

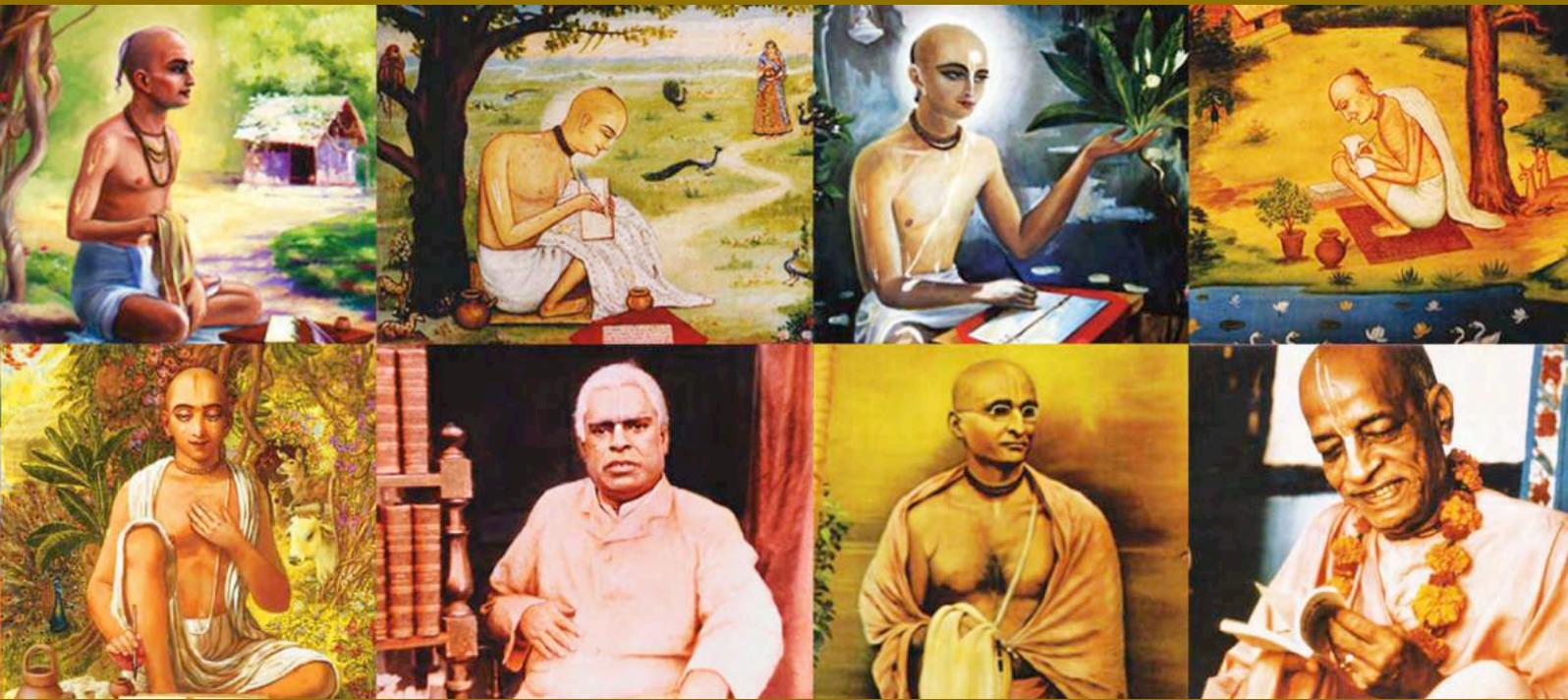


Dedicated to
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta
Swāmi Prabhupāda,
Founder-Ācārya of the
International Society for
Krishna Consciousness



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COMMENDABLE COMMANDERS

The greatest pride of a follower of Vaiṣṇava sampradāya lies in one's connection with the guru paramparā or the lineage of the great spiritual masters who lead the legacy of that Vaiṣṇava school. The pure lives and exemplary character of these great spiritual commanders, the ācāryas, inspire one to follow in their footsteps in one's attempts to practice the process of devotional service. Their illuminating commentaries on the timeless scriptures enlighten the sincere followers, giving them the necessary direction on the devotional path.

Who Is An Ācārya?

The guru holds the most vital position in the lives of spiritual practitioners. An ācārya, the transcendental professor of spiritual science, is one who has faithfully followed and imbibed the teachings of his own bona fide spiritual master. And this lineage ultimately connects to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus all the ācāryas in the lineage are pure representatives of Kṛṣṇa, by dint of their dedication to His devotional service and by repeating His teachings. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself tells Uddhava, "The ācārya is nondifferent from Myself (SB 11.17.27: ācāryam mām vijānīyaṁ). Never disrespect him or envy him or think of him an ordinary man."

