearts to the divine teachings presented in this book.

I would like to explain the origin of this compilation. Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj has travelled the world twenty-four times over the last eighteen years preaching the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Thākura, and Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. A relatively boundless mine of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's recorded discourses now exists. *Revealed Truth* is an attempt to excavate, prepare, and array a collection of gems from this mine.

Considering that both content and organisation are elements of revelation, in *Revealed Truth* content from Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's lectures has been structured according to one of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's favoured models of presentation: the *Dāśa-mūla-tattva*, Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Thākura's consolidation of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's siddhānta into ten fundamental principles. Śrīman Mahāprabhu delineated the whole of revealed knowledge using three foundational concepts: sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojan. He summarised these as Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, and Kṛṣṇa-prema. More specifically, sambandha-jñān means understanding Kṛṣṇa, His energies, and their relationships; abhidheya means the practice of

pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa; and prayojan means the ultimate necessity of every soul: love for Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura summarises Śrīman Mahāprabhu's teachings on sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojan in the introductory verse of his *Dāśamūla-tattva*, in effect, encapsulating the whole of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta in a single verse. *Revealed Truth* presents Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's lectures as an exposition of this verse and the ten principles it summarises.

The aim of *Revealed Truth* is not to publish particular discourses of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, as has been done in previous publications, but to expound prominent themes within the compass of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's preaching by weaving together content from numerous lectures with the hope of making the profundity of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's realisations and teachings clearly accessible. To further this end, *Revealed Truth's* typographic scheme arrays images, captions, verse translations, and scriptural references beside the text to augment its themes. All translation has been done with reference to commentaries by Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and other Āchāryas in the Rūpānuga sampradāya.

I encourage readers to approach this book with a faithful heart and prayerful mood. As terminology, concepts, and moods are being presented, I request readers to move through the text with confidence that any term or concept that is not immediately explained will be addressed later on. Furthermore, I enthusiastically entreat readers to seek out the association of Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj's disciples to further their understanding and appreciation of the content presented herein.

As I introduce *Revealed Truth* I feel compelled to honour the devotees who helped with this project. It is not possible to mention all the devotees who contributed in various ways, so I pray that everyone with whom I had the fortune to collaborate with on this project will consider that here and now I am expressing my heart's appreciation for their assistance. I must mention,

however, the late Śrīpād Bhakti Premik Siddhāntī Mahārāj, who left the world just prior to the completion of this work. It was my hope to bring joy to his heart by presenting him *Revealed Truth* during his last days, as it was Śrīpād Siddhāntī Mahārāj who requested me to compile this book, enthusiastically supported its conceptual structure, and supplied me with a portion of its material.

In closing I wish to state my objective that this book serve as an enlightening source of inspiration for everyone to practise pure devotion.

guru-mukha padma vākya chittete kariyā aikya
āra nā kariha mane āśā

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.2)

“Make the teachings from Śrī Gurudev’s lotus mouth one with your heart. Do not desire anything else (and all of your desires will be fulfilled, *ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā*).”

Arjuna expresses such earnest attachment for the words of his Guru, Śrī Govinda Himself, in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

deśa-kālārtha-yuktāni hṛt-tāpopaśamāni cha
haranti smarataś chittaṁ govindābhihitāni me

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.15.27)

“Śrī Govinda’s words are imbued with novel import throughout all of time and space, and extinguish the fire of worldly existence—the fire of separation—that burns in my heart. Remembering them captivates my soul.”

By reading *Revealed Truth* with attachment for our beloved Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj like that of Arjuna for Śrī Govinda, sincere souls will be able to extract the maximum from the discourses compiled herein and feel the wave of revelation flowing from Śrīla Gurudev’s heart into theirs.

Śrī Gaura-jana-kiṅkar,
Kamal Kṛṣṇa Dās
8 March 2010,
Kolkata, India



Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj



Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



Bhagavān
Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur



Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur

Daśa-Mūla-Tattva

The Ten Fundamental Principles

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ sarva-śaktim rasābhim
tad-bhinnāmsāmś cha jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān tad-vimuktāmś cha bhāvāt
bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ sādhanam śuddha-bhaktim
sādhyam tat-prītim evety upadiśati janān gaurachandraḥ svayam saḥ

(Daśa-mūla-tattva-niryāsa)

iha—In this world; **āmnāyaḥ**—the knowledge revealed through Guru-paramparā; **prāha**—states; **tattvaṁ**—the Truth; **harim paramam**—Śrī Hari is supreme; **sarva-śaktim**—He possesses all potencies; **rasābhim**—He is an ocean of rasa. **jīvān cha**—Also, the souls; **tad bhinnāmsān**—are His separated parts. **prakṛti-kavalitān**—They are covered by māyā; **tad vimuktān cha**—or liberated from māyā; **bhāvāt**—by desire. **sakalam api**—Yet everything—the entire spiritual and material creation; **bhedābheda-prakāśam**—is a different and nondifferent manifestation; **hareḥ**—of Śrī Hari. **śuddha-bhaktim**—Pure devotion; **sādhanam**—is the way; **tat prītim**—love for Śrī Hari; **eva sādhyam**—is the only goal. **iti**—This; **saḥ**—He; **gaurachandraḥ**—Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu; **svayam**—Himself; **upadiśati**—teaches; **janān**—the souls.

“Śrī Gaurachandra personally teaches the souls that (1) revealed knowledge establishes the Truth; (2) Hari is supreme, (3) He is omnipotent, (4) He is an ocean of rasa, (5) the souls are His separated parts, (6) they are either covered by material energy, (7) or liberated from material energy by devotion, (8) everything is a manifestation distinct and non-distinct from Hari, (9) pure devotion is the way, and (10) love for Hari is the goal.”

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj:

“Within this one verse, which conveys the gist of the *Dāśa-mūla-tattva*, Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur has given us everything. He has given us the whole conception of Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you can read and memorise this verse, then everything will be within you: the full conception of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, and Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. Everything, the gist of all revealed knowledge (*āmnāya*), is within this one verse.

“But don’t try to understand this verse by yourself. Hear it from an expert. Everywhere throughout all the scriptures this advice is given: ‘You must hear from an expert.’ So hear this verse from an expert who knows its meaning. If you hear from him with full faith, you will understand properly what is what, and you will get everything.”

SECTION ONE

Revelation

Daśa-mūla-tattva

Truth One:

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ

Revealed knowledge establishes the Truth.

CHAPTER ONE

Āmnāya

Āmnāya means knowledge that has descended from the transcendental world into this material world for the benefit of all souls. You can call that knowledge ‘spiritual’ or ‘transcendental’ or ‘divine’. The main idea is that it has descended from above; it has not been formed by anything of this world. We can understand everything about who we are (sambandha), what the goal of our life should be (prayojan), and how we can attain that (abhidheya) through āmnāya.

How āmnāya, revealed knowledge, exists in this world can be understood through the example of the Ganges River. Previously the civilisation of India was called the Gaṅgā-sabhyatā, “The civilisation of the Ganges”. Everyone throughout India has respect for the Ganges and has faith that Mother Ganges comes down to this world from the lotus feet of the Lord in the transcendental world. As the Ganges comes down through the heavens, Lord Śiva takes her on his head, breaks her force, and then allows her to flow gently over the surface of the earth. Everyone understands that the Ganges descends from the Lord’s abode in this way and then flows down from the Himalayas across India to the ocean in the Bay of Bengal, or the

Ganga Sagar, as it is known in India. As the Ganges flows across India many dirty things can be found within her waters, but everyone understands that the Ganges never loses her transcendental nature even when she appears dirty materially. Ganges water is understood to come down from the Lord's lotus feet and to always be fully transcendental. People understand that no matter how dirty her water may appear, the Ganges' waters spiritual nature is never polluted or removed by anything material. So even though the Ganges appears to be polluted, everyone understands that Ganges water is always spiritually purifying and that even the auspicious breeze blowing off the Ganges brings a spiritual mood of devotion to the conditioned souls of this world.

Subtle transmission

Through this example of the Ganges we can understand that when āmnāya descends into this realm it will never lose its transcendental nature, even though it may mix with our material minds, language, and experience. Still, our intelligence cannot conceive of how the Ganges descends from the transcendental realm or how revealed truth appears in this world. To adjust this we can consider that now in the scientific age so many things exist around us that no one could have conceived of in the past. Only now can we conceive that a signal can be broadcast through the ether, picked up by a receiver, and then played on a television or radio in a distant place. Now in the scientific age we understand that transmission can happen through subtle means. We can learn from the work of the scientists that it is not unreasonable to try to connect with the higher transcendental world just because the medium for our connection with the transcendental plane is not physical. The scientists have shown everyone that clear communication is possible through subtle means. So we only need to discover the proper channel of revelation and how we can make ourselves

a proper receiver capable of receiving transmission from the transcendental realm. Then everything will be revealed to us.

Making ourselves proper receivers begins with faith and prayer. When a house is built it is wired so that electricity is available throughout the house. Without electricity a house is dark at night. But when electricity powers the lights within a house, everything can be seen—what is inside the house and what is outside the house. By ourselves, with only our mundane faculties, we are in darkness and cannot imagine the light of divine life. But if we open our hearts and desire that new light appear there, if we pray that our hearts may be clean enough to receive transcendental knowledge, then happily that knowledge will appear within us. As wires carry electricity, so our hearts have the capacity to receive transmissions from the transcendental realm. Faith and prayer from our heart can bring us new life and light from the transcendental world.

Revelation of the Infinite

Our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, once visited a group called the Arya Samaj in West India. A man from this group challenged him, “You say that Kṛṣṇa is infinite, but you also say you can understand Kṛṣṇa and you have knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. You are finite. So how can Kṛṣṇa be infinite? If the finite can know the infinite, then how can it be infinite?” Śrīla Guru Mahārāj quickly responded, “You are right. It is not possible for the finite to know the infinite by its own power. But if Kṛṣṇa cannot make Himself known to the finite, then He is not infinite. The Infinite must also be able to reveal Himself to the finite, otherwise He is not infinite.” That man could not argue with this and was very happily defeated by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. There is no question whether Kṛṣṇa can reveal Himself to us.

The Lord is not powerless. He has the capacity to reveal Himself, and He is merciful. By His mercy Kṛṣṇa descends



Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj lecturing at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp.

to this world to fulfil our prayers in so many different forms. Sometimes He Himself comes with His full transcendental paraphernalia, sometimes He sends His Avatārs, and sometimes He sends divinely empowered souls. In all these forms He descends to this world to bestow His affection and divine connection upon the fortunate jīva-souls.

Enlightening power

athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na chānya eko 'pi chiraṁ vichinvan

(SB: 10.14.29)

“O Lord, one who receives even a trace of the grace of Your lotus feet can know Your glory. Without Your grace no one can know You, even after searching for a long time.”

When transcendental knowledge appears in our hearts by the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa, we will develop the capacity to understand our eternal relationship with Him. Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur said, “Seeing a light bulb shining indicates it is connected to a power source.” When we will see and understand things clearly in our heart we will know we are connected with a source of divine power. It is only necessary for us to give that divine light clear entrance and a clean position in our heart. We are not in control of the flow of revelation, but if we are faithful, submissive, and surrendered, then we can attract revelation’s flow and feel its presence in our hearts. And when the descending flow of transcendental knowledge wants to reveal itself in our hearts it must reveal itself; we will not be able to check it actually.

Still, from our present position, we are not able to understand everything.

nāyam ātmā pravachanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

(Kaṭha-upaniṣad: 1.2.23)

Our ordinary mental power, intelligence, and learning do not give us entrance into transcendental reality. Only when the Lord reveals Himself in our hearts can we understand Him. This means we can come to know Him only by surrendering to His enlightening power. And whenever we feel the presence

of that type of perfect light-connection in our life we must be happy and think that we are proceeding rightly towards our transcendental destiny. As that happens we will begin to understand everything. But until that happens we can't really understand anything. So, once we have adjusted ourselves to be faithful receivers of the Lord's revelation, we need to connect with Him through the proper channel in which His enlightening power flows. Once we have prepared ourselves we must try to connect with the Lord and His āmnāya through the proper channel, then everything will be revealed in our hearts. It is sure that through the proper connection with the proper channel, āmnāya will appear in our hearts. We only need to proceed in our spiritual life with faith, with chastity and sincerity, with love and affection, and try to receive transcendental knowledge through the proper channel.

Vedic culture

The proper channel means a connection with a Vedic source. It means Vedic culture, Vedic scriptures, and Vedic saints. Vedic culture means āmnāya-paramparā, the descending flow of transcendental knowledge through heart-to-heart transmission. Through the channel of āmnāya-paramparā transcendental knowledge descends from above and flows through this world like the Ganges River. Sometimes people think Vedic culture started when Vedic scriptures were written but this is not the truth. Actually, Vedic culture manifested during the creation of the universe.

At the beginning of creation, Brahmā, the first created being within the universe, awoke and found that everything was dark. He could not see anything. Eventually he heard a sound, "Tapa!" In this form of divya-saraswatī, transcendental sound vibration, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa initiated Brahmā. Kṛṣṇa Himself acted as the first Guru of everyone in this mundane world by giving consciousness of Himself to Brahmā, the creator. *Tapa* means 'meditate'. Brahmā meditated and Lord

īśvarera kṛpā-leśa haya ta' yāhāre
sei ta' īśvara-tattva jānibāre pāre
(Cc: *Madhya*, 6.83)

"One who receives even a trace of the Lord's grace can understand the Lord."

Kṛṣṇa appeared in his heart. After this Brahmā could see and also understand what his work was to be. Then he began creating everything within the universe. Later Brahmā gave the consciousness he received from Kṛṣṇa to Nārad Ṛṣi, and Nārad Ṛṣi gave it to Vedavyās. Vedavyās then distributed that transcendental knowledge to everyone. In this way transcendental knowledge came down into this world at the very beginning of creation and then began to spread from heart to heart.

Transcendental research

This process of revelation is called *Guru-paramparā*, or *āmnāya-paramparā*, and it is the proper channel to approach the Lord. By hearing from a higher source, from a qualified Guru, serving him, and meditating on his instructions, transcendental knowledge is revealed to a sincere seeker. This is the meaning of ‘proper channel’ and this was the process in the previous ages of the Vedic culture.

There was no writing or scripture involved originally: only hearing, serving, and learning from Śrī Gurudev. Someone who could receive transcendental knowledge in this way and also reveal new light about the transcendental world to others was known as a ṛṣi. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained that *ṛṣi* means a ‘research scholar’. This is a very nice expression. It means that someone will only become well-known as a ṛṣi if they have great research capacity, if they are able to reveal new light from the transcendental world that is essential for everyone’s spiritual and material lives.

Vedic scripture

The discoveries of the great ṛṣis who received light from the transcendental world were later organised and compiled into scriptures by Vedavyās. *Vyās*, or *Vedavyās*, is a title which means *Veda-vistāra-kārī*, one who spreads Veda by putting it into suitable written form. *Veda* means the consciousness given by

āmnāya, revealed knowledge that is essential in the lives of everyone. A Vedavyās is actually a Śaktyāveś-avatār, an incarnation of the Lord in the form of an empowered jīva-soul who has the capacity to spread āmnāya.

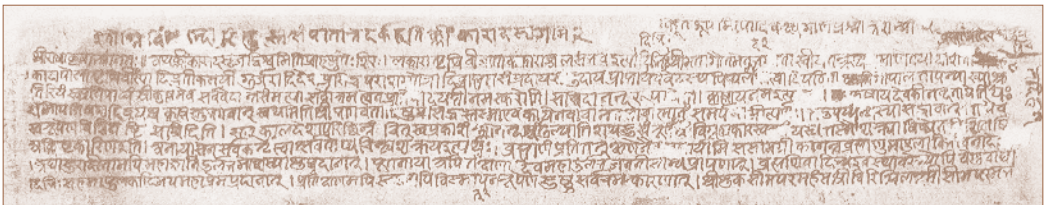
Hinduism, Vedic culture, and Indian culture come from the rulings of Vedavyās. All religious groups within India, mostly Hindu groups, still follow Vedavyās’ teachings and the *Manu-samhitā*, the laws of mankind. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyan was the name of the ṛṣi who performed the service of compiling the scriptures in the recent age and became known as *Vedavyās*.

The discoveries of the ṛṣis were very broad. The ṛṣis understood everything about all aspects of life, both material and spiritual. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyan Vedavyās collected all of their research and mixed it with material examples so that the conditioned souls could understand it. Then he divided and presented their research in different scriptures to be taught to students within the schools of Vedic culture. In this way he composed the four Vedas—the *Ṛg-veda*, *Sāma-veda*, *Yajur-veda*, and *Atharva-veda*—the *Āyurveda* scripture, and the fifth Veda, the *Mahābhārata*.

Garga Ṛṣi’s praṇām mantra for Vedavyās:

vadana-kamala-niryadyasya
 īyūṣam ādyam
 pibati jana-varo ‘yam
 pātu so ‘yam giraṁ me
 badara-vana-vihāraḥ
 satyavatyāḥ kumāraḥ
 praṇata-durita-hāraḥ
 sārṅga-dhanv-avatāraḥ
 (Gs: 1.1.2)

“May Satyavati’s son, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyan Vedavyās, the Avatār of Viṣṇu who removes the surrendered souls’ sorrow and enjoys Pastimes in the forest of Badari, he from whose lotus mouth the sādhus drink the original nectar, guide my words.”



These scriptures are so vast; they are huge books. The *Mahābhārata* alone has over 100,000 verses in it. We have heard that there is also another part of the *Mahābhārata* found only in heaven that has even more verses. But even within the 100,000 verses of our *Mahābhārata* here, there are so many stories; we cannot even conceive how many stories. They are all very sweet, hopeful stories, but sometimes they are mixed with some alloy, some themes which are not purely devotional. Still, they are all related to religion and always give us remembrance of the

An example of the handwriting of Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī Prabhu, who wrote more than 400,000 verses explaining the Vedic scriptures.

fundamental questions of life: “Who are you? Why are you suffering in the illusory environment? What is the cause of everything?” All the scriptures are always giving us this consciousness. Questions about who we are and what the goal of our life should be are the fundamental basis of all religious thought.

Scriptural gist

The *Mahābhārata* presents everything to us, but, along with the other Vedas, it is so vast. We could not finish reading all of the Vedic scriptures even within an entire lifetime. Also, the knowledge given in the Vedas is widely differentiated; there are sections that describe all the different aspects of life. If we try to learn everything just by reading the Vedas ourselves, we become lost in a jungle of knowledge. Considering that this would happen, Vedavyās felt his work was not sufficient. He then composed the 108 Upaniṣads.

The Vedas are very big. The Upaniṣads are much shorter. They present all the ideals found in the Vedas in a much shorter form. But the Upaniṣads are still so many, so Vedavyās finally composed the *Vedānta-darśana*.

Within the *Vedānta-darśana* is present the gist of all revealed knowledge and all the previous scriptures. When Vedavyās wanted to give the substance of the whole of Vedic literature in a very short way, he presented the *Vedānta-darśana*. Within the *Vedānta-darśana* there are only very short sūtras, codes, but there is so much light and so much knowledge within each and every one of them.

Clarifying the essence

Vedavyās wanted to present everything in the sūtras of his *Vedānta-darśana*. He did this, but the sūtras contain so much condensed knowledge that they are very difficult to properly understand. Only a very highly qualified person can properly

An archetypal verse from
the Upaniṣads:

tad ejati tan naijati
tad dūre tad v antike
tad antar asya sarvasya
tad u sarvasyāsya bāhyatah
(Īw: 5)

“The Lord moves, and He
does not move. He is far,
and He is near. He is within
everything, and He is
outside of everything.”

understand the condensed knowledge of the *Vedānta-darśana*. General persons are not able to understand it. We have seen that now there are also many wrong interpretations of the *Vedānta-darśana* being presented that were not intended by Vedavyās. These wrong interpretations create confusion and many mistaken theories which lead towards *māyāvād*, illusionism, and *nāstikavād*, atheism.

Vedavyās wanted that everyone would understand the gist of the Vedas through his writings, especially the *Vedānta-darśana*, and when he saw that this was not happening, he felt unsatisfied. He thought, “I have given so much knowledge to rescue the conditioned souls. I have given so many things for their benefit. Why am I not feeling peace in my heart? Why am I not fully satisfied? Why is my work unsatisfactory? I cannot understand.”



Nārada Goswāmī and Vedavyās in the Himalayan foothills on the bank of the Saraswatī River.

As Vedavyās was thinking in this way his Gurudev, Nārada Goswāmī, came to visit him by the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Vedavyās was very happy to see Nārada Goswāmī. He received him and worshipped him. Then Vedavyās asked him, “Prabhu, why am I unhappy? You know everything, and you can understand why I am unhappy. Please explain this to me.” Nārada Goswāmī said, “Yes, I can explain everything; it is for this purpose that I have come to visit you.”

Then Nārada Goswāmī chastised Vedavyās: “What you have given the conditioned souls is actually not sufficient.

jugupsitaṁ dharma-kṛte 'nuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramaḥ
yad-vākyato dharma itī taraḥ sthito
na manyate tasya nivāraṇaṁ janaḥ

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.5.15)

“*Jugupsitaṁ dharma-kṛte 'nuśāsataḥ*: you have explained religion in khichuri form; everything is mixed together. That is tasteful to the conditioned souls, and they will no doubt enjoy with that. But you have left a puzzle for anyone who wants to transcend this mundane world. They will be frustrated when they try to find the clear path to the spiritual world. The conditioned souls are always active, and they need to know which path is best for them to follow and what their destination should be. Should they follow the path of karma-yoga, the path of action? Jñāna-yoga, the path of knowledge? Aṣṭāṅga-yoga, the path of meditation? Karma-miśra-bhakti, the path of devotion mixed with action? Jñāna-miśra-bhakti, the path of devotion mixed with knowledge? This has not been clearly explained.

“What should be their ideal conception? Brahma conception, the conception of the nondifferentiated Absolute? Paramātmā conception, the conception of the Supreme Soul? Bhāgavat conception, the conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead? You have not explained these things clearly, and you have not explained what is Supreme. It is necessary for you to clarify this to complete your work and truly benefit the conditioned souls.

“The conditioned souls can't conceive that their greatest benefit will come to them through service and dedication to the Lord. They only understand exploitation. When they see the bad reactions they receive in the plane of exploitation they seek relief in the plane of renunciation. But there they lose everything; the jīva-souls cannot find the fulfilment of their existence in impersonal liberation. Only in the plane of dedication and service to the Lord is everything existing beautifully in harmony with the jīva-souls' true nature. You have not explained this to the conditioned souls.”

Religion for the enlightened

Nārad Goswāmī continued, “You have already given medicine for rogīs, sick men, in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, and so on, but you have not explained what is nourishing to strong and healthy men. Your duty is to provide nourishment for everyone. You have given the medicine needed to release the conditioned souls from their suffering. You have given them the clue to find relief. But you have not given any nourishment to the healthy persons, liberated souls, who know they are transcendental, have goodwill, and want further nourishment. You are the supreme authority on religion; no one can change, or argue with, your conclusions. But what you have done is wrong and you must correct it.

“You have said, ‘*Raso vai Saḥ*: the Supreme is rasa.’ That is very good. But what is that rasa actually? There are so many forms of ecstasy. What is the supreme form of ecstasy? If a jīva-soul enters the emporium of ecstasy, how will he know what he wants and what is best for him? You have not clearly given that knowledge to the jīva-souls. So what have you actually distributed?

“You began the *Vedānta-darśana* with, ‘*Athāto Brahma jijñāsā*: now search for the Supreme.’ But who will understand that this actually means, ‘Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Reality the Beautiful’? Who will understand that Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine form coupled with Rādhārāṇī is the emporium of all ecstasy (*raso vai Saḥ*)?”

yad vai tat sukṛtam raso vai saḥ
“He who is perfect (Brahma) is
the embodiment of rasa (Kṛṣṇa).”

The divine play in seed form

In this way, according to the conception of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, Nārad Goswāmī chastised Vedavyās. Then Vedavyās folded his palms and asked Nārad Goswāmī, “Prabhu, what should I do now?”

Nārad Goswāmī said, “Try to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the jīva-souls by describing and distributing Kṛṣṇa-līlā, the divine Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa-līlā is not only the property

The Bhāgavat-chatuḥ-ślokī
mantram (SB: 2.9.33–36):

aham evāsam evāgre
nānyad yat sad asat param
paścād aham yad etach cha
yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham

“Prior to creation, only I
existed. Nothing else—gross,
subtle, or primordial—
existed. After creation, only I
exist, and after the annihila-
tion only I remain.”

