



# BHĀGAVATA PRADĪPIKĀ

*Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam*

*A Monthly E-Magazine from the Bhaktivedanta Vidyapitha with Illuminating Perspectives on the Srimad-Bhagavatam*

Dedicated to His Divine  
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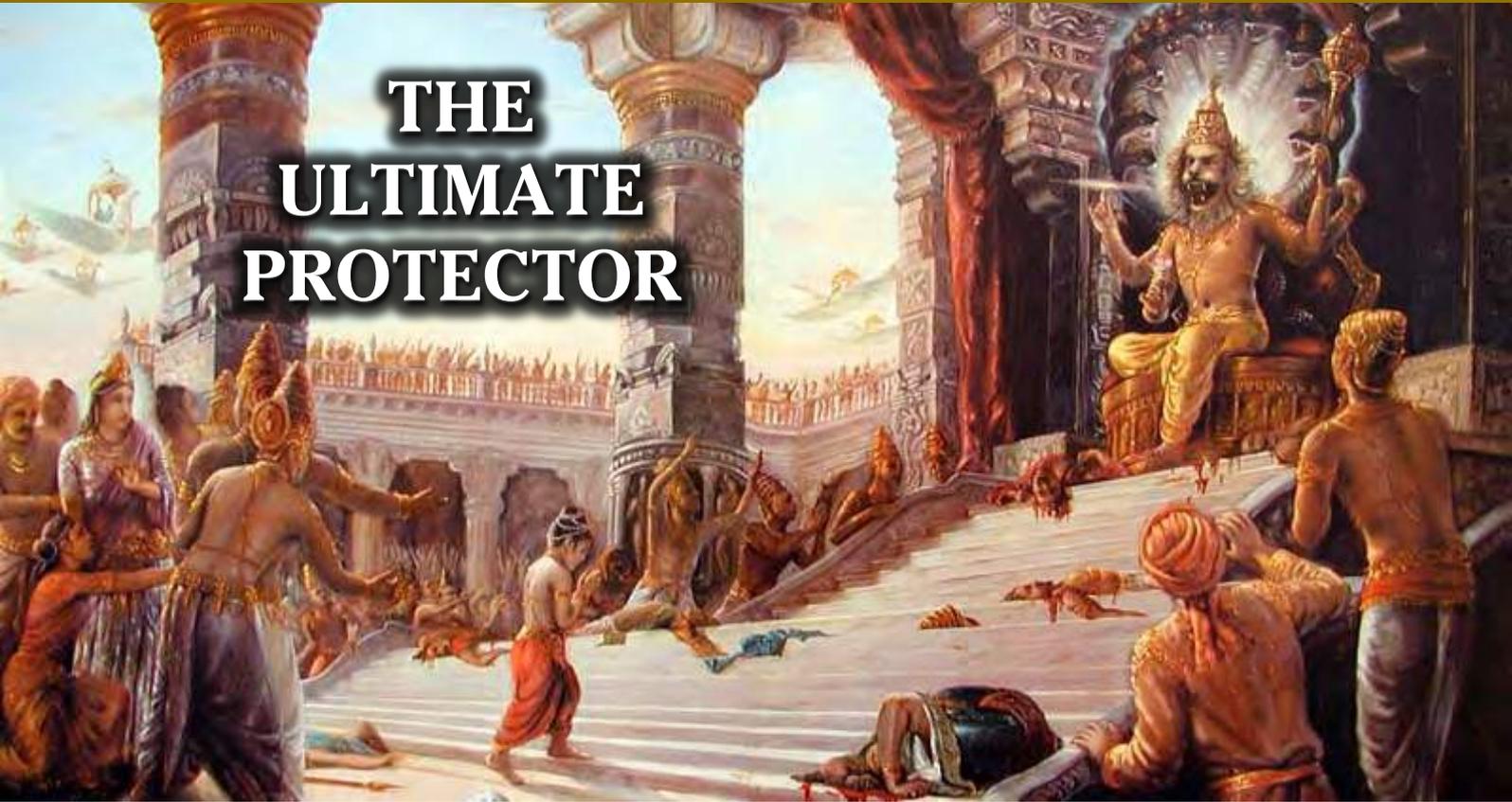
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**NṚSĪMHA-  
CATURDAŚĪ  
SPECIAL**