Connecting to the Paramparā

Sage Śaunaka praises Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī for his vast learning and ability to speak the Bhāgavatam to enlighten all the sages assembled at Naimiśāraṇya. Sūta Gosvāmī attained this qualification by dint of his simplicity (saumya) and his submissiveness (snigdha) to his gurus who had endowed him with all the favors bestowed upon a gentle disciple. Receiving the favor

of the guru depends on the disciple's sincerity in following him. Such a sincere follower can be connected to the paramparā and when he speaks, it is as good as Kṛṣṇa's words, due to his transparency in transmitting the transcendental message descending from Kṛṣṇa through the paramparā.

*kasmai yena vibhāsito 'yam atulo
jñāna-pradīpaḥ purā
tad-rūpeṇa ca nārādāya munaye
kṛṣṇāya tad-rūpiṇā
yogīndrāya tad-ātmanātha bhagavad
-rātāya kārūṇyatas
tac chuddham vimalaṁ viśokam amṛtaṁ
satyaṁ param dhīmahi*

I meditate upon that pure and spotless Supreme Absolute Truth, who is free from suffering and death and who in the beginning personally revealed this incomparable torchlight of knowledge to Brahmā. Brahmā then spoke it to the sage Nārada, who narrated it to Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa. Śrīla Vyāsa revealed this Bhāgavatam to the greatest of sages, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śukadeva mercifully spoke it to Mahārāja Parikṣit. (SB 12.13.19)



The words *tad-rūpeṇa*, *tad-rūpiṇā* and *tad-ātmanā* in this verse clearly indicate that Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself originally spoke Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to Brahmā and then continued to speak this literature through the agency of Nārada Muni, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Śukadeva Gosvāmī and other great sages. In other words, whenever saintly devotees vibrate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is to be understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is speaking the Absolute Truth through the agency of His pure representatives.

Qualities Of A Bona Fide Guru

Being a *guru* is a very responsible position and one who cannot deliver his dependents from the cycle of birth and death by teaching them the process of devotional service cannot accept the position of a guru. This is explained by Lord Rṣabhadeva (SB 5.5.18: *gurur na sa syāt...*). The qualification of the bona fide *guru* is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters. (SB 11.3.21: *śābde pare ca niṣṇātām brahmaṇy upāśamāśrayam*).

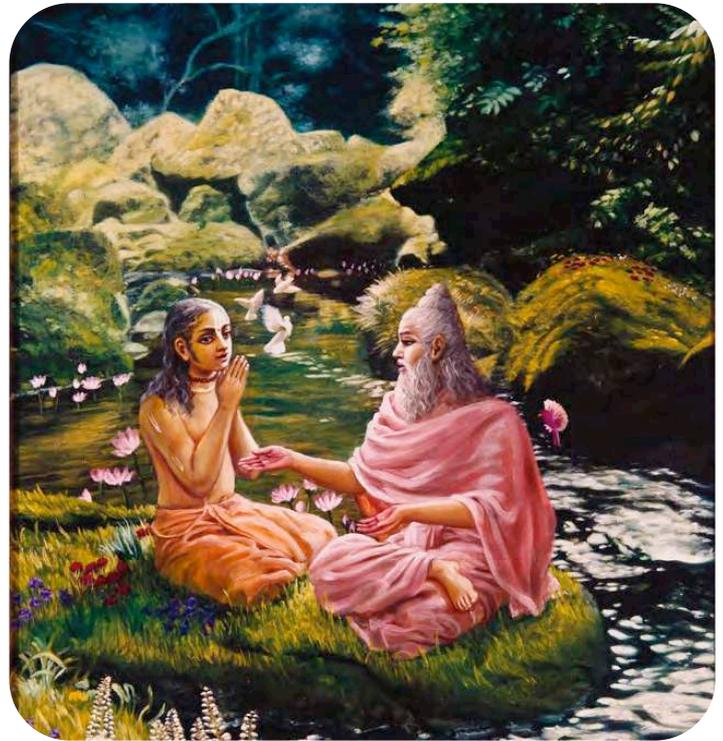
Propounders of Devotional Processes

A spiritual master is not an enjoyer of facilities offered by his disciples, but he is like a parent. Just as a child's growth depends on the attentive care and guidance of his parents, similarly, a disciple's advancement in spiritual life depends on the guidance of the *ācārya*. The duty of a guru is to find the means, according to time, place and circumstances, by which people can be inspired to come closer to Godhead. The *ācāryas* take complete shelter of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet themselves, and they leave behind on earth the method to cross the material ocean. And Kṛṣṇa, being very merciful to them, accepts this method and bestows His mercy upon those who follow this method called the *ācārya-sampradāya*. For instance, Rūpa Gosvāmī published such great devotional book as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that guides the future generations to perform *bhakti*. (SB 10.2.31)