ṛte 'rtham yat pratīyeta
na pratīyeta chātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyām
yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ

“Know that which seems to
exist without Me or does
not seem to exist within Me
to be My energy, comparable
to a reflection or darkness.”

of the mundane world; it is the property of Goloka Vṛndāvan, the highest realm of the spiritual world. I will give you in four short notes the seed form of that divine play, the gist form of that knowledge. You are qualified; you have the capacity to meditate. Plant these seeds in your heart and meditate, and they will reveal their full form to you. With proper vision you will see everything cleanly and clearly. Then you can express that through your writing and distribute it all over the world. You will be fully satisfied and happy with that.”

Nārad Goswāmī properly and authentically gave the Bhāgavat-chatuḥ-ślokī mantram to Vedavyās, that is, transcendental light and knowledge of ananya-bhakti, exclusive devotion. Vedavyās meditated and saw Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself in his heart along with all of His potencies. Then, with inspiration from the chatuḥ-ślokī mantram, plus the twelve verses of chastisement from Nārad Goswāmī, and the idea to write a commentary on his *Vedānta-darśana*, Vedavyās composed his final work, his supreme scripture—*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

The supreme conclusion

Within *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* four sittings are described in which the *Bhāgavat's* message—the message which Nārad Goswāmī received from Brahmā and Brahmā received from Kṛṣṇa Himself at the beginning of creation— was transmitted. The first sitting was the meeting of Nārad Goswāmī and Vedavyās. The next sitting was the meeting of Vedavyās and his son Śukadev Goswāmī. The third sitting happened at Sukratala, where Śukadev Goswāmī spoke to Mahārāj Parīkṣit. The fourth sitting happened at Naimiṣāraṇya, where a disciple of Śukadev Goswāmī, Sūta Goswāmī, spoke to 60,000 ṛṣis who were assembled for a fire sacrifice. After these four sittings Vedavyās collected everything that was expressed, gradually composed *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and then gave it to the world.

In this way Vedavyās wrote his own commentary on the *Vedānta-darśana* and clearly explained everything about revealed knowledge for everyone. With full satisfaction in his heart he presented his introduction to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in a simple way: “This *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is my last will and testament. It contains the highest knowledge—pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness—and any jīva-soul who can follow its directives will attain the supreme goal of life. They will attain a liberated position, get entrance into the transcendental service world, and happily play with the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa in full love, affection, and ecstasy.”

Vedavyās also concluded *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* with full satisfaction:

sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ hi śrīmad-bhāgavatam iṣyate
tad-rasāmṛta-tṛptasya nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvachit

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 12.13.15)

“*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* contains the gist of all the Vedas, the *Vedānta-darśana*, and the Upaniṣads. Anyone who once reads *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* will never become attracted to any other scripture; one will only continue without interruption to drink the transcendental nectar of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.”

śrīmad-bhāgavatam purāṇam amalāṁ yad vaiṣṇavānāṁ priyaṁ

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 12.13.18)

“There was something wrong with what I presented previously, but here in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* there is nothing wrong; everything is clean and clear. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is *purāṇam amalāṁ*, the spotless Purāṇa, and, *yad Vaiṣṇavānāṁ priyaṁ*, all the Vaiṣṇavas have accepted it very dearly within their hearts.”

In this way we can understand,

artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇāṁ bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārtha-paribṛṁhitaḥ

(*Garuḍa-purāṇa*)

yathā mahānti bhūtāni
bhūteṣūchchāveṣṇu anu
praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni
tathā teṣu na teṣu aham

“As the material elements exist within all beings, large and small, yet also exist outside of them, so I exist both inside and outside of all beings.”

etāvad eva jijñāsyam
tattva-jijñāsunātmanaḥ
anvaya-vyatirekābhyām
yat syāt sarvatra sarvadā

“One who seeks the Absolute should directly and indirectly search for Me, who exist everywhere and always.”

“Śrīmad Bhāgavatam presents full knowledge of the sūtras of the *Vedānta-darśana*. It is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-darśana*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *gāyatrī-mantram*; all knowledge, everything, is presented in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.”

If you can follow the conception of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* you will understand the gist of all revealed truth, all *āmnāya*.

Heart-to-Heart Transmission

Question: We hear that all truth is present in the scriptures, specifically *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, but how do we know when we are supposed to take the expressions in the scriptures literally or figuratively? How do we understand what the scriptures are really trying to say?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: How will we understand anything about the scriptures? We must first enter into a school. When we are admitted into a school we are given appropriate lessons for our level by our teacher. When I am studying in a school I pass through class one to class two, then to class three, and so on. In each class what I am taught is not exactly the same. Each higher class does not present everything in the same way as the previous classes do. But whatever I learn in each class is appropriate and beneficial for me at my level.

The Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and other scriptures are an ocean, and they contain so many verses which have many different meanings. Ultimately, they are all guiding us towards the same goal—Kṛṣṇa-bhakti—but we are not always able to understand that. Sometimes it is very

difficult to see that actually. Many different practising processes are explained in the various scriptures: karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, aṣṭāṅga-yoga, bhakti-yoga, and others. If we want to understand the real advice of all the scriptures, if we want to understand where the scriptures' knowledge is trying to take our consciousness, then it is first necessary to faithfully study the scriptural lessons that are appropriate for us in a school, under the guidance of a proper teacher. That is the best process.

We must be very conscious about reading the scriptures. The scriptures are not the easiest thing to understand. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* explains how a student should approach a teacher to learn spiritual knowledge:

**tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ**

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*: 4.34)

Here it is explained that a student must be a little qualified to approach a teacher. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* says, “First be surrendered, then enquire and serve. Your Guru will want to hear your questions and bestow his mercy upon you if you are really surrendered to him, you are humble, and you have real hankering.” First approach Gurudev through surrender; then serve him. Surrender alone is not sufficient. Surrendered service to Gurudev is the main thing that will give the sincere seeker the proper result in his search for transcendental knowledge. Someone may acquire general knowledge in other ways, but without praṇipāt, surrender; paripraśna, sincere enquiry; and sevā, service, transcendental knowledge will not reveal itself in the heart.

When a student is a little qualified in this way and finds a Guru who is a qualified teacher, the student must surrender to him, ask him questions, and serve him. Everything will be revealed in the heart of the qualified sincere seeker by the qualified Guru when the disciple is enriched with these three qualities of surrender, enquiry, and service—enriched with a



*Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*

mood of devotion. When that mood is present, everything will be set right: the Guru’s heart will be melted by that student’s sincere approach, and the Guru will be ready to teach the student. By this process the student will understand, through the melted heart of his Guru, the essence of all the scriptures—everything that is to be found within the Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the other scriptures. This is how we should try to learn the scriptures.

Spiritual experts

We can see that the scriptures themselves always advise us about the position and necessity of the proper teacher, the sādhu. In *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī advises us:

yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Antya-līlā, 5.131*)

“Go to the Vaiṣṇava, the devotee, and hear from him the meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*; only read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in the association of the Vaiṣṇavas.”

Without the Vaiṣṇava we cannot understand the meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and we will undoubtedly proceed in the wrong direction. It is necessary to hear the explanation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, or any scripture, from some expert. Only when we hear from an expert can we understand the real meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Our knowledge is very limited. Nobody can say, “I am full with all knowledge.” Even Śrīla Guru Mahārāj told us, “I am a student. You consider yourselves masters? I consider myself to be a student, and all of you to be students. Nobody is a master.”

It was Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s conception that we are all students. Therefore we must try to understand what our lessons are from a proper teacher. Through one who understands the essence of the lessons we are to learn, we can easily understand what our lessons are. It is very difficult to understand otherwise.

yāha, bhāgavata paḍa
vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara
chaitanya-charaṇe
chaitanyera bhakta-gaṇera
nitya kara ‘saṅga’
tabe ta’ jānibā siddhānta-
samudra-taraṅga

(Cc: *Antya*, 5.131–2)

“Go and study *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* with the Vaiṣṇavas. Sincerely take shelter of Śrī Chaitanya’s feet and always associate with His devotees. Then you will understand the waves in the ocean of Truth.”

We may make wrong interpretations, not understanding the real meaning of the scriptures, and we may be deceived. It is necessary to hear the meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from a proper interpreter and servitor of Kṛṣṇa like Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam itself has given two formulas for understanding *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. One prescribes reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the other prohibits reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. If someone suddenly opens *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and follows what comes in front of them, then they will proceed in the wrong way. It is necessary to harmonise the whole of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*'s conception. And who can harmonise it? Only one who knows the fundamental basis and full meaning of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

There are so many things written in the scriptures, and they are no doubt very good things. But because we have limited knowledge we can also easily misunderstand the words of the scriptures. We must discuss the scriptures with a sādhu to clarify that we are understanding the scriptures properly.

satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 3.25.25)

The Lord Himself explains in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: “Discussions about Me heard in the association of My pure devotees nourish your ears and hearts; they fill your souls with ecstasy. Only when someone proceeds in their spiritual life under the guidance of My devotees will they naturally develop proper faith, attachment, and devotion.”

What is written in books and what is heard directly from the sādhu are two completely different things! What we may read or hear outside the association of the sādhu is not *hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ*: nectarean words which nourish our hearts and fill us with ecstasy. Only when we hear from the sādhu are we



ohe prabhu dayāmaya,
tomāra charaṇa-dvaya,
śruti-śiropari śobhā pāya
guru-jana-śire punaḥ,
śobhā pāya śata guṇa,
dekhi āmāra parāṇa juḍāya
(Gītā-mālā: 1.1.1)

“O merciful Lord! Seeing Your feet become more beautiful atop the heads of the scriptures and a hundred times more beautiful atop the head of my Guru soothes my heart.”

receiving something in the proper channel, receiving something descending down from Goloka Vṛndāvan through the hearts of our paramparā’s Gurus which is perfect and necessary for our spiritual life. Only when we hear in the proper channel from the sādhu is there a transmission of the power which reveals the essence of the scriptures’ words in our hearts. We are given real entrance into what we hear in the scriptures by the sādhu.

Following the great souls

Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj was a wise man. He was very qualified and had studied so many scriptures: the Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, and so on. He also received much advice from various ṛṣis and munis. But after studying so many things he was puzzled and could not find a settled position. “Everything is good; everything is bad. It is good; it is bad. It is good; it is bad. It is good; it is bad.” Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj could not conclude what was the proper way to get relief from the illusory environment and become established in a clean position. Lastly he could only conclude that anyone who tries to discover what religion is simply by reading the scriptures will become crazy.

Reasoning is inconclusive; the scriptures are variegated; one whose conception is not distinctive cannot become a ṛṣi. True dharma is thus secretly concealed. Therefore, the way of the great souls is the path.

**tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya matam na bhinnam
dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhāyām
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ**

(Mahābhārata: Vana-parva, 313.117)

Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj said, “We cannot take the advice of the Vedas directly. Our store of knowledge is very limited, and the knowledge given in the Vedas is very vast. The Vedas explain pratyakṣa-jñān [sensory knowledge], parokṣa-jñān [collective knowledge], aparokṣa-jñān [subtle knowledge], and adhokṣaja-jñān [transcendental knowledge]. Also, the ṛṣis who describe Vedic knowledge present many different interpretations of it and are not always perfect. Parāśar Ṛṣi presented one conception; Vaśiṣṭha Ṛṣi presented another; Chyavan Ṛṣi presented another; and so on. There are so many ṛṣis, and they presented many different conceptions. Thus the jīva-souls become confused; they do not find the truth with only the scriptures, the differing opinions of the ṛṣis, and their own minds. To find the proper conception we must follow the path of the Mahājans, the great souls, in whose hearts the truth is living.”

**svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo balir vaiyāsakir vayam**

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 6.3.20)

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* Vedavyās indicated that Brahmā, Nārada Ṛṣi, Śiva, the four kumāras—Sanaka, Sanātan, Sananda, and Sanat—Kapiladev, Manu, Prahlād Mahārāj, Janaka Rāja, Bhīṣmadev, Bali Mahārāj, Śukadev Goswāmī, and Yamarāj are all Mahājans. These particular twelve Mahājans are described throughout the scriptures and are so glorious. Their primary qualification is that they are devotees of the Lord. Actually, all great devotees of the Lord should be considered Mahājans.

Once many of these twelve Mahājans who are listed in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* were discussing a verse from *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* about the position of the Lord’s devotees, but they could not come to a proper conclusion about it.

In the meantime they saw Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur going by, and they called him over, “O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākur! You know the proper meaning of this verse. Please come and join us.” Then Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur explained the verse to them, and they were very happy.

Devotees like Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur are the greatest Mahājans, and anyone who follows their guidance will be supremely benefitted.

lābhas teṣām jayaṣ teṣām kutaṣ teṣām parābhavaḥ
yeṣām-īndīvara-śyāmo hṛdaya-stho janārdanaḥ
(Pāṇḍava-gītā)

“Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is living in an effulgent way within the hearts of His dear devotees, and His Pastimes are always going on there very gloriously. Such devotees are truly great souls, Mahājans, and are always happy and successful.”

All directions should lead us towards Lord Kṛṣṇa and the real Mahājans, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees. We must follow a proper devotee whose activity is top to bottom dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s service. His practice and lifestyle will be the perfect example of religious life for us, and his guidance will give us the proper understanding of the scriptures. Discussing the scriptures with qualified Vaiṣṇavas—pure devotees, sādhus—is always the best thing for practitioners. Practitioners know something, no doubt, but they do not know everything. When they discuss scriptural matters, with love and affection, with a qualified sādhu, then they must be benefitted by that—realisation of the proper meaning, feeling, and everything, will come to them.

Religion of the heart

When Kṛṣṇa wants to reveal transcendental knowledge in your heart through His devotee, it must be revealed. Even you won’t be able to check it. So we need connection with Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. Thus the actual question is: how can we recognise a genuine devotee, a true religious person? To whom does Kṛṣṇa reveal Himself?



Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur

The first verse to explain this, which explains the theme of our book *Religion of the Heart*, must be:

vidvadbhiḥ sevitaḥ sadbhir nityam adveṣa-rāgibhiḥ
hṛdayenābhyanujñāto yo dharmas taṁ nibhodhata

(*Manu-saṁhitā*: 2.1)

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj once gave a lecture in the library of Dhanbad before a gathering of many highly qualified paṇḍits and wealthy persons. He started his lecture with this verse. He explained that people think religion is found in books and that those books are written in particular languages, but that religion does not actually come from books or languages: religion is communicated through the transcendental language of heart transaction.

All religion presented in scriptures is first revealed in the hearts of ṛṣis, munis, and sādhus. After it appears in their hearts it is transmitted forward from heart to heart, and it later may take the form of books. So what can we say about religion? How much can we understand it? It is a matter of the heart. How can we feel the beauty and understand the glory of religion if our hearts are presently as filthy as a dustbin? Because our hearts are impure we must try to understand religion from a clean-hearted sādhu.

sādhūnām sama-chittānām
sutarām mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ
pumso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā
(*SB*: 10.10.41)

“As there is no darkness when
one’s eyes see the sun, so
there is no bondage when
one sees the equipoised
sādhus whose hearts are ex-
clusively dedicated to Me.”

Qualities of a sādhu

What are the qualities of a sādhu? *Vidvadbhiḥ sevitaḥ sadbhir*: a perfect sādhu cleanly and clearly understands the Vedas, the Vedānta, and the essence of their directives (*vidvadbhiḥ*). He always serves their purpose (*sevitaḥ*). He has no deficiency in simplicity, cleanliness, or proper behaviour (*sadbhir*). He has control of his six senses, and he has regard for everyone. His only sadness is the suffering of others.

Vedavyās, the author of all the Vedic scriptures, was a true sādhu. He saw so many other sādhus and was also praised by so many sādhus. He knew everything about revealed knowledge.

But more so than knowledge and even behaviour, what did he say was the best quality of a sādhu? *Nirmatsarāṇām satām* (SB: 1.1.2): the sādhu’s heart is completely clean and clear; there is not even a tiny dirty thing within it. This means that the sādhu is never envious of others (*nityam adveṣa-rāgibhiḥ*). He has no enviousness or anger and holds full love and affection within his heart for everyone. A sādhu with these qualities who is fully attached to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a real Mahājan, a real leader of humanity, and is always rightly engaged in religious service.

kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva ‘śānta’
 bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali ‘aśānta’
 (Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 19.149)

One who is interested in the mundane—selfish enjoyment, liberation, or supernatural power—is not a sādhu. One who has no desire for selfish enjoyment, who wants to give rather than take, who is always engaged twenty-four hours a day in serving the desires of the divine Lord, he is a sādhu. He alone is a truly peaceful, perfect gentleman. Real religion is the beauty that appears within the heart of such a sādhu, the transcendental feeling revealed in such a sādhu’s heart through his life of service. Whatever advice and instruction such a sādhu expresses is true religious instruction and can never be harmful to anyone. If we will receive a heart transmission from that type of sādhu and follow his guidance, we must feel the benefit of a truly religious life and come to understand the universal religion of all souls (jaiva-dharma). If anyone will proceed according to the guidance of a pure sādhu, then from that launching pad they will happily fly into the sky of virtue and reach the peak of religion. There is no party spirit or sectarian interest in such pure religion.

Universal religion

After Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s lecture, in which he made many of

tulayāma lavenāpi na
 svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam
 bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya
 martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ
 (SB: 1.18.13)

“There is no comparison between even a moment of association with the Lord’s associates, and heaven or liberation. So what is to be said of mortal benedictions?”

these points about true religion, one very well-to-do man in the audience spoke: “In the past we have heard about Vaiṣṇava-dharma, and we considered that Vaiṣṇava-dharma was a branch of Hindu dharma. But I am so satisfied with what I have heard from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj that I now understand that all religious property is present within Vaiṣṇava-dharma. I now know that Vaiṣṇava-dharma is one; it is the true universal religion, and all other dharmas are subparts of Vaiṣṇava-dharma. I feel now that the universal Vaiṣṇava-dharma is the best thing for all jīva-souls.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj’s style was always very broad and perfect. He was always conscious about what he was doing, and he always presented everything according to the scriptures politely with clear logic. Some sannyāsīs and brahmachārīs would present our Param Gurudev’s conception, Śrīla Sarasvatī Thākura’s conception, in a hammering way, but Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was completely different from them. I am fortunate that I have heard many things from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. I have seen that so many people received divine light from him, and that this light became the light of their life.

The law of love and affection

My life in Śrī Chaitanya Sārasvat Maṭh with Śrīla Guru Mahārāj was always very restricted. I would not do anything without the permission of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. At least I can say for myself that I never did anything that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj did not give me permission to do. When the property of Śrī Chaitanya Sārasvat Maṭh was in a critical position I had to go to Kalna every day for two months to defend the Maṭh in court. Each day I would travel from the Maṭh to the court in Kalna and return home, but I would not go anywhere else along the way.

One day Śrīla Guru Mahārāj asked me, “Have you seen the temple of Gaurī Dās Paṇḍit in Kalna?” I said that I had lived near the temple all my life, but that I had never once seen the temple. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “Next time you go to Kalna

offer your daṇḍavat praṇām to Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu there.” It was only then that I ever visited that temple. Also, I never visited Mahāprabhu’s sannyās place in Katwa for twenty-eight years until I received the service-order of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj.

Our life was very restricted under Śrīla Guru Mahārāj, but we actually never felt any restriction. We always felt everything to be the natural love and affection of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. We felt that our service life was guided by Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and we could simply, and happily follow his orders. That was the natural law of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh: everyone would follow the rules automatically with love and affection.

It is always best when people will follow religious rules and regulations naturally with love and affection, with respect and honour. This was the standard we followed in Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh from the beginning, and we never felt the necessity for anything else. In that environment I heard from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj for many years and learned something about the essence of the scriptures, the essence of religion, through him.

*Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj speaking
the sannyās mantra to
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.*



CHAPTER THREE

The Lotus Feet of Śrī Gurudev

Śrīla Narottam Dās Ṭhākur has explained perfectly the position of Śrī Gurudev in one of his songs.

śrī-guru-charaṇa-padma, kevala bhakati-sadma,
vando muñi sāvadhāna mate

(*Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.1*)

“The lotus feet of Gurudev are the one and only abode of pure devotion.”

We must always be serious in our practice of spiritual life and serious about the glorification of the lotus feet of Gurudev. We do not actually know properly the position and glory of our Gurudev’s lotus feet, so we must always be careful in glorifying Gurudev (*vando muñi sāvadhāna mate*). We do not want to make any offence to Gurudev when we glorify him because offences to Gurudev are great obstacles in our spiritual life.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has explained Gurudev’s position to us for our benefit in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*:

āchāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhichit

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 11.17.27*)

“Carefully remember and consider Gurudev to be Me. Never think he is an ordinary man with a mundane form. As Gurudev, I Myself take on a human form to rescue the conditioned souls and give them a connection with the transcendental abode. You must consider Gurudev to be a nondifferent form of Myself.”

Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākur also explained in an even more clear way the position of Gurudev:

sākṣād dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvyata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-charaṇāravindam

(Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam: 7)



“It is written in all the scriptures that Bhagavān Himself manifests in a human form in front of me as Gurudev.”

When Gurudev gives initiation, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself, that is, Gurudev is revealed to be Kṛṣṇa Himself. Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself through the heart of Gurudev in His transcendental sound vibration form, Śrī Hari-nām. Kṛṣṇa descends through the preceptorial line of Gurus (paramparā) into the heart of the disciple through the heart of Gurudev. In that way Gurudev acts as Kṛṣṇa Himself. Still, Gurudev also has his own personal identity as a servitor of the Lord. He never thinks, “I am Kṛṣṇa”, but always thinks, “I am the servitor of the servitor of

the servitor of Kṛṣṇa". In this way Gurudev is Kṛṣṇa's dearmost devotee (*kintu Prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*).

Gurudev is a servant of Kṛṣṇa, but a disciple must still always consider that Kṛṣṇa is revealing Himself in human form in front of him as Gurudev. The disciple sees Gurudev as a human but knows that Gurudev is not actually human. Gurudev's actual form is transcendental: he is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa Himself. Because this conception of Gurudev is very important and we must be very careful to never lose faith in Gurudev, Narottam Ṭhākur sang: "*Vando muñi sāvadhāna mate: be careful to not improperly glorify Gurudev in any way.*"

When Kṛṣṇa takes form as Gurudev, He is so merciful to the conditioned souls. There is no doubt about that.

yāhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava tariyā yāi,
kṛṣṇa-prāpti haya yāhā haite

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.1)

When Gurudev is worshipped as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, and sincere seekers try to understand the service of Kṛṣṇa through Gurudev, Kṛṣṇa is more happy than when He is approached directly. When He is approached through Gurudev, Kṛṣṇa gives much more help to the sincere seekers; He inspires them in their hearts: "Yes, what you are doing is right. Proceed on."

The vital conception is that Kṛṣṇa distributes Himself and no one else can do that. Only when Kṛṣṇa Himself shows His greatly merciful nature and takes the form of Gurudev can transcendental knowledge be spread to someone's heart, and only then will someone understand Gurudev's position.

The chosen one

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, chittete kariyā aikya,
āra nā kariha mane āśā

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.2)

If any sincere seeker can follow the advice of Gurudev he must receive Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Kṛṣṇa Himself has given us 200 per cent assurance of that. We must have full faith in the transcendental

By Śrī Guru's grace the soul crosses over this world and reaches Kṛṣṇa. Make the teachings from the lotus mouth of Śrī Guru one with your heart; do not desire anything else. (Pbc: 1.1-2)

knowledge that is revealed through Gurudev. It is actually not necessary to follow any advice from any other quarter. It is only necessary to wholeheartedly follow with full faith the teachings, orders, and service responsibilities which come from Gurudev.

śrī guru-charaṇe rati, sei se uttama-gati,
ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.2)

If you are determined to follow the order of Gurudev properly with chastity and sincerity, then you will get everything through his service (*ye prasāde pūre sarva āśā*).

Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākura gave us this most clear conception: “Gurudev is a teacher and Gurudev is a servitor.” Gurudev is actually Kṛṣṇa’s supreme servitor (*kintu Prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya*). He shows us his form in this way. You will receive full spiritual benefit when you see what Gurudev is doing and how he is satisfying the Lord. You will be most benefitted when you see that he is giving you service for the satisfaction of his divine Lord. When you see Gurudev in this way you will receive all hope and facility to satisfy the Lord.