**THE ULTIMATE PROTECTOR**



# THE ULTIMATE PROTECTOR



The Supreme Lord is known as *sātvatām paṭiḥ*, the protector of His devotees. He descends in various incarnations to protect the religious principles and those who sincerely follow them. In His incarnation as Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva, He is specifically known for protecting the devotees who fervently depend on Him.

## Protection Through Sainly Association

*Bhaktiyā sañjātayā bhaktiyā*: Devotional service can be awakened by devotional service alone. Thus bhakti is causeless (*ahaituki*) as bhakti alone causes bhakti. The bhakti in Nārada Muni is the cause of bhakti in Prahlāda. And bhakti is uninterrupted (*apratihata*) as it can manifest even in a child, or a demon, if it is bestowed by a powerful saint like Nārada. By all external considerations, someone who is still in the womb of his mother cannot be trained in devotional service or someone who is born in a demoniac family cannot become an exalted devotee of Kṛṣṇa. But these externals are not obstacles in bhakti as proved in the case of Prahlāda. That is the power of saintly association that manifests bhakti in any circumstance.

Hiraṇyakaśipu trickily planned to become immortal by performing severe austerities to get boons from Lord Brahmā. Thus he received the boon of having no death within or outside any residence, during the daytime or at night, on the ground or in the sky, by any weapon, human being or an animal. While Hiraṇyakaśipu was busy endeavoring to become immortal, Nārada Muni instructed his son Prahlāda, who was still in his mother's Ō womb, about devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, which is the real way to achieve immortality.

The protection of the saintly association and teachings of Nārada Muni made Prahlāda not to get affected by the demoniac association and teachings of his materialistic gurus Śaṅḍa and Amarka. Thus one can remain fixed in one's Kṛṣṇa consciousness through saintly association. Thus even after Prahlāda saw Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva face to face, he prayed for the association and service of Nārada Muni, as follows:

*evam janam nipatitam prabhavāhi-kūpe  
kāmbhikāmam anu yaḥ prapatan prasāngāt  
kṛtvātmasāt surarṣiṇā bhagavan gṛhītaḥ  
so 'ham katham nu visṛje tava bhṛtya-sevām*

“My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service? (SB 7.9.28)”

One cannot approach the Lord directly, surpassing the spiritual master. Lord Viṣṇu carries Sudarśana *cakra* to protect His devotees, however His pure devotees carry the Lord Himself in their hearts and distribute His devotional service to others, thus offering ultimate protection to everyone through their holy association.





## Protection From Material Desires

*Saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmahaḥ*: “One’s desires are inspired and influenced by the association that one keeps.” If one is in materialistic association, he develops material and selfish desires. And if one is in saintly association, he develops noble and spiritual desires.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes (5.18.8 P), “We should always offer our prayers to Lord Nṛsimha-deva, who killed Hiranyakaśipu, the personification of material desire. *Hiranya* means “gold,” and *kaśipu* means “a soft cushion or bed.” Materialistic persons always desire to make the body comfortable, and for this they require huge amounts of gold. Thus Hiranyakaśipu was the perfect representative of materialistic life. He was therefore the cause of great disturbance to the topmost devotee, Prahlāda Mahārāja, until Lord Nṛsimha-deva killed him. Any devotee aspiring to be free of material desires should offer his respectful prayers to Nṛsimha-deva as Prahlāda Mahārāja did.”

Hiranyakaśipu controlled the three worlds, puffed up by the power of Brahmā’s benedictions. Though he exhibited great sense control to receive those benedictions, he now became a victim of his uncontrolled senses by the power of those benedictions. He became engrossed in sense enjoyment and fulfilled all his material desires.