The Non-repayable Debt

Thus an *ācārya*'s contribution for the spiritual upliftment of the people in general is a thankless task. And one who takes benefit of their efforts is eternally indebted to them, although one is utterly unable to repay that debt one owes such *ācāryas* as Pṛthu Mahārāja told the four Kumāras.

*yair idṛśī bhagavato gatir ātma-vāda
ekāntato nigamibhiḥ pratipādītā naḥ
tuṣyantv adabhra-karuṇāḥ sva-kṛtena nityam
ko nāma tat pratikaroti vinoda-pātram*



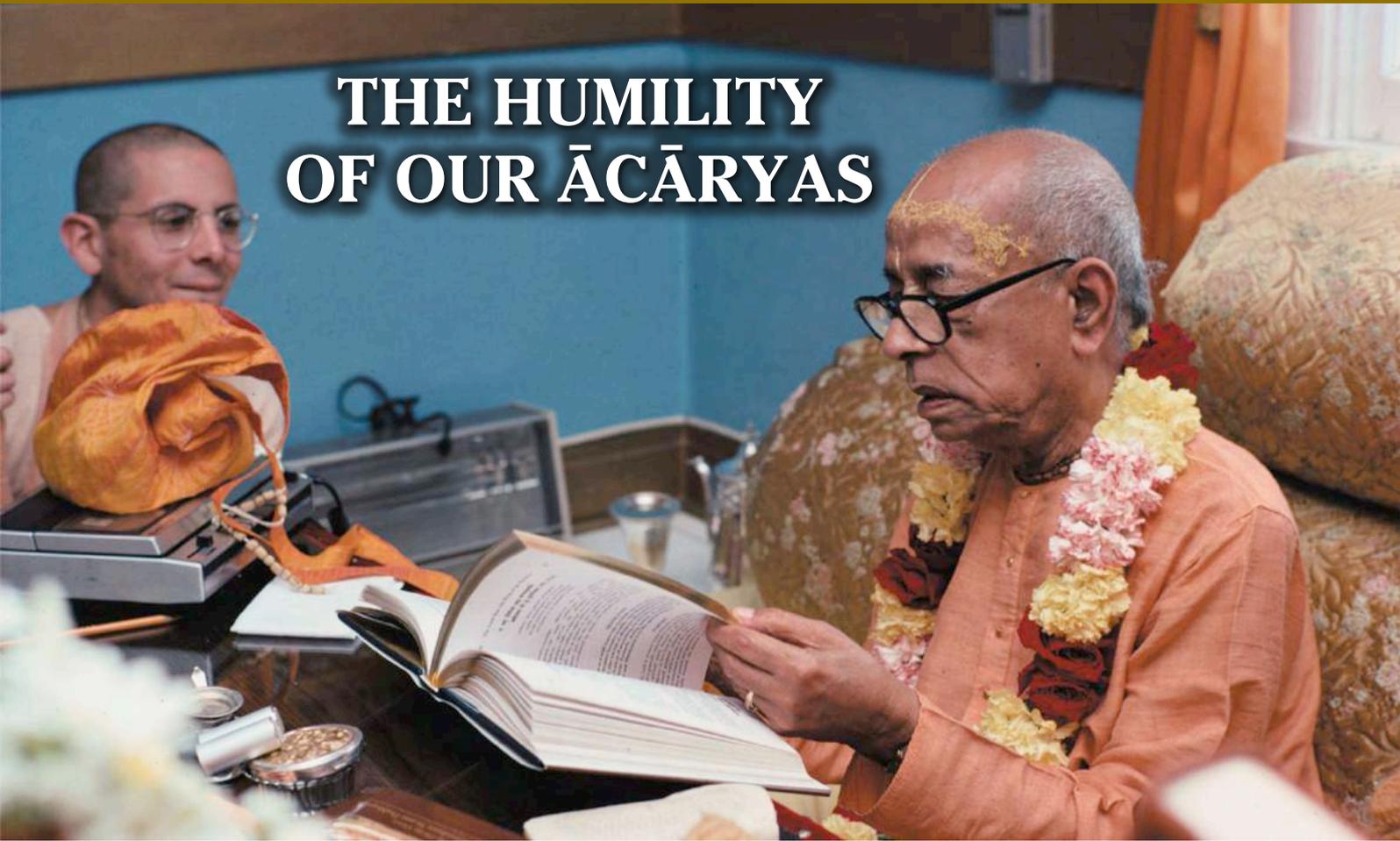
How can such persons, who have rendered unlimited service by explaining the path of self-realization in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and whose explanations are given for our enlightenment with complete conviction and Vedic evidence, be repaid except by folded palms containing water for their satisfaction? Such great personalities can be satisfied only by their own activities, which are distributed amongst human society out of their unlimited mercy. (SB 4.22.47)