Transcendental vision

chakṣu-dāna dilā yei, janme janme prabhu sei,
divya-jñāna hṛde prokāśita

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.3)

Proper transcendental vision comes to us through Gurudev. Everything in this world is mundane, but the transcendental plane can be revealed anywhere and everywhere within this material world. That’s what makes the transcendental plane transcendent. For example, when a flower falls from a tree we do not care so much for that flower. It may have fallen on the road, and we may smash it as we walk by without caring. But when a flower is offered to the lotus feet of the Deity, or offered to a respectable Vaiṣṇava or Gurudev, then we no longer ignore or disrespect that flower. We take it on our head and give

Attachment to Śrī Guru’s feet is the best path. By his mercy all desires are fulfilled. He who gave me the gift of eyes, who revealed divine knowledge in my heart, is my lord birth after birth. (Pbc: 1.2–3)

it proper honour. Why? Not because we see anything different about the flower but because our knowledge tells us that it has been offered to the Lord, and whenever anything is offered to the Lord it takes on a transcendental form. This is transcendental vision. Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura said,

**ye-dina gṛhe, bhajana dekhi,
gṛhete goloka bhāya**

(Śaraṇāgati: 31.6)

“When I see my whole family satisfying the Lord through their activities; when I see their practices like chanting the Holy Name, worshipping the Deity, and offering foods to the Deity; when I see all of the activity in my family is God-centric, then I feel: ‘My family is not mundane and does not live in a mundane environment: it actually has a transcendental form.’”



This sort of transcendental knowledge comes to us through Gurudev, and if we carefully try to observe the environment with that knowledge, then we will be able to see everything transcendently. If we are a proper practitioner then transcendental feelings must come into our heart. When transcendental knowledge reveals itself in our heart, our vision of the environment automatically changes and we see that what appears to be mundane can actually expand into something spiritual. Our children become spiritual children, and the flowers in our garden become spiritual flowers; everything and everyone we see becomes transcendental when we see them related with the Lord.

Through transcendental vision we will see that Kṛṣṇa lives in the heart of everyone. We will see that He lives not only within the hearts of humans but within the hearts of all species, all 8,400,000 species in this world. Through our transcendental knowledge our vision changes. Then, whenever we meet anyone, we first courteously say, "Namaskār Sir". We offer honour in this way to everyone. And who are we honouring? We see that the Lord lives inside everyone's heart, so we are honouring the Lord: we offer our respect to Him and to the person in whose heart He resides. This type of transcendental knowledge and the mood it brings to our heart of giving honour to others is actually natural for everyone, even though we so often forget it.

I have seen it in many Western countries also. Today when we let someone pass before us they happily said, "Thank you. Happy Christmas." The person's heart was melted by our activity, and she expressed her happiness through her blessing. If it was only mundane courtesy that is also very good. When that courtesy will have transcendental feelings behind it, when that courtesy comes from the vision that, "The Lord is living everywhere, and the Lord's mercy is spread everywhere", then it will create even more happiness for her, for us, and for everyone.

Anyone who can see the environment in this way must have transcendental knowledge, and that type of transcendental

knowledge is revealed in our heart through Gurudev. Gurudev is not a man actually. He shows himself in that way, but as an instrument of the Lord, he has a transcendental form.

True love

Gurudev distributes the full love, beauty, charm, and ecstasy that is existing within Kṛṣṇa.

prema-bhakti yāhā haite, avidyā vināśa yāte,
vede gāya yāhāra charita

(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.3)

*Śrī Guru gives pure devotion
and destroys ignorance.
The Vedas sing of his character.*

Kṛṣṇa is very near and dear to us as the enjoyer of the universe. Kṛṣṇa happily enjoys everything we offer to Him, and He also Himself tries to satisfy us: He takes service from us and gives us more and more loving inspiration to continue serving Him. As our loving inspiration increases we feel more and more attachment, love, and ecstasy for Him. This comes to us through service. So our service, our love for Him, our satisfaction, and His satisfaction all continuously increase. This is called prema-bhakti, ecstatic loving devotion.

In the mundane world people use the word *love* very freely for many different purposes, but *love* really means 'satisfying our beloved'. Full attachment, with affection and the mood of trying to satisfy, is the real meaning of *love*.

We see in this mundane world that some people are very happy to feed others. If guests come to their home, with or without an invitation, they cook with great satisfaction, and give affectionate nourishment and enjoyable food to their guests. When they are feeding their guests they actually feel more satisfaction than their guests because of their mood of service and giving. That is the sparking light of transcendental love and affection, which will take full form when we use it to satisfy our divine Lord. When love for our Lord comes into our hearts in a very overflowed way and increases continuously it is called Kṛṣṇa-prema.

Destroyer of illusion

prema-bhakti yāhā haite, avidyā vināśa yāte,
vede gāya yāhāra charita

When Kṛṣṇa-prema reveals itself in our heart, automatically our mundane knowledge, all mundanity actually, disappears, just as darkness disappears from a room when a bulb is lit. *Avidyā vināśa yāte*: automatically all of our mundane feelings disappear when Kṛṣṇa-prema is revealed in our heart. *Vede gāya yāhāra charita*: everywhere all the scriptures—the Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, and so on—glorify Gurudev as the giver of that type of transcendental knowledge.

(Having become indifferent to the material world), one in search of the ultimate good should surrender to a Guru who is equipoised and adept in both the scriptures and the divine.

tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare cha niṣṇātām brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 11.3.21)

All the scriptures advise us: “A teacher is necessary. Without a teacher you cannot understand anything. When the proper teacher comes in front of you, you must surrender to him and honour him. *Guru* means a bearer and messenger of transcendental knowledge. Guru can be and must be honoured as your Lord Himself. This is because a genuine Guru is established with full knowledge on the spiritual platform and directly represents the Lord.”

tatra bhāgavatān dharmān
śikṣed gurv-ātma-daivataḥ
amāyānūvṛtṭyā yais
tuṣyed ātmātma-do hariḥ
(SB: 11.3.22)

“Considering Śrī Guru to be one’s beloved Lord, one should sincerely and submissively learn from him Bhāgavat-dharma: that by which Śrī Hari, He who gives Himself (to His devotee), is satisfied.”

By ‘knowledge’ we do not mean knowledge gathered from books and scriptures. That type of knowledge is not sufficient. A genuine Guru has feelings in his heart that have been revealed by his Guru which come from the Lord Himself. A genuine Guru who has such real revealed knowledge in his heart can preach, and his students learn the proper thing.

gu-śabdāḥ tv andhakārasya ru-śabdāḥ tan-nivāraṇaḥ
andhakāra-nirodhitvād gurur ity abhidhīyate

(Skanda-purāṇa)

“*Guru* means ‘gu’-‘ru’: one who can destroy, *ru*, the darkness of ignorance, *gu*, which is present in the mundane world and in

our hearts, by giving us knowledge that has descended from the spiritual world.”

om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
chakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ

We pray to Gurudev with this praṇām mantram every day. *Ajñāna* means illusion, the illusory environment that covers our whole existence. Under the influence of illusion we think we are our body and become attached to our house and so many temporary things. Everything material is really a passing show, but in illusion we think it will remain with us forever. Gurudev removes the darkness of this mundane illusion by opening our transcendental eyes and giving us transcendental vision—transcendental knowledge.

Gurus: genuine and generic

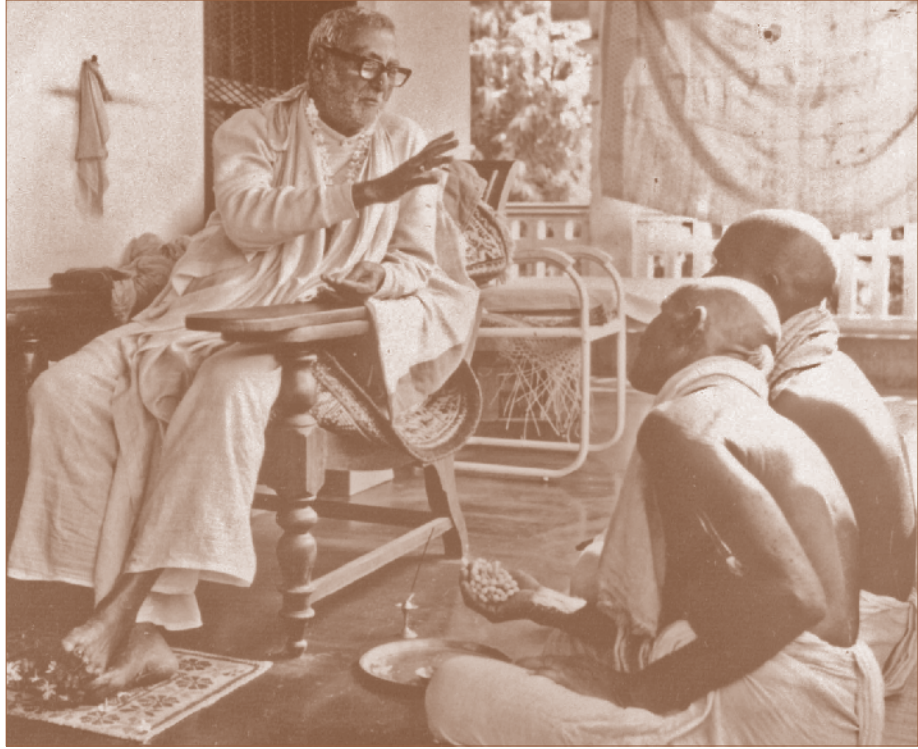
It is necessary for a Guru to be genuine. Not everyone has that quality or qualification. Now in this world everyone can see that there are many self-made gurus, bogus gurus, and so on. I do not know who is bogus and who is not. It is not my business to criticise others, and I do not know who everyone is. I can only comment about the general character of a guru. The scriptures say:

guravo bahavaḥ santi śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ
durlabho sad-gurur devi śiṣya-santāpa-hāraḥ

(Purāṇa-vākya)

“There will always be many gurus who can expertly give their followers some mundane nourishment, take their wealth, and then leave them. But a real Guru destroys the dark mundane feelings of ignorance within everyone and makes everyone’s hearts temples of the Lord. A true Guru who has this capacity, and who never tries to do anything other than this, is very rare in the mundane world.” This is the character and activity of a genuine Guru, and that is the type of Guru glorified in the scriptures.

*I offer my obeisance unto Śrī Guru,
who opened my eyes, which
were blinded by the darkness
of ignorance, with the
salve of divine knowledge.*



Once we saw a very poor man come to take initiation from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. He apologised: “O Mahārāj, I have no money. I can only give you a donation of a few rupees.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj said, “What are you thinking? I do not want any money from you. It is only a courtesy that you give some money. If you do not have much money and cannot contribute enough money to equal the value of Hari-nām mālā [chanting beads] I am giving you, I still must give them to you if you are a sincere seeker. Don’t worry about that. What I need is your faith, sincerity, and chastity. You must promise me that you will serve Kṛṣṇa and through your mood of service try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. I want you to make this promise in front of me, and that is all I want from you.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained everything to the poor man in this way. That is the real mood of distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the real behaviour of a genuine Guru.

Saviour of the fallen

We are conditioned souls, and when we think about our conditioned position we may think we are hopeless. But we can pray to Gurudev, “You have full power and you are kind to the fallen souls. Please give your merciful attention to me and make me a good servitor of yourself, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu,
(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.4)

*Śrī Guru is an ocean of mercy
and the friend of the fallen.*

Gurudev is very merciful to the conditioned souls, and his attention specially goes to those who are most fallen. Gurudev is like an affectionate father. If a father has five sons but one of his sons feels some deficiency because he is unqualified or unhappy, then the father gives special attention and nourishment to that son so that he may be promoted.

Connection with transcendence

Finally Śrīla Narottam Ṭhākur mentions his Gurudev’s name,

lokanātha lokera jīvana
(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.4)

“Lokanāth Prabhu is my Gurudev. He is my life and soul, my everything, and these are the glories of his mercy.”

hā hā prabhu kara dayā, deha more pada-chhāyā,
tuyā pade laila śaraṇa
(Śrī Prema-bhakti-chandrikā: 1.4)

Then Narottam Ṭhākur prays, “O Gurudev, I want your full attention. Please be merciful to me. Again and again I am taking shelter at your lotus feet. I do not know if I am properly surrendering to you, but please give your full attention to me. Only through your divine grace will I be connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa, receive transcendental knowledge, and be engaged in Lord Kṛṣṇa’s service. Please be merciful to me.”



*Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh's logo,
designed personally by
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda
Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.*

True shelter

On the logo of our Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh you can see the sun, some water, and a lotus. These are symbolic. The lotus represents the jīva-soul, the servitor of Kṛṣṇa; the sun represents Kṛṣṇa; and the water represents Gurudev. When a lotus lives in the protection of water, it blooms and the sun's rays give life to the lotus, but when a lotus is taken out of water and kept in a dry place, the sun burns it. The logo of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh means that when we live under the protection of Gurudev, Kṛṣṇa will always be merciful to us, but that without the shelter of Gurudev we have no hope.

harau ruṣṭe gurus-trātā gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana

(Āditya-purāṇa)

If Kṛṣṇa becomes angry with us, our Gurudev can save us from Kṛṣṇa's anger; he can give us some nourishment and life. But if our Gurudev becomes angry with us, nothing can save us, not even Kṛṣṇa can help us. Gurudev's mercy is even more beneficial and essential than Kṛṣṇa's mercy. This is the essential point. Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākur said,

**yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyam stuvamṣ tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī-charaṇāravindam**

(Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam: 8)

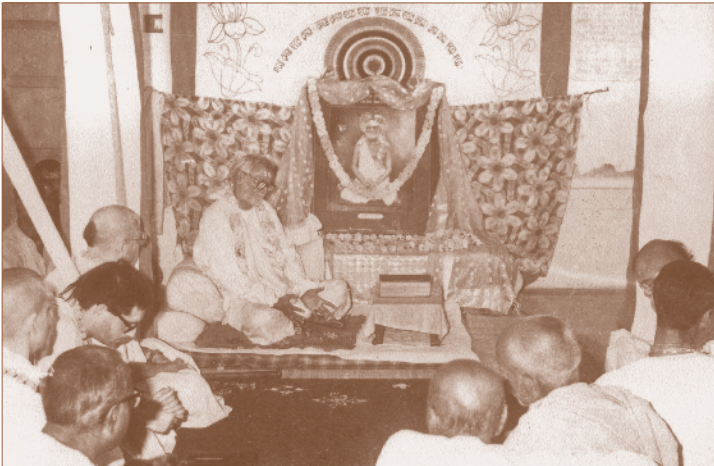
We must consider that Kṛṣṇa's mercy appears to us in the form of our Gurudev's mercy. This means that when our Gurudev is happy with us Kṛṣṇa must also be happy with us, and when Kṛṣṇa is happy with us our Gurudev will be happy with us. This is our Gurudev's position, and in this way we will always see that all auspicious and beneficial wealth comes to us through Gurudev. Gurudev is our true shelter.

*I offer my obeisance unto
the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, praising
and meditating upon His glory at
the three junctions of the day. By
his grace, one gains the
Lord's grace. Without his grace,
one has no shelter anywhere.*

The supreme servitor

Guru-paramparā, the preceptorial lineage of Gurus, is like a telescopic system. Within a telescope there are many lenses, and when they are properly adjusted one by one we can see through them things we do not have the power to see with our own vision. The Gurus in our paramparā are like lenses in a telescope. There is power within each of the lenses which deepens our vision and shows us how to satisfy Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In the line of the Śrī Rūpānuga sampradāya, our vision and devotion is going up through our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, and Prabhupād Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākura, to Śrī



Rūpa Mañjarī and from there to Rādhārāṇī. Śrīla Prabhupād Saraswatī Ṭhākura taught that we will think of our Gurudev at the highest level as Rādhārāṇī Herself; we will think that our Gurudev is a nondifferent form of Rādhārāṇī. Gurudev has different forms. Sometimes we will see that Gurudev is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, but more exclusively we see that he is the supreme servitor of Kṛṣṇa—Rādhārāṇī.

“I got everything!”



Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī,
the prayojan-tattova Āchārya
of the Rūpānuga sampradāya.

Gurudev’s full mercy and gift, which he bestows through his different forms, has been described by Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī in his super praṇām mantram, which we always use to pray to our Gurudev:

nāma-śreṣṭham manum api śachī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭhavāṭim
rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāsām
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-gurum taṁ nato ’smi

(Śrī Mukta-charitam: 2)

Nāma-śreṣṭham: Dās Goswāmī expresses that Gurudev mercifully gave him the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra, the supreme mantram within the mundane and transcendental worlds. The mahāmantra can rescue anyone from any position. It can rescue everyone within all the universes. *Hare Kṛṣṇa* actually means Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Gracefully Gurudev gives us the chance to call Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa into our heart and pray that They will mercifully appear there.

Manum api Śachī-putram: by the causeless mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the nondifferent form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahāmantra came down to the mundane world. Dās Goswāmī also received the mercy of Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu through Gurudev.

Atra Svarūpam: then Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī says that not only has he received the mercy of Mahāprabhu and the Holy Name, but that Mahāprabhu has mercifully handed him to His dearest associate and nondifferent form, Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar. Dās Goswāmī expresses here that he has also received Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar’s mercy through Gurudev.

Rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam: then by the grace of Gurudev, Dās Goswāmī received the mercy and association of Mahāprabhu’s dearest disciples, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī.

Uru-purīm Māthurīm goṣṭhavāṭīm: then by the mercy of Gurudev, Dās Goswāmī was given entrance into Mathurā-Vṛndāvan Dhām, where Kṛṣṇa is always engaged in His Pastimes with the gopas and gopīs.

Rādhā-kuṇḍam: by the mercy of Gurudev, Dās Goswāmī was given shelter at Rādhā Kuṇḍa, where the supreme opportunity for service to Rādhā-Govinda exists.

Giri-varam: by the mercy of Gurudev, Dās Goswāmī received from Mahāprabhu a Govardhan-sīlā, a nondifferent form of Kṛṣṇa, to worship, as well as shelter at the lotus feet of Govardhan Hill near Rādhā Kuṇḍa in Vṛndāvan Dhām.

Aho Rādhikā-Mādhavāsām: and by the mercy of Gurudev, Dās Goswāmī received all hope for the service of Rādhā-Mādhava. This means Rādhārāṇī Herself in the form of Gurudev gave mercy to Dās Goswāmī, because without the special mercy of Rādhārāṇī no one can enter where the Divine Couple are playing.

Prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā: lastly in his praṇām mantram to Gurudev Dās Goswāmī says that he has been given *everything* by Gurudev. *Śrī Gururū Tam nato 'smi:* so he bows down to Gurudev's lotus feet in full surrender.

Dās Goswāmī expressed his heart through this verse. Dās Goswāmī is very humble, but he is clearly confessing in his prayer, "I have received this, this, this, this, and everything, by the grace of Gurudev. I have received the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhārāṇī, Mahāprabhu, Their associates, Their abode—everything."

"When will I receive your mercy?"

Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī was a very dear associate of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and he was also very dear to all the devotees of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar, who was a nondifferent form of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, was his personal guardian. So Dās Goswāmī had no deficiency;

vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī
tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt
tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ
premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe
sevām vivekī na kaḥ
(Śrī Upadeśāmṛta: 9)

"Above Vaikuṅṭha is Mathurā, where Kṛṣṇa took birth. Above Mathurā is Vṛndāvan, where Kṛṣṇa enjoys the rāsa festival. Above Vṛndāvan is Govardhan, where Kṛṣṇa plays amorously. Above Govardhan is Rādhā Kuṇḍa, where the nectar of love overflows. What wise soul would not serve Rādhā Kuṇḍa beside Govardhan Hill?"

he was unlimitedly fortunate by the grace of Gurudev. But after living with Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar, Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī came to Vṛndāvan to stay with Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu.

Dās Goswāmī thought he would leave his body after the disappearance of his Lord, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and his master, Svarūp Dāmodar. But when he found Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in Vṛndāvan, he got new life. While living in Vṛndāvan, Dās Goswāmī followed many very extreme practising processes in his devotional life. Living under the shelter of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, he would pray to Rādhārāṇī as his Gurudev in a very exclusive way, in a mood of *iṣṭa-lābha vine*, unfulfilled desire.

āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañchit
kālo mayāti-gamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvañ chet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me
prāṇair vrajena cha varoru bakāriṇāpi

(*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*: 102)

“O Rādhārāṇī, I worship the Kṛṣṇa who lives with You, plays with You, is joyful with You, and tastes ecstasy with You. I worship that Kṛṣṇa, Your Kṛṣṇa. You are the nectarean ocean of Kṛṣṇa-līlā, and for that I have so much hope. I want to taste a little bit of that nectar, and with great hope I have passed such a long time here in Rādhā Kuṇḍa, praying for Your mercy and hoping I will receive Your connection. You are my Mistress, and I have been waiting on the bank of Your kuṇḍa, Rādhā Kuṇḍa, for such a long time, hoping that You will bestow Your mercy upon me. I have spent so long waiting, and now I am going to die. I have passed eighty years here in Vṛndāvan, and I am living only to receive Your mercy.

“O Rādhārāṇī! Please bestow Your mercy upon me. I need Your mercy, and my only hope is that one day You will bestow it upon me. I have passed year after year not receiving Your mercy, but still I am hopeful I will receive it one day. I am living only

for that, and that is my only desire. I will leave my body soon but I pray, ‘O Rādhārāṇī, please bestow Your mercy upon me.’

“When will You be merciful to me? O Rādhārāṇī! Without Your mercy I do not want Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. I do not want to meet or serve Kṛṣṇa without You. Only when Kṛṣṇa is with You is Kṛṣṇa so glorious to me. Without Your mercy Kṛṣṇa’s mercy is useless to me. I only want to serve You and see that my service goes to Kṛṣṇa through You. That is my desire. Kṛṣṇa is not a factor for me; You are my life and goal. Your service is my only desire and expectation, nothing else. I have passed eighty years praying for Your service and still I am keeping my hope that I will receive Your mercy.

“If I do not receive Your mercy then I consider Kṛṣṇa’s mercy useless and undesirable. I do not want Kṛṣṇa to bestow His mercy upon me in an independent way. What will I do with Him? I do not want anything directly from Kṛṣṇa. Your lotus feet are my only shelter. I only want Your service.”

rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti tadā ‘madana-mohanaḥ’
anyathā viśva-moho ‘pi svayaṁ ‘madana-mohitaḥ’

(Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta: 13.32)

“O Rādhārāṇī, when Kṛṣṇa lives with You, He is fully satisfied and His mood is greatly merciful. When Kṛṣṇa lives with You, He is Madan Mohan: He is liberated from any attraction by Cupid, and Cupid is stunned to see Kṛṣṇa’s beauty. But Kṛṣṇa’s beauty and attractive power come only from You. Without You, Kṛṣṇa’s beauty cannot attract His exclusive devotees. And more than that, without You, Kṛṣṇa Himself is attracted by Cupid.”

“O my Goddess, if You do not accept me, if You are not merciful to me, then what will Kṛṣṇa be for me? His position will not be Madan Mohan: He will be like Bakāri, the killer of Pūtanā and other demons. What will I do with Kṛṣṇa in His form of a demon-killer? I want to exclusively worship the Kṛṣṇa who is holding hands with You, and I want only to worship Him through You. So I need Your mercy. Without Your mercy

everything is useless to me. When will You bestow Your mercy upon me, O Rādhārāṇī? Your mercy is my only hope.”

Devastated by love

In this attentive and exclusive mood of devotion Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī prayed to Rādhārāṇī, trying to draw Her grace to him. In this prayer Dās Goswāmī expresses our highest vision of Gurudev.

Dās Goswāmī lived on the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa for some time with this mood of extreme hope and hankering. But when Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu disappeared, Dās Goswāmī became deeply disturbed and felt he could not tolerate the environment of Vṛndāvan.

śūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham girīndro 'jagarāyate
vyāghra-tuṅḍāyate kuṇḍam jīvātu-rahitasya me

(Śrī Prārthanāśraya-chaturdaśaka: 11)

Dās Goswāmī felt, “My life has left my body. Now Rādhā Kuṇḍa is not the joyful place of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. *Vyāghra-tuṅḍāyate kuṇḍam*: I now see Rādhā Kuṇḍa as the open mouth of a tiger coming to eat me. *Girīndro 'jagarāyate*: I now see Girirāj Govardhan like a python coming to attack me. *Śūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham*: now the whole of Vraja Bhūmi, where the cows, gopas, and gopīs play, appears void and empty to me. I do not see anyone, and everything seems to have been demolished. Everything appears to me in this way because I have lost my heart, my jīvātu [my very life], Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu.”

Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī expressed his feelings of hope to receive the mercy of Rādhārāṇī and his feelings of separation from his Gurudev Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī through his verses *āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañchit* and *śūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham*. Dās Goswāmī was an exclusive follower in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Rādhārāṇī, and in this way his feelings went from deep to deeper. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used the philosophical phrase, “Dive deep into Reality”. It is necessary

for us to touch that reality, at least from a distance. Then we can understand everything. All of it comes through *Guru-śuśrūṣayā* (SB: 10.80.34), the service of Gurudev. All property will gradually come to us in that way. That is our line, our process, our method.

Infinite mercy

Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī is in one way saying, “I have been given everything by my Gurudev.” He openly said this in his beautiful verse *Nāma-śreṣṭhān manum api Śachī-putram atra Svarūpam*. But he also expressed his extreme hankering and hope to attain more mercy from Gurudev, that is, Rādhārāṇī and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. This is the nature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. These two types of feelings are always present in the devotees’ hearts. In one way they are saying, “I have been given everything”, and in another way they are saying, “I have nothing; I am in need.”

If anyone receives mercy from Gurudev, they will never feel it to be insufficient. Yet, they will also feel that Gurudev’s mercy is unlimitedly attractive and infinite. So the more they taste it, the more they will desire to taste more of it. Because their hankering becomes greater and greater in that way, they feel, “I am empty. I have not received anything.” The feeling of the devotee is, “*Tad dūre tad v antike* (Īu: 5): it is so far, and it is so near.”

By hope we feel we are so near to Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī, but by action we may feel we live so far from Their abode and Pastimes. The harmonising conclusion about this situation has been given by Śrī Chaitanyadev: *achintya-bhedābheda*. Inconceivably, both moods are present in the hearts of the devotees: “It is so near to us, and in another way it is so far.”

Through the extreme example of Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī we can understand that if we open the door of our hearts to Gurudev, we will find his mercy is waiting for us right behind the door. If only we open our hearts, Gurudev’s mercy will enter us. We will discover our fortune and find that our

nāham ijjā-prajātibhyām
tapasopaśamena vā
tuṣyeyam sarva-bhūtātmā
guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā
(SB: 10.80.34)

[Kṛṣṇa:] “I, the Soul of all beings, am not satisfied by fire sacrifices, raising children, austerities, or self-control (by adherence to the duties of a brahmachāri, gr̥hastha, vānaprastha, or sannyāsi) as much as I am by service to Śrī Guru.”

ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair
idaṁ yāche punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad rūpa-padāmbhoja-
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani
(Śrīla Dās Goswāmī)

“Taking a blade of grass
between my teeth, I pray
again and again, “May I be a
particle of dust at Śrī Rūpa’s
lotus feet birth after birth.”

Guru-paramparā, beginning with Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, has a spoonful of nectar ready for us. When we receive that, we will feel unable to ever fully glorify Gurudev. We will feel his infinite mercy.

SECTION TWO

*The
Supreme
Personality
of Godhead*

Daśa-mūla-tattva

Truths Two, Three, and Four

harim iha paramaṁ sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdhiṁ

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supreme.

He is the possessor of all potencies.

He is the ocean of all divine ecstasy.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Supreme Controller

Question (in a public gathering): I have heard that Swami Ramakrishna taught that people should first worship demigods like Mother Kālī and then worship Lord Kṛṣṇa. Is worshipping Kṛṣṇa and worshipping other demigods the same thing? Is there a difference between worshipping different Deities or forms of the Lord?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Your questions are simple and their answers are also simple. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* it is said,

yānti deva-vratā devān pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ
bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā yānti mad-yājino 'pi mām

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*: 9.25)

“Those who worship the devatās, demigods, go to the domain of the demigods. Those who worship the pitṛs, forefathers, go to the place of the forefathers. Those who worship the bhūtas, ghosts, go to the plane of the ghosts. And those who worship Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, go to Kṛṣṇaloka, the transcendental abode of Kṛṣṇa.”

This is the advice of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. Ramakrishna told people that all of these forms of worship and all of these

destinations are the same. This is not true, and they are not the same. All diseases are not the same; all happiness is not the same; all sadness is not the same; each of our fingers are not the same; all people are not the same. No two things are exactly the same. How can all forms of worship and all destinations be the same? They are never the same.

The teaching of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* is that you have free choice and you decide what you want. You choose your destination. You have to properly realise what your needs are and then proceed in the appropriate direction. By worshipping demigods you can attain *kanak*, *kāminī*, and *pratiṣṭhā*: temporary wealth, enjoyment, and fame in this world. These are not the essential needs of our hearts. To always be searching in one direction or another in pursuit of material desires is not good, and it will not give anyone a fulfilling result. If you are willing to satisfy anyone, regardless of who they are, to fulfil your material desires, then your nature is like that of a prostitute. But if your mood is that you want to satisfy your Lord exclusively, then your nature is like that of a chaste servitor. The question about whether worshipping the Lord and the demigods is the same is actually a matter of chastity and prostitution.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam has advised us that by pleasing our Master we will automatically please everyone and attain everything we need.

yathā taror mūla-niṣechanena
ṭṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāch cha yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam achyutejyā

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 4.31.14)

“If you pour water on the root of a tree, the whole tree is nourished. If you offer your devotion and service to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all demigods, all goddesses, and the whole world are satisfied. You can fulfil all your duties and desires by worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is what is truly necessary for everyone.”

Relative destiny

When I was young I used to go out every day collecting money for the service of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj. During this time I was living with Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj at Sitakanta Banerjee Lane in Kolkata. He was working on his translation of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* then, and every day he would teach me something from *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, or give me some advice, and then I would go out. I would tell the people I met the things I heard from Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj. Some days I would get a very good response and come home in a dancing mood. But some days I would not collect anything. And on some days people would even try to beat me. During that time I met many devotees of Mother Kālī and would often end up debating with them. The worshippers of Mother Kālī pray to her for selfish purposes: “O Mother Kālī, *dhanam dehi janam dehi rūpam dehi yaśo dehi*, and so on: give me wealth, give me manpower, give me beauty, give me fame, and so on. *Dehi dehi dehi*, give me, give me, give me....”

Mother Kālī is actually a param Vaiṣṇavī, a perfect chaste servitor of her Master, the Lord. And she can also give Viṣṇu-bhakti to the conditioned souls. But the conditioned souls are foolish and cannot understand what is good for them. They do not understand that they must die someday and will be forced to leave everything they may gain in their life through their worship. Pursuing material desires, even through worship, is never in the actual interest of anyone.

One day I told some of the devotees of Mother Kālī who wanted to debate with me, “Vivekānanda is a guṇḍā [dacoit] and Ramakrishna is a mūrkhā pūjārī [ignorant priest].” They became very angry with me and tried to beat me. Many of Mother Kālī’s devotees especially would always want to fight with me.

After this I asked Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj, “What should I say to worshippers of Mother Kālī?”

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj’s preaching style was always very hard, and he told me jokingly, “Ask them why they are worshipping Mother Kālī. If they are faithful devotees of Mother Kālī what



Mother Kālī

will they ultimately attain? Tell them they should know that if they worship Mother Kālī, they will go to Mother Kālī's domain. That will be their destiny. What Mother Kālī eats, they will eat. What Mother Kālī does, they will do. Where Mother Kālī lives, they will live. Their final destiny will be to become an associate of Mother Kālī.

“So you should ask them, ‘Where does Mother Kālī live? Mother Kālī lives in a cremation ground. Who are Mother Kālī's associates? Dākinīs and yogīnīs, that is, many varieties of witches and ghosts. What does Mother Kālī eat in her domain? The meat and blood of her dead sons. What is Mother Kālī's mood? Mother Kālī has no shyness; she stands naked showing her tongue to her sons. She attracts her sons to come to her and then she takes their heads, cuts their necks, and puts their skulls on her garland. Have you seen the garland of the skulls of the demons she kills around her neck? This is Mother Kālī's nature, and if you worship her you will go to her abode, Kāliloka. *Ye yathā Mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy Aham* (Bg: 4.11). If you feel you need to go to Mother Kālī's abode you can go there to stay with her, and lastly she will cut off your head and add it to her garland. If this is your desire then we have no objection.”

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj joked in this way. Then he said, “But just see our Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa lives in Vṛndāvan Dhām. There Kṛṣṇa has so many girlfriends and so much butter, ghee, cheese, milk, sandeś, rasagullas, fruits, sweets, luchis, purīs, laḍḍus, kachorīs, and so on. We can eat all of these things there with Lord Kṛṣṇa. There the forests and gardens are beautifully decorated and so many cows can be found everywhere. We will be associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa and play with Him and the cowherd boys near the Yamunā River. Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful: He attracts everyone with the beauty of His divine form.

“You can do as you like. You have free choice: the meat and witches of Mother Kālī or the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa. You decide for yourself.” In this way Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj jokingly

explained to me what I could say to the devotees of Mother Kālī and gave me very good nourishment.

The Lord's supreme power

It is necessary to understand the positions of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the demigods. There is a story in the Upaniṣads which clearly explains the supreme position of the Lord as the master of the demigods.

Once the demigods were very proud of their universal powers and they thought, "We do everything." The Lord was aware of this and wanted to give them some proper consciousness. He took the form of an old man and appeared before the demigods. He first asked Agnidev, "Who are you, sir? Where are you going?"

Agnidev said, "I am Agnidev, the master of fire."

The Lord asked him, "What can you do?"

Agnidev said, "I can burn whole universes."

Then the Lord tested him, "If you have such power, can you please show it to me by burning this grass here before us?"

Agnidev tried with his full energy but, by the Lord's will, he was unable to burn the grass. Finally he left.

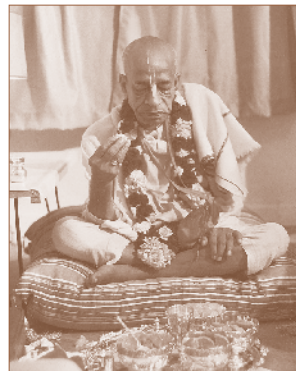
Then Vāyu came along and the Lord asked him, "What is your power? What can you do?"

Vāyu said, "I can blow anything and everything away with my power."

The Lord asked him, "Can you move this grass here before us?" He tried but, by the will of the Lord, he was unable to move the grass.

In this way many demigods came before the Lord but were unable to demonstrate their power.

Finally Devarāj Indra, the king of all the demigods, heard about what was happening and himself came to see the old man. The Lord then disappeared and sent Mahāmāyā to appear before Indra.



*Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta
Swāmī Prabhupād honouring
Kṛṣṇa-prasād.*

Indra asked her, “Who was that old man?”

Mahāmāyā said, “You demigods think you have so much power and can do anything, but without the power of the Supreme Personality of Godhead you cannot do anything. He is that Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

When Mahāmāyā revealed the identity of the old man to Indra, he and all the demigods understood their actual position and from far away they all bowed down to the Lord.

The pride of Lord Indra

Devarāj Indra was often very proud. This is natural. “The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power”—these things can easily make anyone proud. Once, Kṛṣṇa wanted to control Indra’s mentality and demolish his pride. Kṛṣṇa wanted to do this because He liked Indra. He didn’t want to punish Indra but rather give him proper knowledge. When the time came for the yearly worship of Indra, Kṛṣṇa inspired Nanda Mahārāj and the Vraja-vāsīs, “Why are you worshipping Indra? It is really Girirāj Govardhan who provides us with our food. Girirāj Govardhan gives us everything we need the whole year round. We are all living together happily at the feet of Girirāj Govardhan. We should offer pūjā to Girirāj Govardhan. Why should we worship Indra?”

Kṛṣṇa spoke to the Vraja-vāsīs in a very gentle and sober way, and they believed Him. Already Kṛṣṇa had performed so many miracles in Vṛndāvan and all the Vraja-vāsīs knew that Kṛṣṇa was not an ordinary boy, they knew He had extraordinary power. They were also proud of Kṛṣṇa’s power and felt that whatever Kṛṣṇa told them must be truthful. So they followed His advice. Even though Kṛṣṇa was only a seven-year-old boy at the time, all the Vraja-vāsīs chose to follow Him. It was no problem for them. The Vraja-vāsīs said, “We will follow Your advice.”

Then the Vraja-vāsīs left aside the worship of Indra, made a big festival, and began worshipping Girirāj Govardhan. Kṛṣṇa participated in the festival with the Vraja-vāsīs but also showed

them that when they offered everything to Girirāj Govardhan, Girirāj Govardhan accepted their offerings. Kṛṣṇa took the form of Govardhan under His control and showed everyone that Govardhan was eating all of their offerings. In this way all the Vraja-vāsīs were very much obliged and happily offered everything to Girirāj Govardhan.

When Indra heard of the big festival the Vraja-vāsīs held for Girirāj Govardhan, he could not tolerate being left aside and became very angry. He decided to demolish Vraja Dhām. He ordered all his subordinates, Chandra, Vāyu, Varuṇ, and so on to assist him and sent everything he had—his weapons, powerful clouds, and thunderbolts—to demolish Vraja Dhām. For seven days his clouds and thunderbolts struck down upon Vraja Dhām. The Vraja-vāsīs became very disturbed. They came to Kṛṣṇa and prayed, “What shall we do, Kṛṣṇa? We are suffering a very bad reaction because we did not worship Devarāj Indra. You are our shelter. Give us Your protection.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “No problem. Girirāj Govardhan is very merciful. He accepted your offerings, your honour, your everything, so Girirāj Govardhan must save you. By accepting your offerings He has given you assurance He will provide for you. Pray to Girirāj Govardhan and He will save you. I will also pray to Govardhan.”

Then Kṛṣṇa said to Girirāj Govardhan, “O Govardhan, please save them. I am taking You...” Kṛṣṇa picked up Girirāj Govardhan with the small finger of His left hand just as a small child picks up a mushroom (*utpāṭyaika-kareṇa śailam abalo līlochchilīndhram yathā*).

Kṛṣṇa told all the Vraja-vāsīs, “Come beneath Girirāj Govardhan.” The Vraja-vāsīs entered beneath Govardhan Hill with all of their wealth, cows, and the various living entities of Vraja Dhām.

Indra tried to punish the Vraja-vāsīs for seven days. He sent many clouds and completely flooded Vraja Dhām. After this, Indra thought all the Vraja-vāsīs had been driven out of



Śrī Gopāl, the Deity of Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhan Hill who was established by Kṛṣṇa's grandson Vajranabha and later unearthed by Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī.

Vraja Dhām by the flood and died somewhere. When he finally stopped the storms, Kṛṣṇa told the Vraja-vāsīs, “Now you can go outside. The sky is clear and everything is over.”

When Indra saw the Vraja-vāsīs, their cows, and all the living entities of Vraja Dhām come out from beneath Girirāj Govardhan, he was surprised and understood who Kṛṣṇa really was. Indra understood that Kṛṣṇa was not an ordinary boy but the Lord Himself, who had come to perform His divine Pastimes in this world. Indra also understood that he had made a great offence to Kṛṣṇa. Indra came before Kṛṣṇa, paid his daṇḍavat praṇām, and surrendered. He apologised and praised Kṛṣṇa so much, “O Lord, I am foolish. I could not understand Your glories or Your divine Pastimes. Please forgive my offences. Please be merciful to me.”

Kṛṣṇa smiled and said, “It is okay. It is no problem. I forgive your offences.”

Indra said, “I want to worship You with Surabhi’s milk. Surabhi has the power to give unlimited amounts of milk, and I want to perform an abhiṣek for You with her milk.”

Then Indra performed an abhiṣek pūjā for Kṛṣṇa with Surabhi’s milk and said, “You are so merciful to the cows, and to the whole world, so from today on we will worship You with the name ‘Govinda’. He who gives joy to the hearts of the cows, calves, and cowherd boys must be known as ‘Govinda.’” In this way Indra gave Kṛṣṇa the name Govinda and Kṛṣṇa forgave Indra’s offences.

The bewilderment of Lord Brahmā

It is Kṛṣṇa’s nature to be merciful. Kṛṣṇa also forgave Lord Brahmā many times. Once Brahmā stole a group of cows and cowherd boys from the banks of the Yamunā in Vṛndāvan and hid them in a cave. Later Brahmā noticed that Vṛndāvan was still full of cows and cowherd boys. Brahmā went to check on the cows and cowherd boys he hid in the cave and saw that they were still there. Then again he saw in Vṛndāvan all the same



In Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām, Girirāj Govardhan’s Temple sits above Śrī Govinda Kuṇḍa, the lake that formed when Indra bathed Kṛṣṇa with Surabhi’s milk.

cows and cowherd boys playing with Kṛṣṇa near the Yamunā. He was surprised, “I stole these cows and cowherd boys. I just saw them all within the cave where I hid them, but here in Vṛndāvan everything is intact and they are still playing with Kṛṣṇa near the Yamunā. What is this?” Brahmā was puzzled and finally surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. He folded his hands, offered prayers to Kṛṣṇa, and lastly said:

jānanta eva jānantu kiṁ bahūktyā na me prabho
manaso vapuṣo vācho vaibhavaṁ tava gocharaḥ

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 10.14.38)

“O Kṛṣṇa, if anyone says, ‘I know Your glories. I know You’, he can say so, but I cannot say that. So many times I have seen Your glories, but I still have not come to their end. I cannot properly or fully understand You. I feel it is impossible for me or anyone to understand Your unlimited glories.”

It is described in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* that Brahmā was initiated by Kṛṣṇa. But Brahmā has a very difficult life, and many times he forgot Kṛṣṇa’s position and glories. Kṛṣṇa taught Brahmā many times, but again and again disturbance would come to Brahmā and he would forget Kṛṣṇa’s glories. Later he would regain his proper consciousness by Kṛṣṇa’s grace. Thus Brahmā prays to Kṛṣṇa that he can never understand Kṛṣṇa without Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

The madness of Lord Śiva

Not only are conditioned souls and the demigods, headed by Indra and Brahmā, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes, but also liberated souls are puzzled by them. Lord Śiva is not a conditioned soul; he is a liberated soul. Lord Śiva is Maheśvar Devāḍidev: the leader of all the demigods, who is worshipped by all the demigods. Whenever there is a great difficulty or obstacle creating trouble within the universe that no one can solve, it comes to Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva has the power to correct anything.

We can understand that this is Lord Śiva’s position when

we hear the story of the devas and asuras churning the ocean. After making a compromise with Lord Viṣṇu the devas and asuras came together to churn the ocean. They all worked together to churn the ocean, expecting to produce nectar, but many different things were produced. Airāvata, the king of the elephants, was produced. Uchchaiṣravā, a horse as beautifully white as the moon, was produced. Surabhi, the heavenly cow, was produced. Even Lakṣmī Devī, the Goddess of Fortune, was produced. So many things were produced and then distributed. Lakṣmī Devī went to Nārāyaṇ, Surabhi was taken by Indra, and so on.

As the devas and asuras continued churning the ocean, poison was produced, and everyone was disturbed. No one could destroy or control the poison. When the devas and asuras were confused about what to do with the poison, Viṣṇu said, “Go to Lord Śiva. He is meditating on Mount Kailash.”

Then all the demigods went to Lord Śiva and prayed, “Prabhu, save us! Poison has been produced from the ocean.”

Lord Śiva said, “No problem”. Then he came down from Mount Kailash and drank all the poison. This is Lord Śiva’s nature: he can digest poison that can kill all the other devas. He has such power. Lord Śiva saved the devas in this way by drinking the poison and holding it in his throat. The poison was blue and appeared like a beautiful blue ornament on Lord Śiva’s neck. For this, Lord Śiva became gloriously known as *Nīlakaṇṭha*, “He who has a bluish neck.”

This is Lord Śiva’s position and power. He has a very detached nature, and he is worshipped by all devas. But that Lord Śiva, who is a liberated soul beyond all material illusion, is also bewildered by Kṛṣṇa.

When nectar was produced from the churning of the ocean, the asuras stole it. Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of Mohinī Mūrti, an attractive young woman, to trick the asuras into returning the nectar to the devas.

Lord Śiva had seen many of the Lord’s forms, but when he

heard that the Lord had appeared as Mohinī Mūrti before the asuras, he went to the Lord and requested, “I was not present when You distributed ecstasy and appeared in the form of Mohinī Mūrti. Please show me this form of Yours.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “You want to see that form of Mine?”

Parvatī Devī was with Lord Śiva at this time. She smiled, “Oh? The Mohinī Mūrti?” When Kṛṣṇa showed His Mohinī Mūrti form, Lord Śiva forgot his position, lost his senses, and ran madly after Mohinī Mūrti. He was completely attracted by Mohinī Mūrti’s beauty.

Afterwards, when Lord Śiva’s mood finally finished, he came back to his senses and Mohinī Mūrti disappeared. Then he saw that he was again standing with Parvatī Devī next to him. When Lord Śiva saw Parvatī Devī he smiled, and Parvatī Devī also smiled. They both have no shyness actually. Lord Śiva told Parvatī Devī, “Have you seen what just happened? I am a liberated soul. Not only that, I can make liberated souls. By my word I can liberate souls. If I say so, anyone can receive liberation; I have this type of power. So now you have seen Lord Kṛṣṇa’s supreme power. I myself have become enchanted by His power and run madly after His attractive form.”

There is a great difference between the worship of the demigods and the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This must be so because all the demigods themselves worship Kṛṣṇa.

The all-powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa

Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the Creator of all creation and the controller of all power (*Harim iha paramam sarva-śaktim*). As the Creator of all creation, He cannot be powerless. He must be all-powerful. Especially now, in the age of the scientists, we can easily see examples of Kṛṣṇa’s miraculous power and its manifestations everywhere throughout creation. When we are enlightened with transcendental knowledge by Kṛṣṇa’s grace, we will see Kṛṣṇa’s power existing everywhere in every direction within this mundane



Robert Oppenheimer

world. There will be no place where we will not see His power.

The invention of the atomic bomb shows us how much power is present inside every atom of Kṛṣṇa's creation. The scientists have shown that when the charged electrons and protons within an atom are separated, a tremendous explosion occurs. We heard that one of the scientists who helped invent the atomic bomb, Robert Oppenheimer, read *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. When he saw the first test explosion of an atomic bomb he remembered this verse:

**divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsaś tasya mahātmanaḥ**

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā: 11.12)

He remarked, "What I am seeing now before me appears like thousands of suns in full bloom. Seeing such light must be similar to seeing the effulgence of the viśvarūp, the universal form of Kṛṣṇa."

Through the example of the atomic bomb we can understand how much power is present within every atom of creation. All of that power is controlled by Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is so powerful. Even the smallest fragments of His creation contain so much power. But Kṛṣṇa is actually more powerful than we can conceive. We cannot even conceive of the full extent of His power. We cannot actually prove how powerful Kṛṣṇa is through our experience of the mundane world. If I say, "His power is so great!" How much can I actually understand? I may say, "His power is as great as the sky!" The sky may be the biggest thing I can see, but how big is the sky? Beyond what we can see to be the sky is the mahākāś, the outer space of this universe. That is far greater than the sky we can see. But the mahākāś includes only the space found within this particular universe. The scriptures teach us that there are millions of universes existing side by side within the Virajā, the river that divides the material and spiritual worlds. And the whole of the material nature existing within the Virajā is only one vibhūti,

one part, of the majesty and creation of the infinite kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no end to how much more exists beyond the sky we see with our eyes. So we cannot understand how great Kṛṣṇa's power is with only our mundane experience. It is achintya, inconceivable.

The supreme controller

When all of Kṛṣṇa's power is considered at once, we cannot conceive of it. We are finite, and His power is infinite. But everything about Kṛṣṇa's supreme position and power is expressed in the first verse of *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*:

**īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sach-chid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam**

(*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*: 5.1)

In this verse Kṛṣṇa is called the Parameśvar [Supreme Lord]. If we do not know what an īśvar [lord] is, we will not be able to understand Kṛṣṇa's position as Parameśvar, the supreme īśvar. Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākur explained the word *īśvar*: *kartum akartum anyathā kartum samarthaḥ*: one who can do anything, can undo anything, and can change anything into anything else is an īśvar. All the different forms of the Lord are īśvaras: Nārāyaṇ, Viṣṇu, Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Vāman, Rāmachandra, and so on. Lord Śiva is also an īśvar. We can understand that Kṛṣṇa is above them all, because He is described not only as an īśvar, but as the parama-īśvar, the supreme īśvar. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the Supreme Controller; everything is under His control, including all the īśvaras. Kṛṣṇa is most powerful. He is all-in-all, and He has all rights reserved over everything. He can do anything, everything, something, and nothing at any time. All power is within Him.