On the other hand, Prahlāda, although stayed in Hiranyakaśipu’s kingdom filled with demons completely devoid of God consciousness, did not develop any material desires. He cared nothing for the royal opulences of Hiranyakaśipu, even though he could easily inherit the universal empire just by being an obedient materialistic son. Prahlāda saw the futility of material desires through the devotional knowledge he received from Nārada Muni. He told Lord Nṛsimha-deva about the futility of material desires:

*tasmād amūṣ tanu-bhṛtām aham āśiṣo 'jñā  
āyuh śriyaṁ vibhavam aindriyam āviriñcyāt  
necchāmi te vilulitān uruwikrameṇa  
kālatmanopanaya mām niḥa-bhṛtya-pārśvam*

“My dear Lord, now I have complete experience concerning the worldly opulence, mystic power, longevity and other material pleasures enjoyed by all living entities, from Lord Brahmā down to the ant. As powerful time, You destroy them all. Therefore, because of my experience, I do not wish to possess them. My dear Lord, I request You to place me in touch with Your pure devotee and let me serve him as a sincere servant.” (7.9.24)

Even when Lord Nṛsimha offered benediction to him, Prahlāda did not accept any material benedictions saying that his devotion was not like a business transaction.



## Protection From All Fears

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “When Lord Nṛsimha-deva appeared, all the devotees became fearless. The devotee's hope of becoming fearless is to chant the holy name of Lord Nṛsimha-deva. *Yato yato yāmi tato nṛsimhaḥ*: wherever we go, we must always think of Lord Nṛsimha-deva. Thus there will be no fear for the devotee of the Lord.” (7.9.5 P)

The boons offered by Brahmā could not make Hiranyakaśipu fearless; however, Brahmā’s son, Nārada Muni could make Hiranyakaśipu’s son, Prahlāda completely fearless. Brahmā only dutifully sanctioned the material boons as a formality, whereas Nārada Muni out of saintly compassion, voluntarily directed bestowed bhakti, by directing him to the shelter of the Supreme Lord. Thus, although Hiranyakaśipu subjected little Prahlāda to multiple death threats, Prahlāda was not fearful at the least. Therefore, Prahlāda Mahārāja requests all his associates to seek the shelter of the Lord as follows:

*tasmād rajo-rāga-viṣāda-manyu-  
māna-sprhā-bhayadainyādhimūlam  
hitvā gṛham saṁsṛti-cakravālam  
nṛsimha-pādam bhajatākutobhayam iti*

“Therefore, O demons, give up the so-called happiness of family life and simply take shelter of the lotus feet of





Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva, which are the actual shelter of fearlessness. Entanglement in family life is the root cause of material attachment, indefatigable desires, moroseness, anger, despair, fear and the desire for false prestige, all of which result in the repetition of birth and death.” (5.18.14)

When Hiranyakaśipu inquired from Prahlāda what he considers as the best thing, Prahlāda replied that for a man absorbed in anxieties of conditioned life, giving up materialistic household life and going to the forest to take shelter of the Supreme Lord is the best to do. (7.5.5 *tat sādhu manye 'sura-varya dehinām...*)

## Protection Through Remembrance Of Viṣṇu

*smartavyaḥ satatam viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

‘Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the *śāstras* should be the servants of these two principles.’ (Padma Purāṇa)

Prahlāda Mahārāja is mentioned as the best example for the process of *smaraṇam* in *bhakti* (*prahlādaḥ smaraṇe*). He attained perfection by the remembrance of Viṣṇu. When Hiranyakaśipu affectionately inquired from him about the best thing he learnt from his teachers, Prahlāda began glorifying the nine processes of devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu beginning with hearing, chanting and remembering Him. Nārada Muni extols Prahlāda that he was uninterested in playthings even from the very beginning of his childhood, being fully absorbed in the remembrance of Kṛṣṇa as if haunted by a ghost (*kṛṣṇa-graha-grhītātmā*, 7.4.37). Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Prahlāda Mahārāja's heart was always filled with thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Prahlāda Mahārāja is the ideal devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (7.4.36 P)

When the assistants of Hiranyakaśipu struck the tender body of Prahlāda with sharp weapons, threw him under the feet of elephants, subjected him to hellish conditions, threw him from the peak of a mountain and in various other ways tried to kill him, Prahlāda was simply absorbed in the remembrance of the Lord.