Service Gives Realization

Anyone who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take his shelter by initiation (SB 11.3.21: *tasmād gururṇ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam*). Vidura's qualities of faith and submissiveness inspired Maitreya to bestow him the knowledge of the *Bhāgavatam*. Vidura expresses his heartfelt gratitude to Maitreya, with the following humble words that give us a wonderful instruction: "One may receive knowledge from the scriptures and from the teachings of the spiritual master. However, realizing all those teachings is possible only by sincere service to guru, without which one's philosophical understanding remains theoretical (3.7.18). One cannot directly render service to Kṛṣṇa unless enlightened and empowered by the guru. It is actually the service to such a pure devotee as the guru that enables one to attain transcendental ecstasy in one's service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa that vanquishes one's material existence. And such opportunity to render service to guru is a rare privilege and is not easily attainable. (3.7.19-20)" ☀



THE HUMILITY OF OUR ĀCĀRYAS



Vidyā-vinaya-sampanne...

Humility is one of the foremost qualities of a learned person.

A humble Vaiṣṇava doesn't take credit for his activities.

He rather transfers them to the Supreme Lord, other Vaiṣṇavas, and especially the *gurus* who instructed him in devotional service. One very striking feature of the personalities of our beloved *ācāryas*, apart from their scholarship and accomplishments is such humility that moves the hearts. Following are a few glimpses of the humility of the distinguished *ācāryas* of our *sampradāya* whose explanations of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* have been a great source of our understanding of this scripture. In spite of their unique and exceptional ways of explaining the *paramahansa-samhita* in ways understandable by the contemporary audience, they describe themselves incompetent and humbly transfer all the credit to the previous *ācāryas* and the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Śrīla Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in the beginning of his *Sārārtha Darśini* commentary on the *Bhāgavatam*: “I take shelter of the eternal form, name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa known from *Bhāgavatam*, which I studied for a long time by the mercy of guru. After having studied the Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī of Sanātana Gosvāmī and after having understood the conclusions of Lord Caitanya from the Sandarbhas of Jīva Gosvāmī, by the mercy of Śrīdhara Svāmī, I produce this commentary to show the essence of *Bhāgavatam*. I am not learned. Oh! I am rash in this attempt! The cause, being either my own foolishness or the causeless mercy of the Lord, gives rise to its manifestation, even in an unqualified person. If its cause is my foolishness, it will produce mockery, and if its cause is mercy of the Lord, it will produce bliss with every word for the devotees.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda

Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purport to the very first verse of the *Bhāgavatam* encourages the readers to read the explanations on the *Bhāgavatam* by the previous *ācāryas*: “...there is no doubt about the authority of the *Bhāgavatam*. Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and *ācāryas* like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viṣvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam*. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.”



And at the end of his translation of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: “I think that His Divine Grace Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is always seeing my activities and guiding me within my heart by his words... It is to be admitted that whatever translation work I have done is through the inspiration of my spiritual master, because personally I am most insignificant and incompetent to do this materially impossible work. I do not think myself a very learned scholar, but I have full faith in the service of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. If there is any credit to my activities of translating, it is all due to His Divine Grace... The International Society for Krishna

Consciousness, has been formed to execute the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura... I request my disciples who are determined to help me in this work to continue their cooperation fully, so that philosophers, scholars, religionists and people in general all over the world will benefit by reading our transcendental literatures, such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.”