Kṛṣṇa is the one Reality, for Itself and by Itself. His position, activities, character, and all else exist exclusively for His satisfaction. Kṛṣṇa's qualification as Parameśvar, the Supreme

The embodiment of spiritual energy, consciousness, and ecstasy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Lord of all Lords. He has no origin, He is the origin of all, and He is the cause of all causes.

Controller, is first. His position as *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*, the cause of all causes, is last. Everyone is always searching for the cause of everything, the central source of all activity. The answer is Kṛṣṇa: Kṛṣṇa is the origin of everything, everything transcendental and mundane. But Kṛṣṇa's position as the Supreme Controller is more important for us to understand. We will really begin to understand creation, existence, power, and eternity when we understand that Kṛṣṇa—Reality the Beautiful—is the Supreme Controller.

Beauty is power

*He has neither a material body
nor material senses. There is
nothing equal to or greater than
Him. His divine energy
is naturally divided into three
aspects: knowledge, strength,
and action.*

na tasya kāryam karam cha vidyate
na tat samaś chābhyadhikaś cha dṛṣyate
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śruyate
svābhāviki jñāna-bala-kriyā cha

(Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad: 6.8)

The Upaniṣads explain that Kṛṣṇa is the Parameśvar and that no one is equal to Him. As the Parameśvar, Kṛṣṇa can do anything and everything effortlessly through His divine power. This means that creation and everything else happen naturally through Kṛṣṇa's power and Kṛṣṇa is always in full control of everything, but that Kṛṣṇa Himself does not actually have to do anything.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is known as Saśakti-śaktimān: the Supreme Powerful accompanied by His power. *God* means the Lord with His power. The Lord creates the universe with His power, and through His power everything everywhere takes place by His will. It is effortless for Him. But even more significant than creation, the Lord's divine beauty and divine play are manifest through His power. The most important expressions of Kṛṣṇa's power are His attractive beauty and sweet Pastimes, not His capacity to create the mundane world. *Sarva-śaktim rasābdhim*: Kṛṣṇa's qualities of being all-attractive, beautiful, and loving (*rasābdhim*) are greater than His qualification of being

all-powerful (*sarva-śaktim*). The highest form of power (*sarva-śaktim*) is beauty (*rasa*). Kṛṣṇa's quality of being all-powerful actually means that He is all-attractive—infinately beautiful.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to say, “Beauty is the controlling principle. Beauty is controlling everything.” Through Śrīla Guru Mahārāj we can understand that Kṛṣṇa's very nature as ‘Kṛṣṇa’, which means ‘all-attractive’, automatically shows us that He is most powerful. We can also understand that the great examples of Kṛṣṇa's power within His creation are clues about how intensely attractive and beautiful Kṛṣṇa Himself is. This is why it is most important to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Parameśvar, the Supreme Controller. Such understanding gives us consciousness about the divine significance of beauty everywhere, about how, why, and in which way creation is existing and moving under the influence of beauty. Kṛṣṇa's nature as the all-powerful Supreme Controller is actually understood only by experiencing His beauty. Through His beauty one will best and most fully experience His infinite power. This is the Kṛṣṇa conception of divinity.

The Emporium of All Rasa

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu has explained scientifically the supreme position of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He explains that the jīva-souls, who are finite parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, share fifty qualities (guṇas) with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is infinite and the jīva-souls are finite. The jīva-souls share fifty qualities with Kṛṣṇa in a finite way, that is, fifty of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities can be found within them to the extent that Kṛṣṇa empowers them.

The demigods like Śiva, Indra, Chandra, Vāyu, Varuṇ, and so on share fifty-five qualities with Kṛṣṇa. Nārāyaṇ and Kṛṣṇa’s various Avatārs share sixty qualities with Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa has four special, extremely wonderful qualities that He alone possesses—qualities that Lord Nārāyaṇ, Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Rāma, and so on do not possess. Because of these exceptional qualities, Kṛṣṇa is the supreme worshipping Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says,

ete chāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*: 1.3.28)

“There are infinite forms and expansions of the Lord, but Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān, the Supreme Personality of Godhead,

the original and topmost form of the Lord. Everything comes from Him.”

Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī explained that the word *Bhagavān* means *bhajanīya-guṇa-viśiṣṭa*: He who has the most worshippable and attractive qualities. Because Kṛṣṇa has the most transcendental qualities, more than the demigods and all other forms of the Lord, He is supreme. Kṛṣṇa’s Name, Form, Fame, and Pastimes are all supreme.

The Infinite

Kṛṣṇa is the supreme, original form of the Lord, but for Pastimes and creation Kṛṣṇa appears in a variety of forms.

om̐ pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇam udachyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate

(*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad*: 5.1.1)

“Kṛṣṇa is infinite. He has infinite forms, and His infinite forms are all infinite. If you subtract anything from the infinite it is still infinite. Kṛṣṇa’s infinite character is always naturally full, and all of Kṛṣṇa’s expansions are also full. And still Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the most worshippable, original Lord.”

The spiritual world where Kṛṣṇa lives eternally is called *Vaikuṅṭhaloka* or *Paravyoma Dhām*. There, infinite eternally manifest forms of Kṛṣṇa live within Their own abode. We cannot conceive of this with our mundane intelligence. The Lord lives in the spiritual world in infinite different forms, each with His own paraphernalia, associates, and abode. All these forms of the Lord are known as *Viṣṇu-tattva*. Lord *Nārāyaṇ* is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa who lives with His consort *Lakṣmī Devī* in *Vaikuṅṭhaloka* and enjoys unlimited power and opulence as He is gloriously worshipped by His associates with great majesty eternally.

Vaikuṅṭha means *vigata kuṅṭha yasmād*: *Vaikuṅṭhaloka* has the power to appear anywhere; it is infinite and can immediately

take a position within the finite realm by the Lord's will. Nārāyaṇ has many Avatārs. Mahāviṣṇu, the maintainer of the whole material creation, is an Avatār of Nārāyaṇ; Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the maintainer of this universe, is an Avatār of Nārāyaṇ; and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the maintainer of every jīva-soul, is an Avatār of Nārāyaṇ. These Puruṣ-avatārs expand down from Nārāyaṇ to maintain the material creation.

The Lord's purpose

There are also other types of Avatārs that come down from Nārāyaṇ. There are the Lilā-avatārs: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Vāman, Nṛsiṅha, and so on. These forms of the Lord appear within the material universe but also have eternal abodes in Vaikuṅṭhaloka. There are also Yuga-avatārs, forms of the Lord who distribute the dharma of an age; and Śaktyāveś-avatārs, empowered jīva-souls who fulfil the Lord's will. There are so many different types of Avatārs that come down to this material world from Lord Nārāyaṇ.

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
 abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham
 paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya cha duṣkṛtām
 dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā: 4.7-8)

“Whenever irreligion takes the place of religion and religion becomes disturbed, suppressed, or polluted, different forms of the Lord appear to rescue the conditioned jīva-souls and give nourishment to the sādhus. The Lord's Avatārs come to make peace in the world, re-establish the religion of the soul, and perform Their play for Their own purpose.”

The Lord does not only appear once in this world. He appears many, many times to fulfil His various purposes. Sometimes persons learn something about one form of the Lord and through that think they know everything about the Lord. The idea may come to them, “I am a Kṛṣṇa-bhakta. I do

not want to see the face of a Nṛsiṃhadev-bhakta. I do not want to see the face of a Rāma-bhakta.” This is not the proper understanding. It is a lack of real knowledge actually.

Really it is very good to praise other religions. By having respect for other religions we can make a proper comparative study of theism. That is very good. It is very good to know why we practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There are so many demigods and so many forms of the Lord. We respect the son of God, his Father in Heaven, and everything. But why do we worship Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead? It is necessary to understand this.

The Lord of the Vedic culture

Lord Rāmachandra is a very famous Avatār of the Lord who appeared in the Tretā-yuga to re-establish the Vedic religion within the mundane world. Everywhere, everyone knows of Lord Rāmachandra’s great character. All over India everyone is very enthusiastic to chant, “Jaya Rāma!” His character is described in gist-form in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* by Vedavyās, and in the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is described in a grand way. There are so many stories about Lord Rāmachandra’s great character, but the vital point of all of them is that He is Maryādā Puruṣottam: He appeared to establish the Vedic religion, and His Pastimes were guided by the regulations of Vedic religion. All of His actions and His character were perfectly organised and moral. He set the example of the perfect practice of vidhi, the rules and regulations of the Vedic religion. His speciality was that He accepted only one wife (*eka-patnī-vrata-dharo*). Through His character and example Lord Rāmachandra re-established the Vedic dharma.

eka-patnī-vrata-dharo
rājārṣi-charitaḥ śuciḥ
sva-dharmaṁ gṛha-medhīyaṁ
śikṣayan svayam ācharat
(SB: 9.10.54)

“Rāmachandra, who had the pure character of a saintly king and adhered to the vow of having only one wife, taught the dharma of a householder by practising it Himself.”

The Lord of love and play

Lord Rāmachandra’s character is so great, but it is completely different from Lord Kṛṣṇa’s character. Lord Rāmachandra is known as Maryādā Puruṣottam, and Kṛṣṇa is known as Līlā Puruṣottam. Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes focus on love and play; for that

reason Kṛṣṇa is known as Līlā Puruṣottam. When the Lord appears as Rāmachandra He follows the rules of the Vedas perfectly, to the extreme. That is the character of Maryādā Puruṣottam. But when Kṛṣṇa appears to taste the love of His devotees, He sometimes does not follow the restrictions of the Vedic religion at all. Still, both Rāmachandra and Kṛṣṇa are Puruṣottam, forms of the Supreme Lord.

We must understand that Kṛṣṇa is always the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He never loses His supreme position. Even if He does not follow the Vedic religion that He Himself establishes in the world in His other Avatārs, He is still the Supreme Lord. We can understand this through the example of Bhīṣmadev. Bhīṣmadev had perfect moral character. It is beyond even doubt that Bhīṣmadev could make any Vedic moral transgression. He was respected by everyone in the Vedic society as a Mahājan, a great, exemplary soul. Everyone everywhere knew of him and respected him. In large assemblies of kings, brāhmaṇs, and dignitaries, everyone would give first honour to Bhīṣmadev. Everyone considered Bhīṣmadev to have the highest dignity. But that Bhīṣmadev gives full honour and obeisance to Kṛṣṇa.

Once when Kṛṣṇa came to an assembly of many great persons in which Bhīṣmadev was the guest of honour, Bhīṣmadev stood and said, “When Kṛṣṇa is present here, He must receive first honour from everyone. He is more worshippable than anyone.” Then Bhīṣmadev offered a flower to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet in front of everyone. At that time Kṛṣṇa had so many wives, so many girlfriends, and so many things. Through Bhīṣmadev’s example everyone accepted that Kṛṣṇa is *Lord* Kṛṣṇa and He can do anything and everything.

Vidhi-mārg and rāga-mārg

There is a great difference between the worship of Nārāyaṇ and His Avatārs, and the worship of Kṛṣṇa. There are so many religious teachings in the world. It is very rare to get Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Vedic religion's main teaching is that you must be pious; you must follow the rules and regulations (vidhi) of the Vedas for proper social and religious life. The Vedic religion teaches that if your character and behaviour is very clean then you can worship and satisfy the Lord. Respect is ninety per cent of Vedic worship. Vedic religion enables you to respectfully worship the Lord in His form as Rāma, Nṛsimha, Nārāyaṇ, or otherwise. Through mantram and many instruments of worship you can offer your devotion from a distance to the Lord according to the proper rules and regulations.

The worship of Kṛṣṇa is very different from the formal worship of Vedic religion. To worship Kṛṣṇa you must offer pure love, affection, and the hankering of your transcendental soul. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu taught this process and mood of worship, which is known as rāga-mārg. The speciality of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's religion is love and affection. That is the only property used for worship in the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Through attachment to Kṛṣṇa, love and affection for Him develop. Love and affection are most attractive to Kṛṣṇa, and as one's love and affection for Him grow more and more, Kṛṣṇa becomes more and more satisfied. If someone has love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, then anything and everything they do will be satisfying to Him. Any soul with that type of transcendental property is most fortunate. Persons who prefer vidhi-mārg like to worship Lord Rāmachandra, or Lord Nārāyaṇ, or other Avatārs of the Lord, but persons who prefer the mood of love and affection for the Lord, rāga-mārg, must be attracted to Kṛṣṇa.

In this way we can understand Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead—Reality the Beautiful. Everything we desire we can find fully within Kṛṣṇa. We want charm, beauty, love, affection, and ecstasy; we want success in our lives. All of these are fully present and alive within Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All ecstatic activity is found in full in the Kṛṣṇa conception. If we will try to search for a reason to serve and worship

Kṛṣṇa, then the answer will come that everything we need is fully manifested in an effulgent way in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we will find everything that we need, so we must worship Kṛṣṇa.

What do we really need? We do not need awe or reverence; we need happiness. We need joy. We need beauty. We need love. We are searching for these qualities; birth after birth we are trying to search for these essential things. We need eternal existence, harmony, and the nectar of love, beauty, charm, and sweetness. If we search for these things, we will find that all of them are fully present in the Kṛṣṇa conception. In no other God consciousness and in no other God conception are they fully present. The Rāmachandra conception, the Nārāyaṇ conception, the Baladev conception, all the other Avatārs of Kṛṣṇa—none of Them can give us the same rasa, the same ecstatic relationship with the Lord.



The emporium of all ecstasy

Why do I say, “No other”? There is a reason. If you search within the Kṛṣṇa conception, you will find the sonhood of Godhead—the supreme worshippable Lord manifest in a lovingly playful, youthful form surrounded by all five possible relationships (rasas) with the jīva-souls: śānta [attachment],

yeṣāṁ śrīśa-prasādo 'pi
mano hartuṁ na śaknuyāt
siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi
śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-
rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitiḥ

(Brs: 1.2.59)

“Nārāyaṇ’s grace cannot capture the hearts of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. Although Nārāyaṇ and Kṛṣṇa are theologically nondifferent, according to rasa, Kṛṣṇa is superior. Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy is established by rasa.”

dāsyā [servitorship], sakhyā [friendship], vātsalyā [affectionate guardianship], and madhura [intimate love]. In other conceptions you may find relationships with God like the fatherhood of Godhead or servitorship to Godhead. We see that there are many other types of relationships with God. But according to rasa-vichār, the science of divine relationships, the sonhood of Godhead is the best.

The Supreme Lord's position is that He is the supreme controller of everything. But if that Supreme Lord can also be controlled by love and affection, that is an even more glorious position. Why? A father bears the burden of maintaining his children. If a father has no guardian, he has to maintain himself and also bear the burden of maintaining his children. A master must maintain his servants. A friend must care for his friends. But a son can have everything; he can have all types of relationships. When a son has a guardian then he can even do wrong and still be protected. If the Absolute Lord performs His Pastimes in a youthful form, He can enjoy all possible relationships. He can have a father or guardian, and under their care He can simply play and enjoy. When the Lord assumes the form of a son, His Pastimes become the Sweet Absolute.

Kṛṣṇa is known as Vrajendra Nandan, the son of the king of Vṛndāvan. Kṛṣṇa has a father and guardian, so He Himself can play; He can be worry-free. That is the most worshipping Sweet Absolute Reality—where Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is always playfully situated in the centre of everything.

When the Lord has the youthful form of a son, then all relationships are possible with Him. He can have a father, a mother, brothers, servants, friends, and girlfriends; He can have everything. As a son, Kṛṣṇa can be served from every corner in all different types of loving, affectionate relationships (rasas), and He can give ecstasy and joy to the heart of everyone. That is full-fledged theism, and only in such a conception is all beauty, charm, and ecstasy beautifully playing. Kṛṣṇa is

dadhi-mathana-ninādais
tyakta-nidraḥ prabhāte
nibhṛta-padam agāraṁ
ballavīnām praviṣṭaḥ
mukha-kamala-samīrair
āśu nirvāpya dīpān
kavalita-navanītaḥ pātu
mām bāla-kṛṣṇaḥ

(Padyāvalī: 143)

“Awakened in the morning by the sound of butter being churned, Bāla Kṛṣṇa soundlessly enters the homes of the gopīs, quickly blows out their lamps with His lotus mouth, and devours their fresh butter. May He protect me.”

the most beautiful and extremely merciful. So much charm, love, and harmony are existing within the ecstatic Lord of the Kṛṣṇa conception.

So many different ecstatic feelings all merge together within Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The jīva-souls feel unlimited happiness through that. It is inconceivable but still it comes to them, and the process is a very sweet process. Śānta, dāsyā, sakhya, vātsalya, and madhura rasas are the five kinds of relationships with Kṛṣṇa. All are ecstatic; all are filled with loveliness, happiness, sweetness, beauty, and everything. To describe these Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī use the word *chamatkāra* [astonishing]. Because all rasas are manifest in full with only the divine form of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is described as the Akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti: emporium of all rasa.

Kṛṣṇa's super-excellent qualities

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has explained the four special, extremely wonderful qualities that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāj, alone possesses—the qualities that Lord Nārāyaṇ, Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Rāma, and so on do not possess. These are the qualities that distinguish Kṛṣṇa as Svayam Bhagavān, the most worshippable Personality of Godhead.

sarvādbhuta-chamatkāra-līlā-kallola-vāridhiḥ
atulya-madhura-prema-maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ
tri-jagan-mānasākarṣi-muralī-kala-kūjitaḥ
asamānordhva-rūpa-śrī-vismāpita-charācharaḥ

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: Dakṣiṇa-vibhāga, 141–2)

Sarvādbhuta-chamatkāra-līlā-kallola-vāridhiḥ: the first quality is that the Pastimes of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa are like an ocean filled with dancing waves that stun and astonish everyone.

Atulya-madhura-prema-maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ: the second quality is that in His Pastimes Kṛṣṇa is always surrounded by His associates, the super sweet, sweet gopīs, gopa-bālakas, and other residents of Vṛndāvan Dhām, whose hearts and

souls have full, unequalled dedication to Him in five kinds of relationships led by madhura-rasa.

Tri-jagan-mānasākarṣi-muralī-kalā-kūjitaḥ: the third quality is that Kṛṣṇa attracts the minds of everyone within the transcendental and mundane universes and enters the hearts of His devotees with the melodious vibration of His flute. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained that om and gāyatrī come from Kṛṣṇa’s flute song and when He plays the flute Kṛṣṇa sings the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (*Rādhā-padam dhīmahi*).

Asamānordhva-rūpa-śrī-vismāpita-charācharaḥ: the fourth quality is that the personal beauty (śrī, saundarya) of Kṛṣṇa’s divine form is beyond compare. All moving and nonmoving living entities are astonished and faint to behold the beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s divine form.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu described Kṛṣṇa’s four super-excellent qualities in this way. Among these four topmost qualities of Kṛṣṇa the final quality of His supremely attractive form is the highest. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī said, *bhūṣaṇera bhūṣaṇa aṅga*. This means that nothing is more beautiful than Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form: Kṛṣṇa’s form beautifies even the ornaments He wears—Kṛṣṇa’s divine form is the ornament on His ornaments.

We hear definitively that even Kṛṣṇa Himself is maddened by the beauty of His form. When Kṛṣṇa stands in front of a mirror, He forgets Himself and attempts to embrace His image in the mirror. He becomes mugdha, melted and astonished, to see His divine form. Kṛṣṇa showed this to be true by His appearance as Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all beauty, and He Himself becomes mad to see His beauty. That is the incomparable quality and qualification of Kṛṣṇa. No one can compare with the beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s divine form or the love and charm flowing throughout His Pastimes.

Irreversible vision

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu also expressed His own vision of Kṛṣṇa’s divine form:

yan martya-līlāpayikaṁ svayoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā grhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya cha saubhagardheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

(SB: 3.2.12)

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His divine energy and assumed His form suited for human-like Pastimes, which astonishes even Him, which is the ultimate abode of fortune (the ultimate expression of beauty, wealth, power, fame, knowledge, and detachment), and which is the ornament of His ornaments.”

smerām bhaṅgī-traya-parichitām sāchi-vistīrṇa-dṛṣṭīm
vaṁśī-nyastādhara-kīśalayām ujjalām chandrakeṇa
govindākhyām hari-tanum itaḥ keśi-tīrthopakaṇṭhe
mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-saṅge 'sti raṅgaḥ

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: Pūrva-vibhāga, 2.239)

Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura explained this verse: “If you have any attachment to staying within your circle of friends and enjoying mundane life, do not go to Keshi Ghat to see Śrī Govinda’s divine form, which is the reservoir of all beauty. If you see His divine form attractively bent in three places, His stunning eyes, and His face glowing in the moonshine as He plays His flute, you will become completely enchanted and you will not be able to leave. You will never be able to return to the so-called pleasures of material life. It may be better for you not to go there.”

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu expressed his vision of Kṛṣṇa in this verse. It is his own vision. When we hear this verse we can feel something, maybe 0.1 per cent of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī’s divine realisation. We cannot actually conceive of it. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu can express it and we can simply try to harmonise with his feelings.

The divinity of the human form

Lord Brahmā also saw the divine form of Kṛṣṇa and expressed his vision with His verse:

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sach-chid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

(Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā: 5.1)

In this first verse of *Brahma-saṁhitā* we see the real form of Lord Kṛṣṇa expressed. This verse describes Kṛṣṇa’s aprākṛta form, His supramundane form, in which He plays with the cows, cowherd boys, and gopīs in His eternal abode of Vṛndāvan in five kinds of relationships. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī also described this form:



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govindaḥ,
the Deity of Govinda unearthed
by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī who
was established in Vṛndāvan by
Kṛṣṇa’s grandson Vajranabha.

The best of all of Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes
are His human-like Pastimes.
His human-like form is His original
form. His cowherd-boy dress,
flute-playing, adolescence,
and superb dancing perfectly suit
His human-like Pastimes.
Please hear of Kṛṣṇa's charm-
ing form. One drop of its beauty
floods the whole of the three
worlds and attracts every living
entity within them.

evaṁ sva-chitte svata eva siddha
ātmā priyo 'rtho bhagavān anantaḥ
taṁ nirvṛto niyatārtho bhajeta
saṁsāra-hetūparamaś cha yatra
(SB: 2.2.6)

“Joyfully and resolutely serve
the Soul who is self-manifest
within the heart, the beloved,
absolute, worshipping, all-
pervading Lord. Doing so
eradicates the cause of
one's entanglement in worldly
existence (ignorance).”

kṛṣṇera yateka khelā, sarvottama nara-līlā,
nara-vapu tāhāra svarūpa
gopa-veśa, veṇu-kara, nava-kiśora, naṭa-vara,
nara-līlāra haya anurūpa

kṛṣṇera madhura rūpa, śuna, sanātana
ye rūpera eka kaṇa, ḍubāya saba tribhuvana,
sarva prāṇī kare ākarṣaṇa

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 21.101-102)

Kṛṣṇa's original form is like that of a human, like that of our own relative. The human form is the Lord's original form and is the Sweet Absolute. When this is understood, then we can harmonise everything with that Reality. Without this realisation it is very difficult to harmonise so much of our worldly experience. The Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa can harmonise everything. *Evaṁ sva-chitte svata eva siddha* (SB: 2.2.6): when Kṛṣṇa's transcendental Pastimes reveal themselves in our hearts we will understand everything perfectly.

The rising of the divine sun

Kṛṣṇa appeared in His human-like form here in this mundane world like the other Avatārs, but Kṛṣṇa's divine human-like form, Reality the Beautiful, is eternally present in the spiritual realm of Goloka Vṛndāvan. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna:

janma karma cha me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā: 4.9)

“Arjuna, My birth and death in this world are not like the birth and death of ordinary human persons. I show Myself to be like them when I appear, but actually I existed before I appeared in this world and continue to exist after I disappear. My form and appearance are divyam [divine].”

*Divya*m means *aprākṛtam*. *Aprākṛtam* means that Lord Kṛṣṇa’s divine form appears like an ordinary man’s form, but it is actually not made of anything mundane. Kṛṣṇa’s form is a transcendental form which is perfect, positive, and eternally existent in Goloka Vṛndāvan, the highest plane within Vaikuṅṭhaloka. Anyone who understands Lord Kṛṣṇa’s divine form and appearance in this way will be liberated from birth and death. It is necessary to properly understand that His appearance and disappearance are not like the birth and death of mankind. They are like the rising and setting of the sun. The sun does not die when it crosses the horizon. It simply disappears from our vision temporarily and then reappears later. Anyone who understands Kṛṣṇa’s divine appearance and disappearance in this way is liberated and attains the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental world.