## Protection Through Personal Appearance

The Supreme Lord is omnipresent. Yet reserves the right of not being exposed to everyone. An ordinary citizen who does not have necessary qualification or precise purpose to have a personal audience of the king cannot meet him. Similarly, one can't see the Lord without necessary qualification. However, the Lord does not look for any mundane material qualification in one who seeks His audience. All one needs is a simple faith in His omnipresence and causeless protection. Then the all-merciful Lord happily manifests Himself in whatever form the devotee likes to see Him anywhere and everywhere.

Little Prahlāda had that simple faith and Hiranyakaśipu wondered and was enraged at it. Hiranyakaśipu asked Prahlāda whether his God existed within the columns of the palace. Prahlāda confidently said “Yes!” Deriding his son for his faith, he forcefully struck the pillar with his fist and the Lord came out of the pillar in His wonderful half-man and half-lion incarnation, to protect His dear devotee and destroy the miscreant. Even by killing the demons, the Supreme Lord only offers protection to them, by ending their sinful life and delivering them from the clutches of conditioned life. The Lord performed His pastimes by fighting with the demon for some time, and in the evening, on the border between day and night, the Lord captured the demon, threw him on His lap, and killed him by piercing his abdomen with His nails.

## Protecting The Words Of Devotees

Lord Narasiṃha through His appearance in this form protected the words of Brahmā, Nārada and Prahlāda.

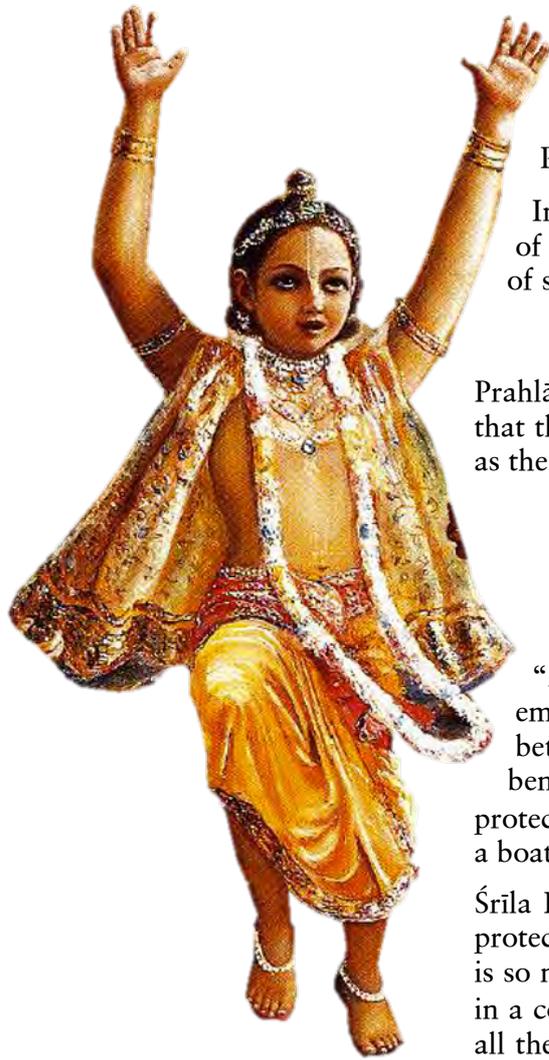
Śrīla Nārada Muni says that the Supreme Lord, to prove that the statement of His servant Prahlāda Mahārāja substantial, i.e, to prove that the Supreme Lord is present everywhere, even within a pillar, exhibited a wonderful form of Narasiṃha-deva that was never seen before. (7.8.17)