Following in the footsteps of such *ācāryas*, a practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness needs to attempt to humbly transfer the credit of one’s activities to other Vaiṣṇavas, especially the *gurus* who guide us on this path. ☀

PARI PRAŚNA

Question: In scriptures, it is seen that Lord always favors demigods or His devotees over the demons. But at the same time it is said He is impartial. How to understand this? (By Vikas Shinde)

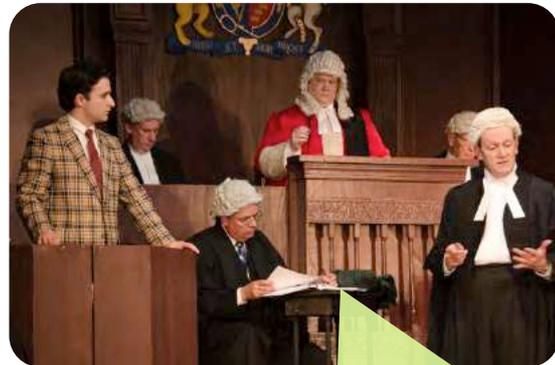
Answer: Consider the following cases. A teacher is impartial to all his students, but a capable student receives more instructions from teacher, this is not teacher’s partiality (SB 7.1.9 P). An electrician connects both a heater and a cooler to the same electrical energy, but factually the electrician has nothing to do with causing heat or cold, nor with the enjoyment or suffering that results (SB 7.1.12 P). A king bestows mercy upon a murderer by killing him, thus saving him from various kinds of suffering. Kṛṣṇa, the supreme judge, deals with matters in a similar way because He is the supreme controller (SB 7.1.12 P).

A question regarding Lord Kṛṣṇa’s apparent partiality was also raised by Mahārāja Parikṣit when he saw that Kṛṣṇa killed demons. Śukadeva Gosvāmī cites the example of Śiśupāla, who has been awarded liberation by Kṛṣṇa, although he acted as His enemy. **Lord Kṛṣṇa is not partial but reciprocal.** Śiśupāla thought of Kṛṣṇa as his enemy all the time, thus he was purified of his envy, because although it was an unfavorable remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, but since it was with full absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Śiśupāla was purified and attained liberation. Kṛṣṇa liberated even Pūtanā who came to kill Him. Thus Kṛṣṇa is not actually inimical to those who envy Him, but shows them His mercy. God’s punishments and His offerings of favor are both of the same value, but in the material field one thinks that Kṛṣṇa is favorable to devotees and unfavorable to nondevotees. (SB 7.1.3 P)



That doesn’t mean that one should purposely hold negative feelings towards God through envy, anger, hatred and so on. The lesson is that even if one has inimical feelings towards God, He is kind to them, then what to speak of those who lovingly worship Him and serve Him.

Mail us at pradipika@vidyapitha.in your questions on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Answers to shortlisted questions shall be published in the next issue of *Bhāgavata Pradīpikā*.



As the mother is the only authority to identify the father of a child, so the mother Vedas, presented by the recognized authority such as Brahmā, Nārada or Śiva, is the only authority to inform us about the Absolute Truth. (SB 2.6.37 P)

Just as when a person comes under the shadow of a big tree, the disturbances caused by the heat of the scorching sun are immediately mitigated, similarly a jīva needs only to seek shelter of the shade of the Lord's lotus feet, then all the material tribulations that disturb him will be subdued. (SB 6.9.43 P)

Any question that is put forward may be answered by quoting the authority, and that satisfies the saner section. That is the system even in the law court. The best lawyer gives evidence from the past judgment of the court without taking much trouble to establish his case. This is called the paramparā system, and learned authorities follow it without manufacturing rubbish interpretations. (SB 2.10.51 P)

ANALOGY ARENA

The association of saintly Vaiṣṇavas—the disciplic succession of masters, disciples and granddisciples—is the real family of the pure devotees, filled with swanlike personalities like Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. (SB 10.87.21 P)