Kṛṣṇa gave this knowledge to the world in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. We must honour and worship everything about Lord Kṛṣṇa as transcendental. There is nothing mundane about His Name, Form, Qualities, Pastimes, and Associates. The scriptures have cautioned us about this.

viṣṇau sarveśvareṣe tad-itara-sama-dhīr yasya vā nārakī saḥ
(*Padma-purāṇa*)

“If we think Sarveśvar Viṣṇu, the Lord of everything, is an ordinary person, then our understanding will be imperfect and that will take us to a hellish condition.”

By the grace of the scriptures, our Gurus, and the sādhus, we must think: “The birth and death of Lord Kṛṣṇa are not like that of an ordinary human. They are transcendental. Kṛṣṇa’s form is transcendental and eternal. *Īśvaraḥ Paramaḥ Kṛṣṇaḥ Sacchīd-ānanda-vigrahaḥ*. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is the Creator of all creation, and He has an eternal divine form.”



Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī writing in
Śrī Vṛndāvan Dhām.

The sonhood of Godhead

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhū has explained step by step how the play of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Sweet Absolute is supreme according to rasa-vichār, the science of spiritual relationships.

vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām vivekī na kaḥ

(Śrī Upadeśāmṛta: 9)

This verse is very famous. It is very small, but it fully describes the position and gist of all the Pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Vaikuṅṭha, the abode of Lord Nārāyaṇ, is infinite. In His opulent Pastimes in Vaikuṅṭhaloka, Lord Nārāyaṇ eternally exists as the worshippable Deity, and all His servitors serve Him there forever, from a respectful distance.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhū explains that in Vaikuṅṭha there is no *janita*, birth, of the Lord. This means that Lord Nārāyaṇ has no mother or father. Thus Madhupurī—Mathurā Vṛndāvan—is superior to Vaikuṅṭhaloka because there the Lord manifests His transcendental Pastimes of birth and childhood. When the Lord takes birth and plays as a boy, His Pastimes are more exalted and transcendently glorious. Why? Because the full range of relationships are possible with Him.

Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes manifest the full range of relationships: śānta [attachment], dāsya [servitorship], sakhya [friendship], vātsalya [affectionate guardianship], and madhura [intimate love]. Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes also include birth, so His Pastimes are more elevated than those of Lord Nārāyaṇ. But Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes have something more than Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes. That is parakīya-rasa, paramour love. Paramour love is found only within Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes.

Lord Rāmachandra's nature and character is to always follow the Vedic religion. In Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes the full range of rasas are present, but their movement is controlled by

the rulings of the Vedas. In Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes the full freedom of rasa does not show itself in an effulgent way. Up to dāsyā-rasa Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes are so nice. Dāsyā-rasa is firm and full in Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes. Sakhya-rasa, vātsalya-rasa, and madhura-rasa are suppressed in His Pastimes. Sītā Devī is Rāmachandra's wife, but Her mood is, "I am a servant of Rāmachandra." The tendency of all of Rāmachandra's associates—His wife Sītā Devī, His father Daśarath, His mother Kauśalyā, and so on—is to consider themselves servants of Rāmachandra.

This means that the madhura-rasa in Lord Rāmachandra's Pastimes moves only according to the respectful mood taught in the Vedas. Lord Rāmachandra set the example of Vedic dharma and accepted only one wife. His quality is that He has only one consort. Thus there is no opportunity for the jīva-souls to become consorts of Lord Rāmachandra. He will not accept anyone else but Sītā Devī as His wife. But the Lord is so beautiful and attractive that we hanker to see His beauty and naturally feel that we want to be His consort. As Rāmachandra, the Lord will not accept us in that way; but as Kṛṣṇa, the Lord will. Kṛṣṇa is the form in which the Lord will accept us not only as His wives but as His paramour lovers. Kṛṣṇa has 16,108 wives, and, more than that, He has millions of girlfriends.

Kṛṣṇa is the emporium of all rasa; the full range of relationships are possible with Him. In Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa takes birth. He accepts service in vātsalya-rasa and *tatrāpi rāsotsavād*: He sports in the paramour love of madhura-rasa in the rāsa-līlā, His dancing Pastimes with His girlfriends. And when Kṛṣṇa performs the rāsa-līlā, He does not enjoy paramour love with only a small group: Kṛṣṇa plays with millions of gopīs in this way. Kṛṣṇa has that capacity.

Kṛṣṇa is Supreme and everything is under His control, but as Vrajendra Nandan, in the play of the sonhood of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa is worry-free and simply enjoys unlimitedly. That is the full-fledged theism found in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In His



Śrī Rādhā Raman, the Deity of Kṛṣṇa who lovingly self-manifested Himself for Śrīla Gopāl Bhaṭṭā Goswāmī.

supreme divine form of Kṛṣṇa the Lord shows His supreme nature through His capacity to enjoy.

rāya kahe,—kṛṣṇa haya ‘dhīra-lalita’
nirantara kāma-kṛīḍā—yāhāra charita

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 8.187)

This is a wonderful expression found within the Rāmānanda-saṁvād of Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta. There Rāmānanda Rāy says that Kṛṣṇa’s nature is dhīra-lalita, which means He is always in the beautiful ecstatic mood of śṛṅgāra-rasa [madhura-rasa], and He has no job other than enjoying with the gopīs. *Nirantara*, without ever stopping, Kṛṣṇa playfully enjoys, spreads His Pastimes, and accepts the service of His beloved devotees.

Inconceivable sweetness

This is the divine conception of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, and He taught that it is the gist of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kāchid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargenā va kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pumartho mahān
śrī-chaitanya-mahāprabhor matam idam tatrādarah naḥ paraḥ

(Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākura)

“The worshippable, desirable goal of our life is the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His divine form of Vrajendra Nandan Kṛṣṇa, who is manifest in His abode of Vṛndāvan. All beauty, all charm, everything opulent, tasteful, and ecstatic is present within Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvan-līlā. Everything is there in Vṛndāvan: Vrajeśa Tanay Kṛṣṇa and His full love-play. Service there, in the mood of the Vraja-vadhūs, Kṛṣṇa’s beloved girlfriends, is the supreme service, and that is our life’s goal, that type of ecstatic love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

All beauty, ecstasy, and everything is present within the Kṛṣṇa conception. Only Kṛṣṇa can be our heart and soul. The full-fledged conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is found in that

Vrajendra Nandan Kṛṣṇa conception, the sonhood of Godhead. A great devotee, Guṇarāj Khān, wrote a book named *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijay*. It begins:

“nanda-nandana kṛṣṇa—mora prāṇa-nātha”
ei vākye vikāinu tāra vaṁśera hāta

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 15.100*)

“Nanda Nandan Kṛṣṇa is my heart and soul.” Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev was deeply attracted to this conception, and after hearing Guṇarāj Khān’s expression, Mahāprabhu was so charmed that He said, “I consider Myself a slave of a dog from the house of Guṇarāj Khān.”

Raghupati Upādhyāya also described the sonhood of Godhead to Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu:

śrutim apare smṛtim itare bhāratam
anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ
aham iha nandaṁ vande
yasyālinde param brahma

(*Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 19.96*)

“Those who are very fearful of this mundane environment can be that way. They can worship the śruti, smṛti, *Mahābhārata*, Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, and so on. I do not want to go that way. I do not see that as my necessity. I feel that all I need is Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. I know that Kṛṣṇa plays in the courtyard of His father Nanda Mahārāj, so I feel I will receive Kṛṣṇa’s mercy through Nanda Mahārāj. I feel that I need only to take the dust of Nanda Mahārāj’s lotus feet on my head. By doing that I will surely receive Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.”

In his verse, Raghupati Upādhyāya describes Kṛṣṇa as Parambrahma, the Supreme Absolute. Everyone already knows Kṛṣṇa is Parambrahma: *Brahma-saṁhitā* said it; *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* said it; and Kṛṣṇa Himself said it everywhere in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. But who can conceive that that Kṛṣṇa, who is Parambrahma, plays in the courtyard of His father Nanda Mahārāj? Who can conceive that Mother Yaśomati

chastises Kṛṣṇa with a stick? That is the inconceivable beauty of the Sweet Absolute Reality of the Kṛṣṇa conception—the sonhood of Godhead.

The ocean of rasa

Raghupati Upādhyāya later charmed Mahāprabhu with another verse. Kṛṣṇa does not have only one kind of divine form; He has three, one for each of the environments where He engages in His Pastimes (Dvārakā, Mathurā, and Vṛndāvan). The quality and qualification of Vṛndāvan Kṛṣṇa, the youthful, playful Kṛṣṇa, is supreme. Raghupati Upādhyāya said:

śyāmam eva param̐ rūpaṁ purī madhu-purī varā
vayaḥ kaiśorakaṁ dhyeyam ādya eva paro rasaḥ

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 19.106)

“The divine form of Śyāmasundar Kṛṣṇa is the Lord’s supreme form; Mathurā Vṛndāvan is the Lord’s supreme abode; Kṛṣṇa’s youthful form is the supreme form of worship, and ādi-rasa, madhura-rasa, is the supreme rasa.”

kaṁ prati kathayitum iśe
samprati ko vā pratītim āyātu
go-pati-tanayā-kuñje
gopa-vadhūṭi-ṅgaṁ brahma
(Cc: Madhya, 19.98)

“Who can I tell, and who will
believe, that the Absolute
hunts the wives of cowherd
men in the groves along
the banks of the Yamunā?”

Here Raghupati Upādhyāya
suggests to Śrīman
Mahāprabhu that by His
appearance the glory
of madhura-rasa will be
revealed to the world.

The divine youthful form of Kṛṣṇa is the source of all rasa. All rasa comes from Him like Mana Sarovar, the lake in which the Ganges and all other sacred rivers are present. Kṛṣṇa is known as *rasābdhi*, the ocean of rasa, the ocean of nectar. The jīva-souls are so fortunate because they are tiny and can swim in the nectarean ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes.

Rasa has five principle styles—śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, madhura—and seven kinds of secondary styles—hāsya [laughter], adbhuta [wonder], vīra [valour], karuṇa [sorrow], raudra [anger], bibhatsa [disgust], and bhaya [fear]. In Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes all of these rasas swim together like baby fish happily playing together and kissing.

The origin of paramour love

When time and fortune favourably come to us, we can enquire about rasa and our research will lead us to madhura-rasa. There

are so many rasas but all rasas are present inside madhura-rasa. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavīrāj Goswāmī explained:

ākāśādi guṇa yena para para bhūte
eka-dui-tina-chāri krame pañcha pṛthivīte

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā 19.233)

“As sky, air, fire, and water are present within earth, so all rasas—śānta, dāsyā, sakhyā, and vātsalya—are present within madhura-rasa.”

Madhura-rasa is the supreme ecstasy. It is sarva-rasa-samāhāra: the combined form of all rasas. We have heard that Kṛṣṇa is the Akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti—the emporium of all rasa—the concentrated form of all rasa, but, more than this general idea, we can understand that because all rasas are fully present within madhura-rasa, Kṛṣṇa being described as the Akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti means that He is Śṛṅgāra-rasa mūrtimān: the concentrated form of madhura-rasa in paramour love.

All the scriptures have said this also, and that is a miracle! Vedavyās began the *Vedānta-darśana* with the sūtras, “*Athāto Brahma jijñāsā*: search for Brahma”, and “*Janmādy asya Yataḥ*: He—Pūrṇabrahma Kṛṣṇa—is the source of everything”. Then he wrote, “*Ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt*: He, Kṛṣṇa, is ānandamaya, the Sach-chid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ: the embodiment of truth, consciousness, and ecstasy.” So the *Vedānta-darśana* begins by telling us, “Lord Kṛṣṇa is ānandamaya: He is the reservoir of all ecstasy, and we can find our full nourishment in Him.” Then Vedavyās said, *raso vai Saḥ*: “He is rasa; Kṛṣṇa is rasa”. So Kṛṣṇa is the Creator of all creation (*janmādy asya Yataḥ*), with rasa, with sweetness. In other words, it is Kṛṣṇa the emporium of all rasa who is the Creator of all creation. This means that it is *His* manifestation—Kṛṣṇa the *Sweet Absolute's* manifestation—that is everywhere! It is the play of the Divine Couple, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that is the origin of everything; it is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's play that is overflowed all over the transcendental and material worlds. This is the real meaning of *janmādy asya Yataḥ*: “That

from which everything comes”. It is necessary for us to realise this and connect with it.

The Divine Couple

The play of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme Powerful, with His supreme Power, Rādhārāṇī, is eternally going on in Goloka Vṛndāvan, the highest plane within Vaikuṅṭhaloka. Kṛṣṇa and His Power are nondifferent, Saśakti-śaktimān, but Kṛṣṇa divided Himself from His Power for the purpose of līlā, Pastimes. He divided His Power from Himself for His own satisfaction and play. So the phrase ‘Supreme Personality of Godhead’ means Kṛṣṇa the all-powerful *with* His Power (Rādhārāṇī).

The Powerful and His Power are nondifferent. We cannot differentiate Them just as we cannot differentiate the sun from its heat and light. Kṛṣṇa, the Powerful, is always depending upon His Power. Without His Power, the Powerful does not have His existence; He does not have His play. He is like a dry battery with no charge. We have heard Śuka and Śārī, the parrots of Vṛndāvan, debating:

śuka bali āmāra kṛṣṇa giridhārī chhila
śārī bali āmāra rādhā śakti sañcharila

Śuka said, “My Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhan Hill.”

Śārī replied, “It is only because Rādhārāṇī gave Her power to Kṛṣṇa that Kṛṣṇa was powerful enough to lift Govardhan Hill.”

In this way we understand the position of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as Saśakti-śaktimān: Kṛṣṇa the Powerful, who depends on His Power, Rādhārāṇī.

The Divine Couple has been described very concisely and conclusively by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Goswāmī in a full-fledged way in the eighth chapter of the Madhya-līlā of *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*. There the full-fledged theism of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is exposed. The position of Kṛṣṇa and the position of Rādhārāṇī has been fully described for us. There

Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev asked Rāmānanda Rāy many questions, and the supreme conclusion of worship of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa was revealed. Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar has explained this concisely for us,

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Ādi-līlā, 1.5)

“Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are One, but They divided Themselves for Their divine play in madhura-rasa-līlā.”

The clue to the whole of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s Pastimes is given here.

rādhā-kṛṣṇa eka ātmā, dui deha dhari’
anyonye vilase rasa āsvādana kari’
(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Ādi-līlā, 4.56)

Śrīla Svarūp Dāmodar said, “Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa ekātmā: Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are One, that is, Saśakti-śaktimān, but They have divided into two forms for Their own divine play of paramour love.”

If you say that Kṛṣṇa is śaktimān [powerful], then His śakti [power], Rādhārāṇī, is already with Him; otherwise He could not be śaktimān. Various forms of Kṛṣṇa sometimes appear in this mundane world, but if you will understand that the original Divine Form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the cause of all causes, the Parameśvar, the Creator of all, who Himself has no creator, then you must see that it is Saśakti-śaktimān Kṛṣṇa—Śrī Kṛṣṇa with His śakti Rādhārāṇī—that is behind everything (*janmādy asya Yataḥ*).

The taste of nectar

Like his *Vedānta-darśana*, Vedavyās began Śrīmad Bhāgavatam with the phrase *janmādy asya Yataḥ*. By doing this he showed that Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is a commentary on the *Vedānta-darśana*, though at the same time he also showed that Śrīmad Bhāgavatam starts from the platform of madhura-rasa.



Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodar,
the Deities served by Śrīla Jīva
Goswāmī Prabhu

nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam ālayaṁ
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.1.3)

If we think of the Vedas as a kalpa-taru, a wish-fulfilling tree, then Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is like their fruit. *Galitaṁ phalam* means Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is like a nicely ripened fruit without skin or seed. Its rasa, nectarean juice, is very sweet and palatable. It contains the gist of all transcendental ecstasy and all the Vedic scriptures. *Pibata Bhāgavatam rasam ālayam*: until death try to taste the *Bhāgavat's* rasa. Again and again it will be tasteful to you. You will always find new taste there—in the Divine Couple's eternal Pastimes.

SECTION THREE

The Soul

Daśa-mūla-tattva

Truths Five, Six, and Seven

tad bhinnāmsāmś cha jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān
tad-vimuktāmś cha bhāvāt

Souls are separated parts of Kṛṣṇa.
Some of them are captivated by māyā.
Some of them are liberated from māyā by devotion.

CHAPTER SIX

The Evolution of Consciousness

Lord Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu gave this consciousness to the world:

jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā-śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'
sūryāmśa-kiraṇa, yaichhe agni-jvālā-chaya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra 'śakti' haya

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 20.108–9)

Kṛṣṇa is like a chit-sūrya, a great sun made of spiritual energy, and the jīva-souls are like rays of that spiritual sun. Just as the sun and the sun's rays are both different and nondifferent, Kṛṣṇa and the jīva-souls are simultaneously different and nondifferent. Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura said, "*Tad bhinnānsāmś cha jīvān*: the jīva-souls are distinct, finite parts of the infinite Lord." In this way the jīva-souls belong to the Lord. They come from the Lord's energy, His marginal potency (taṭasthā-śakti). The jīva-souls naturally have a subservient relationship with the Lord, that is, all jīva-souls are eternal servitors of their Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is their natural identity. This is Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev's primary teaching: the service of Kṛṣṇa is the true dharma of every jīva-soul.

Divine energies

The jīva-souls are one of the Lord's three primary energies.

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetrajñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-samjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate

(Viṣṇu-purāṇa: 6.7.61)

Lord Kṛṣṇa's power has three divisions: His parā-śakti [internal spiritual energy]; His kṣetrajñā-śakti [marginal spiritual energy], which manifests the individual jīva-souls; and His aparā-śakti [material energy]. These three main potencies of Kṛṣṇa are also sometimes known by other names such as the antaraṅga-śakti, taṭasthā-śakti, and bahiraṅga-śakti. All of these energies are activated by Kṛṣṇa's will for His play and satisfaction.

The Divine Couple's transcendental play with Their paraphernalia, that is, all of Kṛṣṇa-līlā, is part of the chit-śakti [spiritual potency]. The jīva-souls come out from the taṭasthā-śakti for Kṛṣṇa's play and satisfaction, as well as the creation of the material world. The material environment and the bewilderment of the conditioned souls come from the māyā-śakti [material energy], which is like the Lord's shadow potency, a reflection of His spiritual energy (chit-śakti).

The jīva-souls are the Lord's marginal potency, taṭasthā-śakti. *Taṭa* means a shore, the area on the bank of a river between water and land. *Taṭasthā-śakti* means the Lord's energy that is situated on the margin between the spiritual and material energy, and can adapt to either environment.

Searching for love

Question: If "not a blade of grass moves without the will of the Lord", then do the jīva-souls have free will?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Kṛṣṇa gives the jīva-souls some free will. Kṛṣṇa wants to see if the jīva-souls will willingly serve His divine lotus feet and dedicate themselves to Him. That is

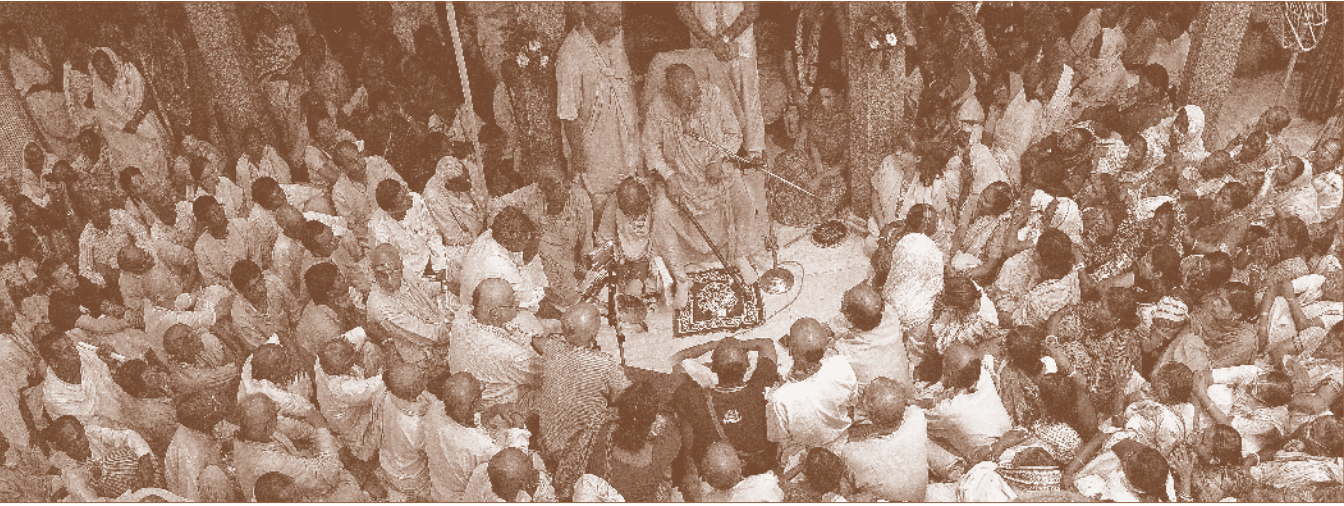
Kṛṣṇa's desire. He gives the jīva-souls free will and does not disturb it. This is because He wants to have a loving relationship with them, and love is not possible without free will. This is why Kṛṣṇa created His neutral śakti, the jīva-śakti: for the expansion of His loving Pastimes.

The jīva-soul's nature (dharma), given by Kṛṣṇa, is to have free will. Free will means consciousness. Consciousness means thinking, feeling, and willing. Every jīva-soul has these three capacities. And they are always active; the jīva-souls can never stop thinking, feeling, and willing. The jīva-souls are always pursuing something; by their nature they are always active and seeking.

The jīva-souls are part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who is the Sach-chid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ: the embodiment of eternity, consciousness, and ecstasy. This means the jīva-soul's nature is also sach-chid-ānanda, eternally existent, conscious, and ecstatic. The jīva-soul's existence is built by Kṛṣṇa's own existence, just as a sun-ray comes from the sun. The jīva-soul's thinking, feeling, and willing, the jīva-soul's conscious nature (chit), is always seeking the jīva-soul's positive nature—ānanda. This means that they are by nature searching for Kṛṣṇa, searching for the ecstasy, love, beauty, and charm that are present within Him.

Divine magnetism

The jīva-souls feel whatever they do. Whenever the jīva-souls feel the presence of beauty they naturally want to dedicate themselves to that, to serve and worship the source of that beauty. This capacity and tendency for dedication is the actual function of the jīva-souls' conscious nature, of their thinking, feeling, and willing. We see that everywhere within all cultures people have a tendency to worship. Even jungle-men worship the sun, moon, and ocean, or the trees, mountains, caves, and so on. All jīva-souls' nature is to worship. It is existing within their consciousness. Pure devotional life, that is, pure attraction



and service to beauty, is the actual nature, the actual dharma, of the jīva-souls.

It is within the nature of all jīva-souls to be attracted by the magnetic power of beauty. When a jīva-soul's whole existence is overcome by the attractive power of beauty, then the jīva-soul manifests its full nature as an eternal servant. The two syllables of the word *Kṛṣṇa* mean *ākaraṣaṇa kare* and *ānanda dāna*: *Kṛṣṇa* attracts the jīva-souls and gives ecstasy to them through His service. *Kṛṣṇa* is like a great attractive magnet and the jīva-souls, His parts and parcels, are like iron filings that are divinely attracted to Him. The jīva-souls are automatically attracted to *Kṛṣṇa* and His Pastimes in the transcendental world, and the jīva-souls feel naturally fulfilled in their relationship with *Kṛṣṇa*, that is, in *Kṛṣṇa*-bhakti. This is the sanātan-dharma, the jaiva-dharma, the eternal religion of all jīva-souls. Really religion is one, "*Dharmo yasyām Mad-ātmakaḥ* (*SB: 11.14.3*): all souls must be attracted to the divine sun, Śrī *Kṛṣṇa*, and serve Him with their full existence." This is the property of all jīva-souls. It is not anything mundane or made by humanity.

kālena naṣṭā pralaye
vāñīyaṁ veda-saṁjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā
dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ
(*SB: 11.14.3*)

[*Kṛṣṇa*:] "During the creation I spoke to Brahmā the Vedic teachings, the dharma of devotion to Me, which was lost during the annihilation by the influence of time."

Entering the illusory environment

Question: How do the jīva-souls enter into the material nature?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Whenever jīva-souls manifest within the marginal energy (taṣasthā-śakti), they mostly go to the side of the spiritual energy (chit-śakti). There they find the light of their positive spiritual existence in the company of their all-attractive Lord in the eternal world, Vaikuṅṭhaloka. Some unfortunate souls, however, come to the negative side, the māyā-śakti.