*satyam vidhātum nija-bhṛtya-bhāṣitam vyāptim ca bhūteṣu akhileṣu cātmanāḥ adṛśyatātyadbhuta-rūpam udvahan stambhe sabhāyām na mṛgam na mānuṣam*

Prahlāda said to Narasiṃha-deva that He appeared to make the words of his devotees Brahmā and Nārada to come true. Being the Supreme Lord, He is not bound to follow the conditions set by Brahmā's boons, still He chose to kill Hiranyakaśipu in accordance to the boons Brahmā has bestowed—

- inside or outside any residence (the Lord killed him in the doorway)
- during the day or night (the Lord killed him at twilight)
- on the ground or in the sky (the Lord killed him on His own lap)
- by any human being or animal (Lord Narasiṃha is half man, half lion)
- by any demigod, demon, or great snake (the Lord is beyond any of these categories)
- by any weapon or any entity, living or nonliving (Lord Narasiṃha pierced the daitya with his nails, which are not considered weapons and are neither living nor dead)





When the demigods wanted to kill the son of Hiranyakaśipu who was in the womb of Kayādhu, Nārada Muni told them that there was a great devotee in Kayādhu's womb. To prove this statement of Nārada true, Prahlāda said, that Narasimhadeva has appeared to give His personal audience to Prahlāda and make him a pure devotee.

In this way Sri Narasimhadeva appeared personally to protect Prahlāda in time of need though He protected him throughout his life by giving him association of saints and also through the practice of the process of devotional service.

### Protection Beyond Comparison

Prahlāda offered his heartfelt prayers to Lord Narasimha-deva in which he said that there is no person or power within this world that could offer such protection as the Supreme Lord.

*bālasya neha śaraṇam pitarau nṛsiṃha  
nārtasya cāgadāṃ udanvati majjato nauḥ  
taptasya tat-pratīvidhir ya ihāñjaseṣṭas  
tāvad vibho tanu-bhṛtām tvad-upekṣitānām*

“My Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva, O Supreme, because of a bodily conception of life, embodied souls neglected and not cared for by You cannot do anything for their betterment. Whatever remedies they accept, although perhaps temporarily beneficial, are certainly impermanent. For example, a father and mother cannot protect their child, a physician and medicine cannot relieve a suffering patient, and a boat on the ocean cannot protect a drowning man.” (7.9.19)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Having unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord as one's protector, friend and master is the natural condition of eternal life. A living entity is so made by the will of the Almighty that he is most happy when placing himself in a condition of absolute dependence. (1.9.22 P)” Thus it is in the best interest of all the devotees to fervently seek the shelter of Lord Nṛsiṃha who is our ultimate protector. ☀

## "ONLY BHAKTI SATISFIES YOU"

manye dhanābhijana-rūpa-tapaḥ-śrutaujas-  
tejah-prabhāva-bala-pauruṣa-buddhi-yogāḥ  
nārādhānāya hi bhavanti parasya puṁso  
bhaktyā tutoṣa bhagavān gaja-yūtha-pāya  
(SB 7.9.9)

One may possess wealth, an aristocratic family, beauty, austerity, education, sensory expertise, luster, influence, physical strength, diligence, intelligence and mystic yogic power, but I think that even by all these qualifications one cannot satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, one can satisfy the Lord simply by devotional service. Gajendra did this, and thus the Lord was satisfied with him. (Prahlāda Mahārāja's Prayer to Lord Nṛsiṃha-deva)



VERSE OF THE MONTH



**BHĀGAVATA  
PRADĪPIKĀ**

Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam

If a devotee is qualified, sincere and serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and if he follows the instructions of a bona fide spiritual master, as Prahlāda Mahārāja did when preaching the instructions he had received from Nārada Muni, his preaching is effective. (SB 7.8.1 P)

# PARI PRAŚNA



**Question:** If the Supreme Lord is all-merciful and all-powerful, then why does he allow his children, the living entities to suffer in this world illusioned by maya? (by Shresthapati Das)

**Answer:** The Lord does not desire that a living being be illusioned by His external energy. However, the Lord does not interfere with the task of the illusory energy because such performances of the illusory energy are also necessary for reformation of the conditioned soul.