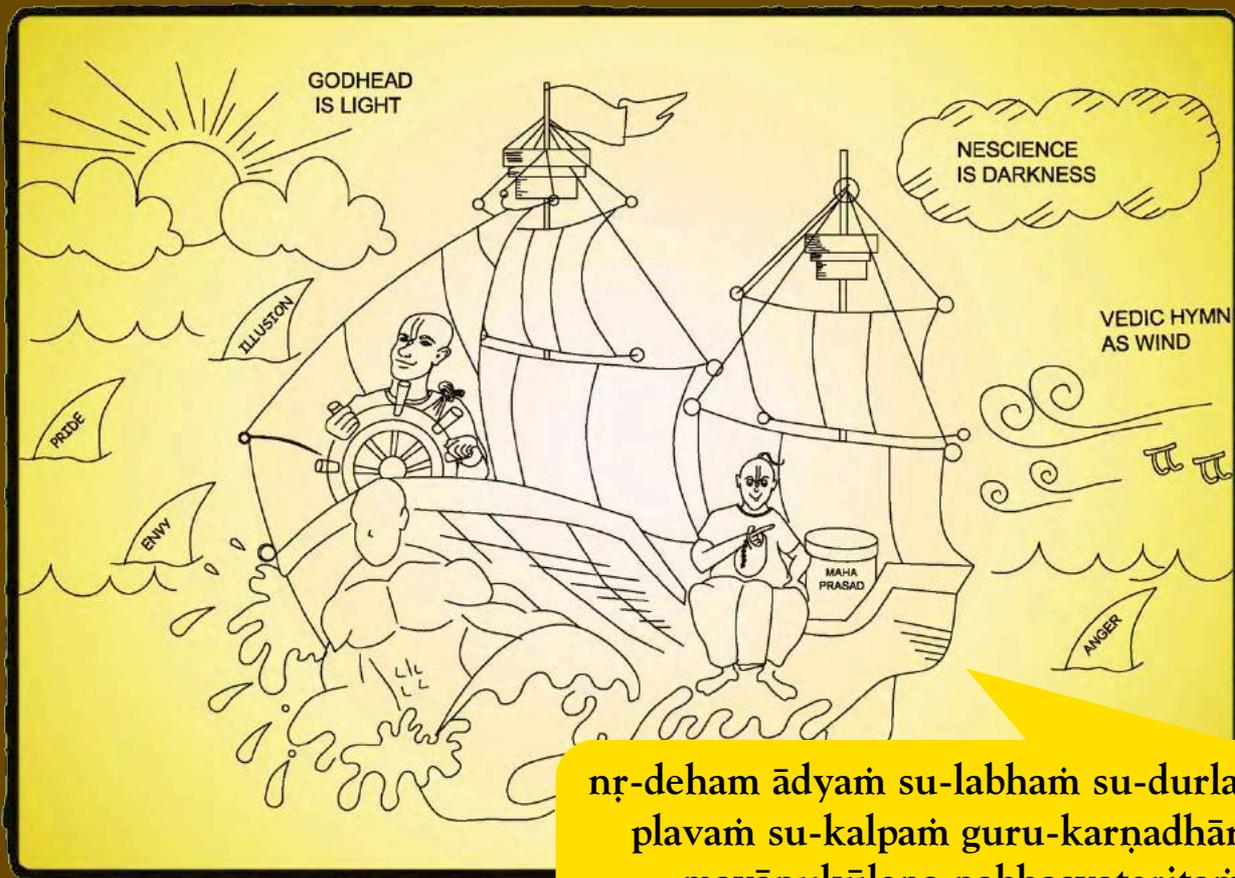
The Lord is not like a shopkeeper trying to please all sorts of customers in the mental speculator exchange. However, He reveals Himself to the pure devotee who follow the ways of previous ācāryas, or authorities, through the transparent medium of a bona fide spiritual master. (SB 2.4.21 P)

The contamination in the heart of a conditioned soul is like a huge accumulation of garbage created by the three modes of material nature, especially the modes of passion and ignorance. Unless one receives transcendental knowledge in disciplic succession, there is no question of his becoming purified of this contamination. (SB 5.25.8 P)





VERSE OF THE MONTH



Lord Krishna to Uddhava

**nṛ-deham ādyaṁ su-labhaṁ su-durlabhaṁ
 plavaṁ su-kalpaṁ guru-karṇadhāram
 mayānukūlena nabhasvateritaṁ
 pumān bhavāb̥dhim na taret sa ātma-hā**

SB 11.20.17

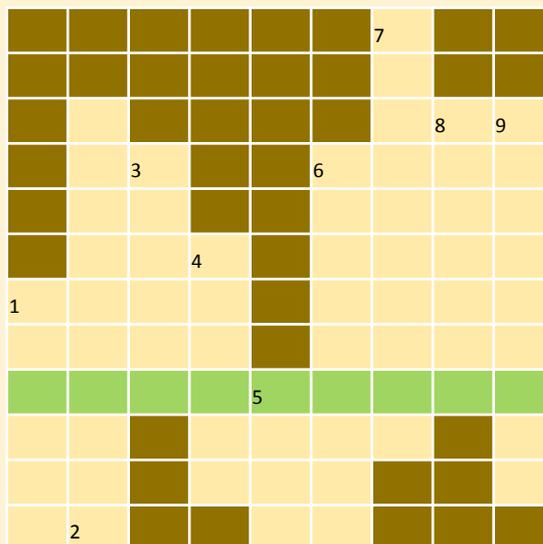
The human body, which can award all benefit in life, is automatically obtained by the laws of nature, although it is a very rare achievement. This human body can be compared to a perfectly constructed boat having the spiritual master as the captain and the instructions of the Personality of Godhead as favorable winds impelling it on its course. Considering all these advantages, a human being who does not utilize his human life to cross the ocean of material existence must be considered the killer of his own soul.