**kṛṣṇa bhulī' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha**

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 20.117)

Sometimes jīva-souls, by their misfortune, jump into māyā [illusion] to attempt to enjoy material existence. When their vision, not seeing Kṛṣṇa, moves to the negative side, they see māyā, and immediately feel, “Oh! There is great beauty! I can master and enjoy that energy.” In this way unfortunate jīva-souls jump into the darkness of the illusory environment.

Māyā means the illusory environment, the Lord’s shadow potency, His dark power, which attracts the sparking light of the jīva-souls. *Māyā Devī* is one of the Lord’s potencies, and by His will she has great attractive power.

**kṛṣṇa-bahirmukha hañā bhoga-vāñchhā kare
nikaṭa-stha māyā tāre jāpaṭiyā dhare**

(Śrī Prema-vivarta: 6.3)

Whenever unfortunate souls want to enjoy separately from their Lord and come under the spell of *Māyā’s* attraction, they jump towards her and she immediately embraces them. She weaves a web around them, binding them as her prisoners. These jīva-souls are immediately covered by the dark power of *Māyā’s* illusory environment and thrown into the waves of birth and death.

The unfortunate group of jīva-souls who are bound by *Māyā Devī* is very small though. Actually, within the total transcendental reality, the māyik jagat, the illusory material universe, is like a very small skin spot. The souls in this world are a very

small, insignificant minority, and they live in the material environment like prisoners. When people break the rules and regulations of society they are sent to prison. Prison is supposed to reform criminals, and this world is like a prison-house for purifying the jīva-souls. But the number of people in prison is always a very small percentage of the total population. Today in India there are at least 90 crores [900 million] of people but only 25 lakhs [2.5 million] of prisoners. It is only a small portion of the jīva-souls who unfortunately want to enjoy māyā and are subjected to the bondage and suffering of material existence.

*Under My direction My material
energy produces this world
of moving and stationary forms.
Thus the world repeatedly
manifests.*

**mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-charācharam
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate**

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā: 9.10)

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained that the material universe functions in a cyclic way under the Lord's direction. By the Lord's will, the material energy manifests the matter of the mundane universe and then becomes filled with moving and non-moving life forms, that is, jīva-souls. In His form of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa casts His glance upon māyā. Through His glance He throws His power, His liṅgam [male potency] into prakṛti, the material nature. *Tal-liṅgam Bhagavān Śambhur (Bs: 5.8)*: the personification of that reproductive potency thrown by Viṣṇu is Śambhu, Lord Śiva. When Viṣṇu casts His glance over māyā, the form of Śambhu appears, and it is Śambhu who directly touches māyā, the material energy. Through Śambhu, Viṣṇu's neutral power made up of the jīva-souls enters into the womb of material nature and comes out in a divided way in millions and millions of parts. In this way all the jīva-souls enter into the material world and activate the material energy.

Evolution: material or spiritual?

Question: As a university student, all of my science classes are based on Darwin's theory of evolution that humans evolved from previous species who evolved from inanimate matter.

How can I integrate Darwin's theory of evolution with your teachings?

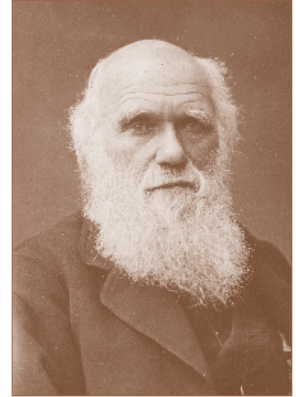
Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: If two ideas are completely different, like negative and positive charges, then it is not possible to harmonise them. If you try to combine negative and positive charges without the support of a neutral position, then a shock is inevitable. There is always a clash between materialistic and spiritual theories, so you will only find harmony when you try to discover what is actually negative and positive.

Mundane educational institutions teach Darwin's theory of evolution, although it has never been proven. Darwin's theory is not a complete explanation of existence because it does not actually explain where movement and consciousness come from. Its conclusions are speculations based upon observations of fossils. Because Darwin's theory is based only upon the observations of the senses, it cannot properly determine the true origin of consciousness—the senses are themselves instruments of consciousness.

Darwin's theory of evolution is completely different from conclusive transcendental knowledge. Transcendental knowledge appears directly in the heart through revelation in the association of sādhus and scriptures. It does not rely on the senses or mind. Only transcendental knowledge is completely authoritative and free from illusion. Only through transcendental knowledge is there the possibility of having complete and satisfying knowledge of all existence—of both matter and spirit.

Organised creation

The scriptures explain that there are 400,000 types of human species, *chatur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ* (Pp). We can agree that it is possible for some of these types of human species to come about according to the ideas given in Darwin's theory, but we can never agree that all humans came about in that way. The Vedic scriptures explain that creation begins with the appearance of



Charles Darwin

Brahmā, and Brahmā engineers the rest of the universal creation under the order of the Supreme Lord.

One name of Brahmā is Svayambhū, ‘Self-born’. Brahmā is the first created being within the universe, and there is only one Brahmā. There is only one self-born being because Brahmā himself creates all other beings. In the past, and certainly within the five thousand years of modern history, there has never lived another being like Brahmā.

The scientists have now developed their gene theory. Through that they have changed the forms of some species. But if all the various life forms in this world were created by accidental changes in genes, then another being like Brahmā might have been created. Because this has never happened we can understand that creation is not random and species do not appear simply by accident. In other words, consciousness is controlling creation.

Expressions of desire

The Vedas explain that creation happens by the will of the Lord. But they explain that creation does not actually come from the Lord Himself directly; it comes from and through His marginal potency, the *taṣasthā-śakti*. To understand this we can consider that everything we can recognise in this world—humans, trees, fish, animals, insects, rocks, clouds, and so on—is an expression of consciousness. All recognisable forms in this universe are manifestations of *jīva*-souls. The Vedic theory is that the spark of life, the *jīva*-soul, is spiritual and eternal. It is not a creation or formulation of matter. The spiritual *jīva*-souls enter anywhere and everywhere within the dull matter of the material energy and give rise to so many different forms and combinations of material energy, according to their desires. Even though they are covered by material energy in this way, the *jīva*-souls, as sparks of life, particles of spirit, are not themselves material. The *jīva*-souls are spiritual, and, as conscious beings with desires, they express themselves differently within the material

energy. They give rise to all the different material forms and movement found within the universe. The creation of variegation within the material universe is actually produced by the presence, consciousness, and desires of the jīva-souls.

Infinitesimal and infinite

The jīva-soul's existence is very, very tiny. You cannot see it with a microscope.

bālāgra-śata-bhagasya śatadhā kalpitasya cha
bhago jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa chānantyāya kalpate

(Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad: 5.9)

“The size of the jīva-soul's form is compared to the tip of a hair that has been divided 100 times and then divided 100 times again.”

It is miraculous that the sparking light of only one jīva-soul has the power to illuminate the entire universe. All atoms within the universe are forms animated by jīva-souls, and we can understand through the scientists' electron-proton theory how much power is present within every atom of creation, that is, within every jīva-soul. Everyone has heard about the power of the atomic bomb; they have heard about how much power is released when the form of only one atom is broken. In that way one can easily understand something about the greatness of the power of every jīva-soul.

To understand how the jīva-souls have such great power we can consider that even a part and parcel of the Infinite is infinite. Anywhere a jīvātmā is present, the Paramātmā [Supersoul] is also present. The Paramātmā lives in the heart of every jīvātmā. In the Upaniṣads it is said:

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariṣvasjāte

(Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad: 4.6)

“Two birds, the Paramātmā and the jīvātmā, are perched together like friends on the same branch of a peepul tree.”

The Paramātmā is always with the jīvātmā, and the jīvātmā receives its power and light from the Paramātmā. The jīvātmā's existence is very subtle, but it can wield infinite power because it is directly related with the Infinite reality, the Paramātmā. Whether a jīva-soul lives within an elephant body, a tiger's body, an insect body, or a human body, is not a factor. The jīvātmā can show its light and power anywhere and everywhere. Material space and size are insignificant.

Matter and consciousness

There is another way we can understand the relationship between matter and consciousness. If someone asks, "What came first, consciousness or fossils?", we answer that we cannot discuss fossils if we are not first conscious. Consciousness is original. Fossils come into existence through the presence, and by the influence, of consciousness. Consciousness always comes first, before matter.

This is difficult to understand, and I even heard Śrīla Guru Mahārāj debating this point with other Āchāryas. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj would never accept fossils to be original. He would always say that behind fossils is consciousness; otherwise, it would not be possible for them to exist. The knower must exist before the known object. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's conclusion was, "Everything is existing within consciousness, and everything is built by consciousness. Nothing is jaḍa [matter]."

What is matter? Matter is our illusion. Matter is our misconception. One property of consciousness is that it is always moving, it is always active and dynamic. All movement in the universe is produced by the influence of consciousness upon matter. A stone may appear to you to be solid matter, but actually there is movement, and therefore consciousness, within stone. Within one day we cannot understand that it is moving, but after a thousand years or ten thousand years we will see that a stone has changed its form. In this way we can



understand that at all times it is moving. How is it that stone is able to constantly move if there is not conscious existence within it? Our assertion is that everything we perceive is only a manifestation of the movement of consciousness, and that everything exists within consciousness.

The play of spiritual existence

Matter and consciousness are never the same thing. They both exist here in this world and we must understand the difference between them. Movement and evolution are properties of consciousness. Dull matter is only a shadow form. It does not move or evolve on its own; it takes shape according to the influence of consciousness upon it. Evolution can only take place on the conscious level. The movement and evolution of consciousness is positive. Whatever happens within the shadow forms of matter is *māyā* and is negative. It is merely a passing show. The word for *universe* in Sanskrit is *jagat*, which means *gachchhati iti jagat*: that which is always moving. This means that the universe is always moving due to the presence of the *jīva*-souls within it. No form within the universe is permanent. Everything is always changing, and nothing remains in any particular form eternally.

Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura has systematically explained in his book *Śrī Chaitanya-śikṣāmṛta* how the *jīva*-souls animate material nature. He explains that consciousness, which is called *chetanā* in the scriptures, animates all forms within the universe in five primary categories: *āchchhādita-chetanā* [covered consciousness], *saṅkuchita-chetanā* [suppressed consciousness], *mukulita-chetanā* [budding consciousness], *vikaśita-chetanā* [blooming consciousness], and *pūrṇa-vikaśita-chetanā* [fully blossomed consciousness]. I printed one book called *Paramārthadharmā-nirṇaya* to broadcast this knowledge. If you read it you will clearly understand how the *jīva*-souls are situated within the material energy.



The Centenary Memorial Building, the museum and guesthouse built at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh Nabadwīp in honour of the 100th anniversary of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja's appearance day.

Stone and plant consciousness

There is consciousness within all forms found in the universe. Āchchhādita-chetanā means covered consciousness. All the beauty of this world made of 'immovable' objects, like rocks, stones, and metals like gold, are made of āchchhādita-chetanā.

When I was purchasing materials for a building in Nabadwīp I was surprised to find that there were two kinds of stone for sale: dead stone and living stone. The living stone was a little more expensive than the dead stone. I was surprised that the quarrymen recognised a difference between dead stone and living stone. That sort of knowledge is found in the Vedas, but how did these villagers come to understand it? They had never studied the scriptures or seen any of the mountains moving, but that knowledge came to them simply from working with the stone.

I asked them to show me how to recognise the difference between the two forms of stone. In that way I learned something from them. Through this example we can understand that consciousness is passing through stone forms of life.

All varieties of plant life are also considered āchchhādita-chetanā. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose scientifically proved the theory that plants and trees have consciousness. This is true for all plant life. I personally saw a plant in Fiji that would noticeably contract when you touched it and return to its position when you moved your hand away. Consciousness must be present within plants; otherwise, this would be impossible. In this way the jīva-souls, the sparks of life, particles of spirit, exist within even the grossest material forms.

Animal consciousness

Saṅkuchita-chetanā means consciousness showing a small fraction of its capacity and activity; consciousness minutely manifesting its natural thinking, feeling, and willing. Saṅkuchita-chetanā refers to insects, aquatics, animals, and similar creatures.

All visibly moving forms, apart from humans, are considered saṅkuchita-chetanā.

jalajā nava-lakṣāṇi sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśati
kṛmayo rudra-saṅkhyakāḥ pakṣiṇām daśa-lakṣaṇam
triṁśal-lakṣāṇi paśavaḥ chatur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ

(Padma-purāṇa)

In the scriptures we hear that there are 8,400,000 different species in this world: 900,000 kinds of aquatics, 2,000,000 kinds of plants, 1,100,000 kinds of insects and reptiles, 1,000,000 kinds of birds, 3,000,000 kinds of four-legged beasts, and 400,000 kinds of humans. All these life forms, except the plants and humans, are considered saṅkuchita-chetanā.

I have seen some very nice examples of animals showing their conscious nature. Once in a film about jungle lions I saw a lioness chase a group of deer. Within the group of deer were a mother and her baby. When the group of deer saw the lioness coming towards them, all the deer began to run away, but the mother deer could not run very fast because she was trying to bring her baby with her. The rest of the deer ran away from the lioness to safety, but the mother and her baby could not. When the lioness caught up to the mother deer and was about to jump and catch the mother deer, she suddenly stopped. I saw the eyes of the lioness then, and the feeling came to me that she was thinking, "Oh, I am foolish. I did not know this deer had a baby with her." That lioness was hungry, but she did not kill that mother deer. After she saw the mother deer's baby she let them go and began to search for food elsewhere. When I saw this, I felt, "Yes, even jungle animals have some consciousness and religion."

Human life

Mukulita-chetanā means budding consciousness, a sprout of consciousness which will soon blossom into its full form. This means human life. In human life, consciousness actively begins



Jagadish Chandra Bose

to expand. In human life, the jīva-souls have some control over their thinking, feeling, and willing. They can make conscious choices. Dogs, tigers, and other species have brains but no species' brain has as much power as the human brain. The human form is more capable than all other forms; it has the facilities of self-consciousness, intelligence, and discrimination. In human life the jīva-souls can consider what is good and what is bad, and then apply what they decide. Jīva-souls in the human form can consciously search for and discover what is spiritually beneficial for themselves.

But the natures and forms of humans are so variegated. *Chatur-lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ*: in the scriptures 400,000 species of humans are differentiated! This means there is great diversity within human life. Diversity means differences in mentality. Within human life there are many stages of realisation about the proper use of intelligence and consciousness. These are described by Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura as mukulita-chetanā [budding consciousness], vikaśita-chetanā [blooming consciousness], and pūrṇa-vikaśita-chetanā [fully blossomed consciousness].

The stage of mukulita-chetanā refers to humans who live as little more than animals (saṅkuchita-chetanā), humans who do not utilise their conscious nature properly for spiritual progress. Atheists, jungle-men, and persons from very low grade cultures with only hazy religious sentiments are described as mukulita-chetanā.

Religious life

āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunam cha
sāmānyam etat paśubhir narāṇām
dharmo hi teṣām adhiko viśeṣo
dharmaṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ

(*Hitopadeśa*)

We must understand the difference between animal life and human life. Human life can be almost the same as animal life.



Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura

Humans may live in an organised way in cities and buildings, and animals may live in the jungle, but both humans and animals engage in eating, sleeping, fearing, and enjoying (*āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunam cha*). These are the natural activities of life for all species. So what is special about human life? What makes human life more than animal life? It is not actually brain power or intellectual capacity but dharma, religion. In human life jīva-souls can connect with their soul's natural religious mood and culture. If humans don't use their brain and consciousness to connect with their transcendental existence as jīva-souls through dharma, then there is no difference between their human life and the life of a beast.

Dharma has been explained in a very nice way by Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākura. He explained that if we search everywhere throughout all the planes of existence in the universe, *ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ* (Bg: 8.16), we will find that everywhere there is some form of religion, some form of dharma. He used the example of water. What is the religion of water? Water's nature, or religion, is liquidity. Fire's religion is producing heat and light. A stone's religion is to be hard. In this way he gave many examples. Every object and being within the universe functions according to its dharma because of the presence of consciousness, the presence of a jīva-soul, within it. The jīva-souls always exhibit their dharma, nature, but they do so through their forms of embodiment. The jīva-souls are sometimes covered by an animal form, sometimes by an insect form, and sometimes by a human form. All these forms are coverings, part of the illusory environment of māyā, which make the jīva-souls forget their spiritual dharma, their true nature as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Blossoming consciousness

Dharma means religion, but *dharma* literally means 'to hold'. When jīva-souls have a human form and their thinking, feeling, and willing is manifest clearly to them, they must practise dharma consciously by holding their mind and mentality in

a good position. This is the vital point of human life. If anyone consciously leads a religious life, actively practising the dharma of the soul, they will always be benefitted, and their practice of religious life will help establish them in their natural position, in their true spiritual dharma.

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā
yayātmā suprasīdati
(SB: 1.2.6)

“Humanity’s supreme dharma is unconditional and unalloyed (self-manifest and irresistible) devotion to the transcendental Lord, which completely satisfies the soul.”

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.2.6)

The supreme form of all dharma is Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, and the practice of other dharmas gradually develops into Kṛṣṇa-bhakti. The practice of dharma, which is what makes human life more than animal life, ultimately establishes the jīva-souls in their natural position as servitors of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the stage of mukulita-chetanā the jīva-soul’s consciousness can open itself to revelation from the transcendental plane. When the consciousness of any jīva-soul is influenced by higher consciousness, then it gets sensible and clean knowledge. When revealed knowledge appears within the hearts of the jīva-souls, then they embrace their natural theistic life and ideal. This is when the jīva-souls begin to enter into their natural position and behave according to their true nature. This stage is called vikaśita-chetanā, blossoming consciousness.

Revelation enters the hearts of the jīva-souls by the grace of the Lord and the grace of an expert devotee of the Lord. Kṛṣṇa consciousness exists within all jīva-souls but it is suppressed by the illusory environment. By the grace of a pure sādhu, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which already exists inside the jīva-souls, is revealed to them. Through the practice of religious thought and culture (dharma) in the association of pure devotees, the jīva-souls’ consciousness develops day by day more and more. In this way the Kṛṣṇa consciousness that is already within them marches into the open doors of their hearts from without, and through that the jīva-souls feel the joy of their own pure existence.



Consciousness in full bloom

If, with consciousness, anyone will try to understand the Lord, then the Lord will reveal Himself to that soul, and then the soul won't have any further question about the Lord's existence. Until then one can try to believe and practise the soul's dharma in the association of pure devotees. The pure devotee is in the

highest stage of conscious evolution, pūrṇa-vikaśita-chetanā [fully blossomed consciousness]. A jīva-soul in that stage is described as a siddha-mahāpuruṣ, someone who has genuine and direct experience of the Lord, someone whose pure feelings are enriched with full consciousness of the Lord's Name, Form, Fame, and Pastimes. Everything transcendental and mundane is seen and known by a siddha-mahāpuruṣ.

The play of the Sweet Absolute

In this way the jīva-souls animate the material energy and exist at different stages of spiritual evolution. One name of the transcendental world is the *ātma-jagat*. Through this name we can understand that the jīva-souls do not come from the material world: they are actually members of the eternal world and have an eternal form. *Jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān Tad-vimuktānś cha bhāvāt*. When the jīva-souls misuse their freedom, they enter the material nature and suffer in the bondage of karma. When they are re-established in their natural consciousness of eternal service to Kṛṣṇa, then they transcend Māyā's illusions and feel supramundane joy. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj described this play of the Sweet Absolute with the jīva-souls in his book *Subjective Evolution of Consciousness*.

The Waves of Birth and Death

The mundane world is a plane of exploitation. No one can live there without exploiting others. It has been described in the scriptures as bhogamaya bhūmikā.

ahastāni sahasānām apadāni chatuṣ-padām
phalgūni tatra mahatām jīvo jīvasya jīvanam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.13.47)

“Those who have hands live on those who have no hands. Those who have four legs live on those who have no legs. The big live on the small. No living being can maintain its body without exploitation because every living being’s food is another living being.”

In the mundane world everyone is exploiting everyone. No one’s life can continue without exploitation. The jīva-souls are by nature active; they must always do something, and in this world the jīva-souls cannot do anything without exploiting others. If someone eats something, he eats someone else’s energy. If someone builds a house, or a stadium, or anything, he has to take the material to build that from somewhere. Even if

someone wants to fill in a hole, he must dig up earth from elsewhere to do that. Every jīva-soul takes the energy it needs to act and maintain its body from other living beings in the form of the products produced by the sky, air, fire, water, and earth. In this way the embodied jīva-souls are forced to exploit each other to fulfil their needs and desires in this mundane world. This is always the situation in the mundane environment: exploiting to exist.

Action and reaction

We have seen that sometimes scientists who study the mundane world come to understand something about scriptural thought. For example, I have heard from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj about Isaac Newton and his third law of motion: “To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. Newton’s third law is a perfect explanation of karma. The theory of karma is very clearly explained in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*. What Newton recently ‘discovered’, the law of karma, was actually explained in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* five thousand years earlier:

te taṁ bhuktvā svarga-lokaṁ viśālaṁ
kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti
evaṁ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante

(*Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*: 9.21)

“Within the mundane universe pious jīva-souls enjoy in the heavenly planets, and impious jīva-souls suffer in hellish planets after leaving their earthly bodies. When the jīva-souls’ positive or negative karmic reactions are finished, they are born again in the earthly plane.”

Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā explains in this way how creation and the wheel of karma revolve within the material environment.

The mundane universe is a passing show (*gachchhati iti jagat*). The jīva-souls are constantly revolving up and down through the different species and planes of life in this universe according

to their karma. The jīva-souls try in many ways to find satisfaction, but none of their attempts are successful.

kabhu svarge uṭhāya, kabhu narake ḍubāya
daṇḍya-jane rājā yena nadīte chubāya

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 20.118)

“In material life, the jīva-souls are sometimes raised to heaven or material prosperity, and sometimes drowned in a hellish situation by their karma. This experience of the jīva-soul is similar to a king’s punishment of a criminal. When a king wants to punish a criminal, he orders his servitor, ‘Take this criminal, drown him until he is nearly dead, raise him up, give him one breath, and then force him under water again.’”

The jīva-soul’s existence and passing enjoyment in this world is comparable to being forced above and below water again and again. The equal and opposite reactions of the jīva-souls’ exploitative actions, done even for survival, force them into this condition.

Inescapable karma

We can also recognise Newton’s third law in another verse of Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā:

mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇa-sukha-duḥkha-dāḥ
āgamāpāyino ’nityās tāms titikṣasva bhārata

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā 2.14)

“Heat, cold, happiness, sadness, and all the other phases of mundane life come and go. They are a passing show. Whenever happiness comes, sadness follows it, and whenever sadness comes, happiness follows it. This is the nature of the material environment.”

The jīva-souls must tolerate these changes. Happiness and sadness are actually the reactions to the jīva-souls’ own activities. All of the jīva-souls’ experiences and actions register within the cyclic system of karma, and no jīva-soul can avoid the reactions produced by karma.



Sir Isaac Newton

‘Miraculous news’

In the *Mahābhārata*, Dharmarāj asked Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj, “What is the news in this world?” Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj replied:

māsarttu-darvī pariḡhaṭṇena
sūryāgninā rātri-divendhanena
asmin mahā-moha maye kaṭāhe
bhūtāni kālaḡ pachatīti vārtā

(*Mahābhārata: Vana-parva, 313.118*)

“The news of this world is that the conditioned jīva-souls are being cooked by Mahākāl [Universal Time] in the pot of worldly illusion, which is heated by the fire of the sun and burns on the firewood of the days and nights. The pot is stirred by the ladles of the months and seasons, and within the pot the jīva-souls are suffering so much, covered with the masala [flavouring] of kāma [lust], krodha [anger], lobha [greed], mada [pride], moha [illusion], mātsarya [envy], and the desires for kanak [wealth], kāmīnī [women], and pratiṣṭhā [fame]. This is the only news in this world.”

Dharmarāj then asked Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj, “What is miraculous in this world?” Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj replied:

ahany ahani bhūtāni gachchhanti yama-mandiram
śeṣāḡ sthāvaram ichchhanti kim āścharyam ataḡ param

(*Mahābhārata: Vana-parva, 313.116*)

“Day by day the embodied souls are suffering so much in their worldly lives and finally departing for the house of death. Day by day before their eyes death takes away their father, mother, sons, daughters, neighbours, and so on. But the jīva-souls who stay behind think, ‘I will not go. I will never die. I will stay here and enjoy everything. So many others have gone, but I won’t. I will stay here and enjoy. Everyone else has died, but death will never come for me. I will stay here forever.’”