An affectionate father does not like his children to be chastised by another agent, yet he puts his disobedient children under the custody of a severe man just to bring them to order. But the all-affectionate Almighty Father at the same time desires relief for the conditioned soul, relief from the clutches of the illusory energy.

The king puts the disobedient citizens within the walls of the jail, but sometimes the king, desiring the prisoners' relief, personally goes there and pleads for reformation, and on his doing so the prisoners are set free. Similarly, the Supreme Lord descends from His kingdom upon the kingdom of the illusory energy and personally gives relief in the form of the Bhagavad-gītā, wherein He personally suggests that although the ways of the illusory energy are very stiff to overcome, one who surrenders unto the lotus feet of the Lord is set free by the order of the Supreme. (SB 1.7.5 P)

If the Supreme Lord were to interfere with the minute independence of the living entities and force them to be with Him, there would be no question of the living entity's engaging in the loving service of the Lord, since love implies a spontaneous free choice by the lover. (SB11.3.5 P)

**Question:** Why is Kṛṣṇa known as the best well-wishing friend of all living entities? There are others who genuinely try to help others. Aren't they also the best well-wishing friends? (by Yamini)

**Answer:** Certainly there are people in this world who genuinely try to help those who are suffering. The best amongst them is the mother who loves and cares the person the most, more than anyone else in the world. However, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mother of Dhruva accepts her limitations to help her child and as a loving mother guides her child to Kṛṣṇa. She says, "You came to me crying, having been insulted by your stepmother, but I am unable to do any good for you. But Kṛṣṇa is so kind to His devotees that if you go to Him, then the combined kindness of millions of mothers like me will be surpassed by His affectionate and tender dealings. When everyone else fails to mitigate one's misery, Kṛṣṇa is able to help the devotee." (SB 4.8.22 P)

If anyone can completely perceive another's distress without doubt, it is the Lord Himself. If someone is in distress and wants to get relief from his friend, sometimes it so happens that his friend does not appreciate the volume of distress he is suffering. But for the Supreme Lord it is not difficult. The Supreme Lord, as Paramātmā, is sitting within the heart of every living entity, and He directly perceives the exact causes of distress. Thus He can only help (SB 3.20.28 P).

Similarly devotees of Kṛṣṇa are also to be considered the best friends of all living entities as they connect them to Kṛṣṇa. (*sādhavo dīna-vatsalāḥ*). They can interfere in the normal course of karma of a living being by persuading him to take up to devotional service.

Mail us at [pradipika@vidyapitha.in](mailto:pradipika@vidyapitha.in) your questions on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Answers to shortlisted questions shall be published in the next issue of Bhāgavata Pradīpikā.



Sometimes one loses his money on a public street, where everyone can see it, and yet his money is protected by destiny and not seen by others. Thus the man who lost it gets it back. On the other hand, if the Lord does not give protection, even money maintained very securely at home is lost. (SB 7.2.40 V)

Just as those who are greedy see everything as a source of money-making and those who are lusty see everything as being conducive to sex, the most perfect devotee, Prahāda Mahārāja, saw Nārāyaṇa even within a stone column (SB 7.7.55 P)

Just as a small insect falls forcefully into a fire and the insignificant creature becomes invisible, when Hiraṇyakaśipu attacked the Lord, who was full of effulgence, Hiraṇyakaśipu became invisible. (SB 7.8.24 P)