QUIZ CORNER

Fill the boxes based on the clues below.

1. A transcendental professor of spiritual science.
2. A spiritual lineage or tradition.
3. Authority to verify the identity of father.
4. A learned Paṇḍita's quality.
5. The living entity is ___ prakṛti
6. Receiving favor of guru depends on disciples's...
7. The ācārya of Rudra-sampradāya.
8. An actual guru is _____, one who has heard or received perfect knowledge through paramparā.
9. One who is protected by Viṣṇu.

Mail your answer to pradipika@vidyapitha.in with "November Quiz Corner" in the subject. Names of the first three people who gave correct answers shall be published in the next issue.



**Answer for
 October Quiz
 Corner:
 DAMODARA**

Winners:
 Pritam De
 Ritu Dalal
 Radhikesh Das
 Gagan Meena
 Aniruddha
 Chakraborty
 Tripath Sagoo

Gather all the letters from the **green** boxes, **jumble** them and **fill** the following boxes.

Answer:





BHĀGAVATA PRAVĀHA

The Flow of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

PARĪKṢIT'S BIRTH DHṚTARĀṢṬRA'S RETIREMENT & KṚṢṆA'S DISAPPEARANCE

[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 1 Chapters 12-14]



Sūta Gosvāmī began to narrate Parīkṣit's being saved in the womb of his mother (1.8), but later elaborated on other topics i.e., Kuntī's prayers, Bhīṣma's departure, Kṛṣṇa's departure from Hastināpura and entrance into Dvāraka (1.8-11). Now upon the request of Śaunaka, Sūta Gosvāmī revives the topics of Parīkṣit. After describing Parīkṣit's birth (1.12), he narrates some important events that occurred before his coronation as the King, namely Dhṛtarāṣṭra's retirement (1.13) and Kṛṣṇa's disappearance (1.14).

Birth and Glories of Mahārāja Parīkṣit

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira sets a perfect background of righteous and Kṛṣṇa conscious rule for King Parīkṣit. Yudhiṣṭhira's opulence is aspired for even by the denizens of heaven. The child Parīkṣit within the womb has seen the Supreme Lord personally and was protected by His prowess. Upon his birth, Yudhiṣṭhira gave profuse charity to the *brāhmaṇas*, who performed the birth rites and later predicted the child's future qualities and activities. He will be known as *viṣṇu-rāta*, one who was protected by Viṣṇu. He will become a first class devotee, endowed with all good qualities of great personalities like Arjuna, Bali and Prahlāda. After hearing about his death, caused by the bite of a snake-

bird, he will free himself from all material attachment and surrender unto the Supreme Lord by hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī. He will be known as Parīkṣit [examiner] because he would come to examine all human beings in his search after that personality whom he saw before his birth.

Yudhiṣṭhira's Sacrifice

Soon child Parīkṣit developed luxuriantly and King Yudhiṣṭhira considered performing a sacrifice, but was anxious for funds. Upon Kṛṣṇa's advise and his brothers' assistance, he collected the riches left by King Marutta and did the sacrifice. Seeing the sacrifice through, Lord Kṛṣṇa stayed for a few months and then started for Dvārakā, accompanied by Arjuna and Yadus.



BHĀGAVATA
PRADĪPIKĀ

Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam

A conditioned soul has four disqualifications: he is sure to commit mistakes, he is sure to be illusioned, he is prone to cheat others, and his senses are imperfect. But if one carries out the order of the spiritual master by disciplic succession, or the paramparā system, he overcomes the four defects. (SB 3.24.12 P)

Reunion with a Respectable Elder

After having received knowledge from Maitreya, Vidura who was on a pilgrimage, came to Hastināpura. He was greeted well by everyone, who upon seeing him appeared to have regained their consciousness after a long period. Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, asked Vidura about his pilgrimage and especially the news of the residents of Dvārakā. Vidura gradually described everything except the news of the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty, for he couldn't bear to see the Āpāṇḍavas in distress.