This is the foolishness of the conditioned souls, and Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj described it as the greatest wonder in the

world. The conditioned souls think they will live this particular life eternally. It is simply not true. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj used to quote this English verse:

*The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.*

(Thomas Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard')

Here the position of everything in this world is very simply explained: according to everyone's culture, qualities, karma, and so on, their position within material life goes up, then down, up again, down again, and finally to the grave. The conditioned souls, however, are not able to properly understand this. When any soul does realise their position in this world, they feel:

**dina yāminyau sāyam prataḥ
śīsira vasantau punar āyātaḥ
kālaḥ krīḍati gachchhaty āyus
tad api na muñchaty āśā-vāyuh***

(Moha-mudgara-stotram: 12)

Again and again the sun rises, the sun sets, and days pass by, but the conditioned souls never really consider it. The conditioned souls always absorb themselves in eating, sleeping, fearing, and enjoying (*āhāra-nidrā-bhaya-maithunam cha*). They only think about what they will have for dinner this evening, what they will have for breakfast tomorrow, and so on. While they are thus absorbed in material life, the days continue to pass, and beyond their control Time flows on.

The wheel of karma

Death and birth are very important questions for conditioned souls. The jīva-souls want to enjoy their existing lives forever. They make houses and families for this purpose. But at any time a car accident can happen and take anyone away from

*Day and night, dusk and dawn,
winter and springtime come and
go again and again. Time plays
on, and life passes away, but the
disease of desire never leaves me.
(Everything in this world comes
and goes in the course of time
except the false hope of material
happiness.)*

*Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj wrote two poetic Bengali translations of this verse by Śaṅkar Āchārya:

**divasa-rajani sandhya-sakala
ṣaḍ-ṛta-sane-khele mahākāla
nāṣe paramāyu; tabu āśā-vāyu
nā chhāḍe āmāya, e viṣama-dāya!**

*"Time plays with the days,
nights, dusks, dawns, and six
seasons, and takes away
my life. Yet the disease of
desire never releases me. This
is my dire condition!"*

divasa-yāminī-sandhyā-prabhāta
vasanta-śarat kare yātāyāta
kāla sethā khele nāṣe paramāyu
tabu nāhi chhāḍe duṣṭa āśā-vāyu

“Day and night, dusk and
dawn, and winter and spring
come and go. Time plays
amongst them and takes away
my life. Yet the disease of
wicked desire never releases me.”

their house and family. The jīva-soul cannot actually control anything. The reactions to one’s previous actions (karma-phal), can always forcibly oust one from any position in this world. Karmic reactions bring birth, death, old age, disease, happiness, and sadness to the jīva-souls within this material world. The jīva-souls never know when death will come to them and they will have to leave everything to take another birth.

According to their karma, jīva-souls may receive a human birth again or may revolve through the 8,400,000 varieties of species in this world. No one can stay in their present body forever. Everyone must change bodies according to the laws of karma. No one knows where their karma will take them, where they will stay, what they will do, or what their future will be. They only know that the karma-chakra, the wheel of karma, must push them forward. “To every action there is *always* an equal and opposite reaction.” Within the material environment the karma-chakra is always cycling, and the reactions to everyone’s previous actions are happening automatically.

Leaving the body

The waves of birth and death are always flowing within this environment, carrying away the jīva-souls. Some people think that dying in a plane crash is very terrible, but actually it is not an unhappy way to die. Before a plane crashes, when it is falling towards the earth, people lose their senses. When they die they do not feel what happened. They only later realise, “I am out of my body”, and wonder, “Where is my body? Where is my leg?” When their awareness returns to them after they die, they immediately recognise, “I am detached from my body”. Then they begin to search for their body. When they see one body part over here and one body part over there, they think, “How could I ever live in that body again? It is not possible.”

After jīva-souls depart from a body, they often try to enter back into it. But when a jīva-soul leaves a body there is no power for the body to run, and because of that the heart does

not beat and the body stops functioning. When this happens, the body begins to degrade, and after it has degraded it cannot work again properly. In this way it becomes impossible for jīva-souls to re-enter their previous bodies. After trying to re-enter his former body and being unsuccessful, a departed jīva-soul becomes very sad and finally begins following his body around. Even though he can't enter back into his body, he cannot forget his body. Until his body is cremated a departed jīva-soul follows his body, and again and again tries to enter into his body. But once a jīva-soul has left his body, and the body degrades, the jīva-soul cannot enter into his body again. It is like *Paradise Lost*.

Paradise Lost is an epic by John Milton in which the fate of the souls who turn away from God is examined. There death, sorrow, and emptiness are understood to be the consequences of accepting Satan's proposal, "Better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven."

Disembodied life

When a jīva-soul follows his body to its cremation ground or grave, he thinks, "What are my relatives doing? Why are they burning my body? They should keep my body for some more time so I can try again to enter back into it."

When his body is finally burned or buried, the jīva-soul feels very helpless. He wonders, "Where should I go now?" After his body is cremated the jīva-soul visits his house, his old bedroom, and the homes of his relatives. He sees his son or mother or father crying, and he also feels very sad. He wants to show himself to his relatives, but he cannot. He tries to talk to his relatives, but they cannot hear him talking. Frustrated, he may go back to the cremation ground where his body was. Left without shelter the jīva-soul wanders around and around restlessly. He may stay at the cremation house thinking of his body, and other souls who were also cremated the same day may be there as well. He will see those souls and talk with them. They may be the souls of rickshaw wallahs, or kings, or anything else. In life a rickshaw wallah cannot speak with a king, but when they have left their bodies, they may live together in a tree near their cremation ground.

In this way the departed soul lives after his body is cremated, and he feels very hungry and thirsty, although he is unable to eat or drink. The departed soul still has his subtle body, his mental body, which contains all his feelings and desires. So he lives in a very helpless condition: full of desires with no way to satisfy them.

Vedic rites for the departed

It is a Vedic rule that three days after a jīva-soul departs his relatives on his daughter's side offer him some water and milk. This is done through mantram after his body's cremation.

sasa naṣṭo nirālabho vāyu-bhūto nirāśrayam
idaṁ kṣīra idaṁ nīra śraddhayā diya te 'pi mām

This mantram means, "You are living now in this cremation field. You have no place to rest and your soul has no formation (*nirālabho*). Your form is now like a *vāyubhūta*, an air form like a ghost, and you have no shelter (*nirāśrayam*). I am your daughter and I am offering you this water and milk. Through this mantram you will receive it and you will feel peaceful."

Mentally the departed jīva-soul then drinks that water and milk. Later his sons offer piṇḍa, traditional sacrificial articles. His sons will become the proprietors of his land, so they must do something good for their father. Ten days after his departure they shave their heads, take a bath in the Ganges or a body of water, put on new cloth, and make an offering to their father or whichever relative of theirs has departed. The departed soul accepts all the offerings through mantram. Through mantram there is communication on the mental plane. The departed soul then feels peaceful, "I have no body or I have no existence among my relatives, but they are still remembering me and they are still doing something good for me. I am not so helpless. Help is coming to me from my relatives." In this way the departed soul feels some mental peace.

After offering piṇḍa the departed soul's relatives perform a śrāddha ceremony. In remembrance of his necessities—maybe

a pair of shoes, an umbrella, some cloth, or some food—they make an offering in his name to a group of brāhmaṇs. There are sixteen items used in this offering. When the departed soul's relatives supply brāhmaṇs in the ceremony with these necessities, the departed soul receives a year's supply of his necessities mentally.

In this way, on the mental level, the departed soul's subtle body receives ten or twelve years of food when a group of ten or twelve brāhmaṇs is fed. In his name his relatives feed a group of brāhmaṇs, and all the property they offer is enjoyed by him mentally. Each of his relatives bears witness, "This śrāddha ceremony is the Vedic practice for departed jīva-souls, and I am offering these articles for the benefit of my father", or mother, or other relative, according to their relationship. Then the śrāddha ceremony is finished. The brāhmaṇs from the ceremony take responsibility for the departed soul's spiritual advancement and bring some light to him. Within a few days he feels the darkness of his situation leave, and he feels detachment in his mind.

The ghost plane

This is the traditional Vedic process. If a departed soul is a Vaiṣṇava, then all of this is not necessary. The best thing that can be done for him is to offer some preparations to the Lord in His Deity form and then serve the Vaiṣṇavas with that prasādam. Serving the Vaiṣṇavas in the name of the departed soul is the best way to help him, and no problems will come to that Vaiṣṇava if a traditional śrāddha ceremony is not held.

Anyhow, after his death a departed soul wants to speak with his relatives, but he cannot. At that time his experience is very bitter. Some days after the ceremony for his passing the grief of his relatives begins to fade and the departed soul thinks, "What is this? Now they are forgetting me. I need to move on and choose my future path. Where shall I go?"

When a jīva-soul is not embodied he can move very quickly over the earth. The departed soul begins to search for his

previous connections who still may be on the mental plane. He searches for his forefathers or persons from his past life that have already departed. He searches for his former associates and maybe he finds his grandfather seated under a tree meditating in the Himalayas. Even if he finds some of his previous connections, none of them say to him, “Oh, there you are! Come here! Come here!” No one responds to him like that. The other departed jīva-souls he meets in the mental plane look at him innocently. They advise him, “It is natural, your feelings. Our feelings were the same as yours when we first left our previous bodies. Now you should try to understand our sober mood and try to proceed towards a higher destiny.”

Question: Mahārāj, there is an Indian lady here who lost her son a few months ago. She is still grieving very much as though it happened yesterday. Will the soul of her son suffer because of this?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: That soul may or may not suffer. That soul knows his mother is foolishly crying for him. He knows he cannot go back to her and she cannot see him. Sometimes in that situation a departed soul may avoid his mother. But if he has much affection for her, he may continue to live near her. Also, sometimes a departed soul may take on a shadow form through great concentration with his subtle body. That means he may become a bhūt [ghost]. Through concentration a soul may take the form of a ghost because of his attachment for his previous worldly life and relatives, but he cannot exist in that form for a long time.

Mental experience

Generally a departed soul will try to see how he can go towards a higher standard of life. According to his previous karma he gets an opportunity to stay in some place he desires, and he also gets the opportunity to do what he desires. This all happens on the mental level. On the mental level the vision of departed



souls is clearer than the vision of humans. Actually, it is the opposite of human vision. Departed souls can see things very far away from them but they cannot see things near to them. If a departed soul thinks of the ocean, the ocean will come to him on the mental level. If a departed soul thinks of a garden, a garden will come before him. Whatever he thinks of will come before him according to his karma (previous experience).

When things come before him, he thinks, "What shall I do with this?" If his previous karma is good and he also had some association with sādhus, he will use his thoughts to try to satisfy the Lord. If someone has given him good association and advised him, "O boy, while you are here (in this disembodied mental state) try to meditate", then he will think, "I am happy when I think of a flower garden so I will meditate on that to satisfy the Lord." Then he will think of a flower garden, the flower garden will come into his mind, and if he has a proper cultured mood, he will offer flowers from that garden to a Deity mentally. In this way he can offer the fruits of his karma, the qualities of his previous experience, to the Lord according to his cultured mood, and when he will offer that to the Lord he will receive double the satisfaction he would by enjoying it himself. In this way a departed soul is tested on the mental plane and must try to do something positive there.

The waves of birth and death

As he is living on the mental plane a departed soul's previous karma also pushes him forward. On the mental plane there are always waves moving, the waves of janma and mṛtyu, birth and death. These waves are always flowing throughout the mental plane. Generally the souls existing in the mental plane avoid the waves of birth and death. When those waves come to them they try to move out of the way. They do not want to be carried away by those waves to take birth again. The waves of birth and death come like thunder. When departed souls see the waves of birth and death, they think, "These waves

will knock me senseless.” When souls on the mental plane see the thunderous wave of birth coming towards them they feel afraid. They know that that thunderous wave will knock them senseless and take them to an unknown destination. They avoid that wave and live in the mental plane according to their karma.

Flying to heaven and hell

Mostly, departed souls try to move towards a higher standard of thinking while they are living in the mental plane. If they have a tendency to enjoy and some pious karma (punya), then they will feel some sort of air come and push them up to Svargaloka (heaven). In heaven there are many enjoyable things and departed souls enjoy them there according to their karma. The reactions to the actions they did in their previous lives come to them and they enjoy the heavenly environment.

If a departed soul has some bad karma, he is taken to an unpleasant environment. There he feels fearful and hungry. He feels burning sensations. He feels as though he is in the middle of a thunderstorm. He feels many varieties of miseries. In India you will see images of narak [hell]: people being killed, burned, scalped, eaten by vultures, and so on. All these reactions happen to a departed soul in his subtle body on the mental level in hell, and he cries so much as he suffers. According to a soul's karma he will either suffer in Narak or enjoy in Svargaloka.



Rebirth

When a departed soul's karma is finished he must again take birth. This is the law. He will not be able to avoid it. It will happen suddenly as though in the meantime. The waves of janma and mrtyu, birth and death, will come and take him forcibly to his birth. He will be knocked senseless and forced down to the ground of the earth. Unconsciously he will take on the form of a tree or plant and then a fruit. From the fruit he will move

into the body of a human, animal, or insect according to the reactions of his karma. If his next body will be a human body, he will take the form of some rice or some food, and in this way move into the body of his future father. From his father's body he will move into the womb of his mother.

Sometimes when a soul is in the womb of his mother, his consciousness will suddenly come back to him. He will see his own form as an ātmā [soul], and he will see that the Paramātmā [Supreme Soul] is living with him. Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur has described this experience within the womb:

**jananī-jāṭhare, chhilāma yakhana,
viṣama bandhana-pāśe
eka-bāra prabhu! dekhā diyā more,
vañchile e dīna dāse**

(Śaraṇāgati: 1.2)

*While I was bound in the terrible
confines of my mother's womb,
You once revealed Yourself to me,
O Lord! Yet since then You have
deprived this poor servant.*

Not everyone receives this consciousness in the womb, but Śrīla Bhakti Vinod Ṭhākur has described it in one of his songs. When the jīva-soul is living in the womb of his mother he has some general consciousness and feelings. When the jīva-soul's body and senses form within the womb, his awareness begins to come back to him, though it is not so strong, after being knocked senseless by the waves of birth and death. But when he is born and comes out from his mother's womb, he forgets everything. His next life begins from that moment.

Sometimes some persons can see mental pictures of their previous lives even after they have taken on a new body. Sometimes when a child is sleeping or looks into the sky, his vision goes beyond this planet, and he sees into another plane of experience. This has been researched in the past.

Picking up where you left off

After birth the jīva-soul loses all memory of his previous experience, and his karma provides him with opportunities for his future.

pūrvā janmārjitā vidyā pūrvā janmārjitaṁ dhanam
pūrvā janmārjitaṁ karma agre dhāvati dhāvati

If he performed some pious activities, or gathered some knowledge or wealth, in his previous life, that follows him into his future life. He cannot see how this happens but it happens. For example, I remember seeing a young girl who played harmonium like an expert the first time she touched a harmonium. She could immediately play and sing very difficult tunes after hearing them only once or twice. She could easily play music that many adults could not play. This quality came to her through her previous karma. According to one's karma one may have particular qualities that bring them quickly to an advanced stage of practice.

In this way the next birth of a soul begins. The atmosphere of his birth may sometimes help him, and may sometimes go against him, according to his karma. Finally that birth passes and his body goes to the grave again. In this way the waves of janma and mṛtyu, birth and death, always flow throughout this mundane world, and the jīva-souls revolve through the passing show of material existence.

The Waves of Kāma and Prema

As humans we all know we have a human body. There is no doubt that we've taken human birth. But how has such fortune come to us? Somehow we came to our mother's womb, and from our mother's womb to where we are now. But we don't really know how we came into our mother's womb and where we were before that. Most persons in this world are not using their time to try to understand this and discover how they can make the best use of their life. The sādhus and scriptures come to give people proper consciousness about this.

The most important question of life

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* it is described that when Mahārāj Parīkṣit was cursed to die within seven days, he asked all the great ṛṣis and munis of his time, "How can I make the best possible use of this short time?"

Many ṛṣis and munis were present in a grand assembly and they gave their opinions according to their ability. But it was as though so many different bottles of medicine were brought to a sick man and he could not decide which one to take. All the



ṛṣis and munis were very scholarly and qualified, but Mahārāj Parīkṣit felt confused after hearing all of their different opinions. He said, “I cannot understand what to do. All of you together should decide what is best for me.”

At that time Śukadev Goswāmī came into the assembly, and all the ṛṣis and munis gave full honour to him. They told Mahārāj Parīkṣit, “This is the most qualified person to answer your question.”

Śukadev Goswāmī sat upon a throne in front of everyone. Mahārāj Parīkṣit worshipped him, and then asked, “How can I derive the greatest benefit from life within the short period of time I have left to live?”

When Śukadev Goswāmī heard Parīkṣit Mahārāj’s question he said, “Oh! You are so fortunate! You have asked the supreme question. This is the only question there is actually.”

śrotavyādīni rājendra nṛṇāṃ santi sahasraśaḥ
apaśyatām ātma-tattvaṃ gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinām

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 2.1.2)

“Other persons ask so many questions, ‘How do we cook this? How do we clean that? How do we perform fire sacrifice? How do we offer worship?’ When persons do not know the nature of the perfect question, then they ask so many questions that are unnecessary.” The only real question is, “How can we be supremely benefitted during our short lifetime?”

Mahārāj Parīkṣit knew he had only seven days to live when he questioned Śukadev Goswāmī. Unlike Mahārāj Parīkṣit, we are not sure how long our lifetime will last. But if we receive some proper consciousness and realise that we may die at any moment, then we will immediately try to discover what is supremely beneficial for our lives and try to proceed in that way. Without proper consciousness we will consider that we have so many mundane duties that are all ‘very important’.

Rare human birth

labdhvā su-durlabham idaṃ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṃ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 11.9.29)

We have crossed over thousands of births to attain this human birth, which is *sudurlabha*, very rare and difficult to attain. It is only after crossing so many crises and critical positions that this rare human life is now in our hand. It requires so much pious activity to attain a human birth, and somehow we have reached it. We must not forget that it is very rare to attain, and can also be lost very easily.

Within the human form we can receive proper consciousness about the perfection of our life, the perfection of our existence as jīva-souls. In human life we can realise our spiritual potential,

that is, that our only actual duty is to satisfy our Lord, Kṛṣṇa. *Jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—Kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa'*: as jīva-souls we are all eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa.

**kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha**

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta: Madhya-līlā, 20.117)

“Forgetting Kṛṣṇa we have abandoned His service, come to this material world, and experienced so many forms of suffering amidst the waves of birth and death.”

Now in our fortunate life as humans we have the opportunity to get liberation from our heavily conditioned position and find the proper help and strength we need to engage in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

Full dedication without hesitation

There is really only one question in our lives: “How may we be supremely benefitted?” And there is only one answer: “Satisfy Kṛṣṇa and you will get the supreme benefit of life.”

Here in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* it is expressed, “*Tūrṇām! Immediately* try to get that result! If you have any sobriety about your position do not wait one second. It is not necessary to wait one second to get that result; immediately start, and until death try for the supreme benefit of your life.” *Niḥśreyasāya* means the super-benefit of your spiritual life and the super-benefit of your mundane life. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will give you everything.

Viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt: eating, sleeping, fearing, and enjoying are possible in every birth in every species. We will experience that sort of enjoyment in every birth. Only in human birth do we have the opportunity to get the supreme benefit of our lives—Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**yāvat āchhaye prāṇa, dehe āchhe śakti
tāvat karaha kṛṣṇa-pāda-padme bhakti**

(Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavat: Madhya-khaṇḍa, 1.342)

“So long as there is life and strength in your body, try to dedicate yourself to the service of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”

Sleeping in illusion

The scriptures explain that our position as conditioned souls in the illusory environment is like that of a man dreaming. Because we are bewildered by Māyā and asleep to who we are and what is in our own best interest, we do not engage ourselves in Kṛṣṇa’s service and foolishly suffer through so many forms of material difficulty. The scriptures compare the suffering of the conditioned soul to a man dreaming that a tiger is coming to attack him. Within his dream the sleeping man feels very fearful and suffers great pain. Within his dream he cries out, “Tiger! Tiger! Ah! Save me! Save me!” If any of his friends are awake nearby, what will they do? If they are intelligent they will see that their friend is only dreaming and try to wake him up. They won’t search for a stick to scare away the tiger or anything like that. They will only try to wake him up, “Wake up! Wake up! There is no tiger attacking you. You are simply dreaming in your bed.” When the sleeping person awakens he will see, “Oh. There is no tiger attacking me actually. I was only dreaming.”

Awakening to our real interest

The conditioned jīva-soul’s position is like the dreaming man. All the conditioned souls are sleeping in their bodies under the influence of Māyā’s illusory environment. The jīva-souls’ suffering in this world, which is really only the suffering of their minds and bodies, is like the suffering felt by a sleeping person within a dream. To leave behind that suffering it is only necessary to wake up. If the conditioned jīva-souls can wake up to their real identity as souls they will automatically understand everything and see that all of their suffering is only part of Māyā’s illusion.

tasmād idam jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpaṁ
svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇaṁ puru-duḥkha-duḥkham

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 10.14.22)

The jīva-souls will see that the play of the material universe is simply a passing show put on by Māyā in which their consciousness is covered by illusion and they suffer so many varieties of sorrow as though within a dream. Under the influences of Māyā and karma the jīva-souls pass through so many challenges.

yayā sammohito jīva ātmānaṁ tri-guṇātmakam
paro 'pi manute 'narthaṁ tat-kṛtaṁ chābhipadyate

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: 1.7.5)

“When the jīva-souls are deluded by Māyā they foolishly believe they are products of material nature, even though their very nature is superior to matter. Bound by identification with matter they try to exploit the illusory energy and then suffer the reactions to their misconceived actions.”

Māyā's illusory environment

Question: Is there anything wrong with the world today?

Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj: Misconception. Misconception about our real identity and function is the only problem within this world. Misconception means māyā. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj explained that *māyā* means 'mā'-'yā'. *Mā* means 'not' and *yā* means 'this', so 'what is not truth' is māyā. When the conditioned souls forget their Lord, they are polluted by mahāmāyā, the illusory environment, and suffer so much. Māyā Devī's job is to create chaos and confusion in the lives of the jīva-souls so that they become bewildered and cannot see the proper path and purpose of their life. Māyā Devī's function is to hide the jīva-souls' wealth: their eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. She does anything and everything to disturb the conditioned souls.



The conditioned souls cannot avoid association with mahāmāyā. Suffering in the lives of the conditioned souls is natural and expected; it is the natural reaction to the jīva-souls' misguided activities. That suffering is also good because it inspires fortunate souls to want to clean themselves of the pollution of the illusion; it inspires them to want to steady themselves and avoid further entanglement within material existence.

Positive and negative power

I am habituated to not believe Māyā. We learned from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj and other great personalities that we should not believe Māyā Devī and the tricks of her illusory environment. Māyā may have so much power and be able to do anything and everything within her illusory environment, but we have learned not to be bewildered by that. We honour Māyā, but we never believe Māyā. No doubt we cannot fight with Māyā directly; we are tiny souls, and we must be defeated by her because the Lord's power is working behind her. But with the spiritual strength we receive from Guru-Vaiṣṇava we can cross over the ocean of māyā.

Māyā's power is negative. It comes from the Lord, but it is a negative power. The power coming through Guru-Vaiṣṇava to rescue the conditioned souls is positive; it is the Lord's positive power descending from His purposeful and positive world. Whenever the conditioned souls are connected with the Lord's positive power, they must be carried beyond the influence of His negative power. We have no doubt about this as the Lord's natural desire for love, beauty, charm, and sweetness is fulfilled by the unalloyed service of the jīva-souls. If any jīva-soul sincerely wants to dedicate himself to the Lord then the Lord will certainly rescue him and give him that chance. That is the Lord's nature. The Lord gave the jīva-souls free will for this purpose, as well as for facilitating His play of rescuing the jīva-souls with the attractive power of His divine form and Pastimes.

kṛṣṇa—sūrya-sama; māyā
haya andhakāra
yāhā kṛṣṇa, tāhā nāhi
māyāra adhikāra
(Cc: Madhya, 22.31)

“Kṛṣṇa is like the sun;
Māyā is like darkness.
Wherever Kṛṣṇa is present,
Māyā is absent.”