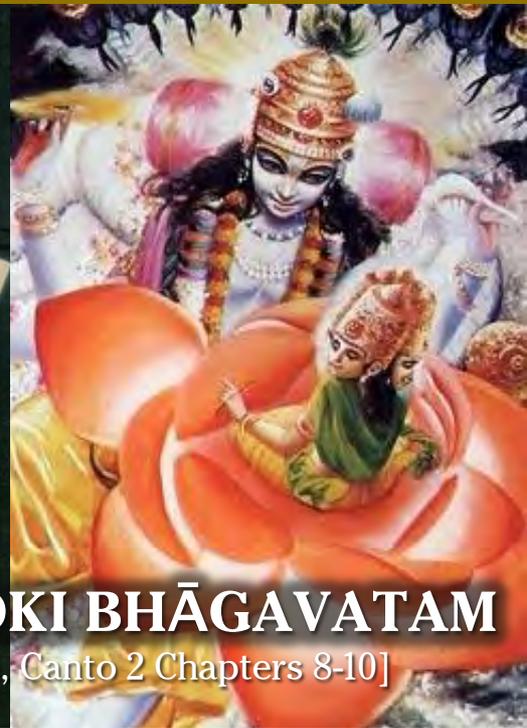
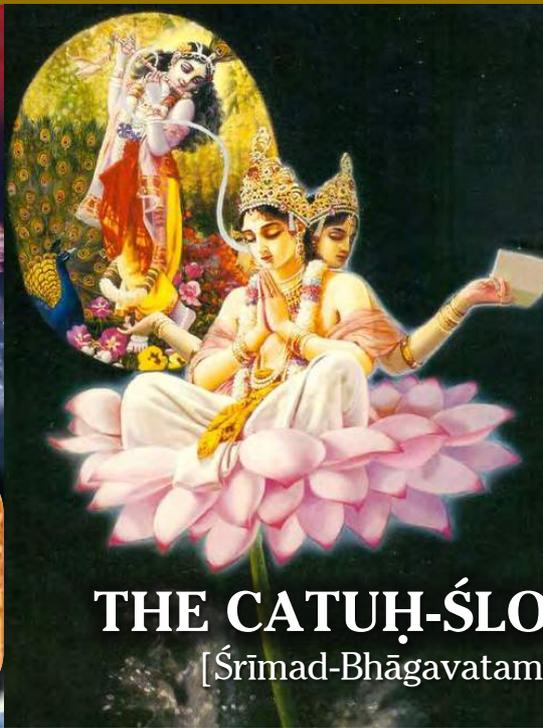
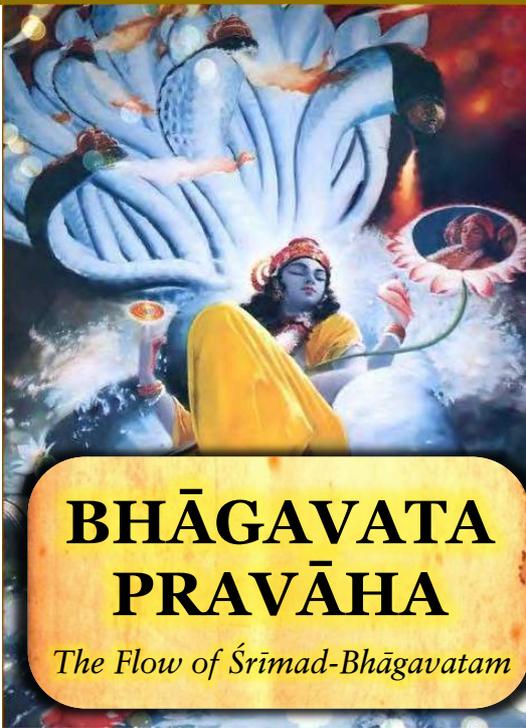
## ANALOGY ARENA