A Sadhu's Sharp Words

Vidura came to Hastināpura just to rectify the mentality of his elder brother, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was still attached to the palace comforts despite his advanced age. Vidura chastised him, "Get out! Don't delay! Just see how fear has overtaken you! The Lord's potency as insurmountable time has approached us all and to it, we surrender all our possessions and relations. You are old, invalid and living at the cost of others. Your memory is shortened, intelligence disturbed and your body defective. You live just like a household dog, eating the remnants of Bhīma. Although you refuse to die, your body will dwindle and deteriorate like an old garment! Leave home and head North immediately!"

Long Awaited Retirement

Convinced by introspective knowledge, Dhṛtarāṣṭra broke the strong network of familial affection by his resolute determination and immediately left home to set out on the path of liberation, as directed by Vidura. His queen, the gentle and chaste Gāndhārī followed her husband. Vidura, having the purpose of his Hastināpura visit fulfilled also departed.

An Uncalled for Lamentation

Unable to find his two uncles and aunt, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira felt himself responsible, perhaps for his offenses or perhaps their sorrow at having lost their sons in the battle. The good King recalls all the good favors that the Pāṇḍavas had received since childhood from their blind uncle. Sañjaya who was himself aggrieved, also lamented.

An Unexpected Good Counseling

Just then, Devarṣi Nārada appeared to remind Yudhiṣṭhira that all living beings are conducted by the will of the Supreme Lord, for it's He who brings them together and separates them again. Nārada therefore advises Yudhiṣṭhira to give up his anxiety of thinking that how others will exist without him. Next, Nārada declared the whereabouts and future movements of the Dhṛtarāṣṭra who would practice renunciation and quit his body in mystic fire. Gāndhārī will enter that fire and Vidura will then depart for pilgrimage.



Effects of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Disappearance

Arjuna had gone to Dvārakā to see Lord Kṛṣṇa and learn of His next activities. A few months passed and Arjuna did not return. Yudhiṣṭhira observed some inauspicious omens such as seasonal disruptions, earthly disturbances, crying deities, and even cheating and misunderstanding amongst people and so on (symptoms of Kali yuga). Concerned, he shared his observations to Bhīma.

Dejection of Arjuna in Separation

Arjuna arrived from Dvārakā and offered his respects to the king. Seeing him dejected, Yudhiṣṭhira inquired about the welfare of their relatives and especially about Lord Kṛṣṇa, remembering His position as the protector and maintainer of the fortunate Yadu dynasty. Noticing the depressed demeanor of Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira inquires about his personal welfare, "Is your health alright? Has some one disrespected you? Could you not keep your promise? Have you failed to give protection? Have you sinned?" Hearing no response from Arjuna, Yudhiṣṭhira frankly asks him if he was feeling empty due to losing his most intimate friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

To be continued...

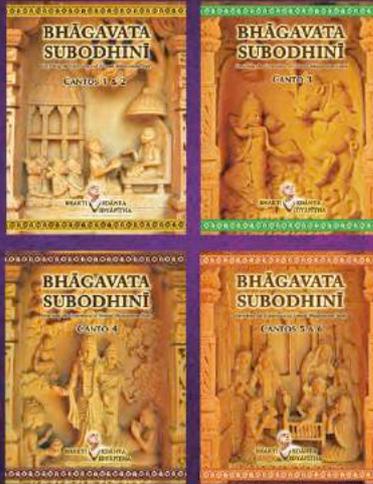
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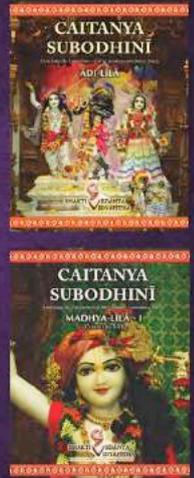
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Aṅgīya tātra and so on.



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NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
CC: Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
BG: Bhāgavad-gītā
BS: Brahma-sāṁhitā

1.1.1: Canto 1, Chapter 1, Verse 1
1.1.1 P: From Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to SB 1.1.1 (If it is beyond Canto 10 Chapter 13, it is from the purport of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples)
1.1.1 V: From Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on SB 1.1.1.

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**BHĀGAVATA
PRADĪPIKĀ**
Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam

Accepting the thoughts of exalted authorities through disciplic succession is certainly much easier than the method of mental speculation, by which one tries to invent some means to understand the Absolute Truth. (SB 7.9.18 P)