When cotton is transformed into thread, the cotton is no longer visible, and when the thread is woven into cloth, the thread is no longer visible. Similarly, when the seed that had generated from the navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu became manifested as the cosmic creation, one could no longer understand where the cause of the cosmic manifestation is. ( SB 7.9.34 P)

As there is no difficulty in establishing the intimate relationship between a father and son, there is no difficulty in reestablishing the natural, intimate relationship between Nārāyaṇa and the living entities. (SB 7.6.19 P)

In due course of time, various types of diseases are manifest in those who are sinful. Similarly, in this world there are many deceptive friends in false garbs, but eventually, because of their false behavior, their actual enmity becomes manifest. (SB 7.5.27 V)





## BHĀGAVATA PRAVĀHA

*The Flow of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

## THE CATUḤ-ŚLOKI BHĀGAVATAM

[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 2 Chapters 8-10]

*Parīkṣit Mahārāja puts a number of questions before Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who answers them in various parts of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.8). He speaks about the Catuḥ-Sloki Bhāgavatam which the Lord had presented to Brahmā in response to his queries (2.9). Brahmā in turn had expanded this knowledge in paramparā and instructed Nārada. Śukadeva Gosvāmī then defines the ten topics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and then describes about sarga and visarga beirfly (2.10).*

### Parīkṣit's Efforts to Remember Kṛṣṇa

Parīkṣit Mahārāja requests Śukadeva Gosvāmī to speak about Nārada's preaching exploits according to the instructions of his father Brahmā. Parīkṣit Mahārāja desires to give up his body while absorbing his mind on Lord Kṛṣṇa, devoid of material attachment. This shows his efforts to remember Kṛṣṇa. He says, "The Lord quickly manifests in the heart of a devotee who continually hears and chants about Him, with faith and serious endeavour. *Hari-kathā* enters the heart through ears and washes away all contamination, just as the autumnal rains clear the water reservoirs. Such a person with purified heart never gives up the Lord's lotus feet, as a traveller is satisfied at home after a troubled journey."

### Questions by Parīkṣit Mahārāja

Parīkṣit Mahārāja asks a series of questions to Śukadeva Gosvāmī about the Supreme Lord and the *jīva*. The questions were: "How did the *jīva*, who is spiritual, attain a body which is material? What is the difference between the Lord and *jīva* assuming bodies? Where does the master of *māyā*, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu lie? How does the Lord perform His *līlās* using *yoga-māyā* and then disappear without any attachment? Parīkṣit asks further questions about Kala, Karma, lifespan of humans

and demigods, creation of various places in universes and their inhabitants, characteristics of *varṇāśrama*, durations of *yugas*, *yuga-dharma*, and activities of *yugāvatāras*, about *sāṅkhya*, worship of *puruṣāvatāras*, *yoga-miśra-bhakti* and so on. Śukadeva Gosvāmī answers these questions in various parts of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Vidura asks similar questions in 3.7.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja inspires Śukadeva Gosvāmī by saying, "Please answer all that I have inquired and that which I may not have inquired. I am certainly not affected by hunger or thirst since I am drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa which is flowing from your mouth." Being pleased, Śukadeva Gosvāmī speaks *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which was first spoken by the Lord to Brahmā in the first *kalpa*.

### Spiritual Jīva Assuming Material Body

Śukadeva Gosvāmī answers to Parīkṣit's first question. He says, "The relationship of the *jīva* with the body is unreal and it is only due to the Lord's *māyā*. It is like a dreamer seeing his dream body. Afflicted by this *māyā*, the *jīva* appears in so many forms. While enjoying the *guṇas*, the *jīva* thinks in terms of 'I' and 'mine'. But, when he gets in touch with the Lord, who is beyond time and *māyā*, through *bhakti*, he becomes free of the these misconceptions.





## Lord Brahmā's Darśana of Vaikuntha

After answering Parikṣit's first question Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes how Brahmā got the Supreme Lord's *darśana*. He says, "Brahmā, the first spiritual master, seated on his lotus seat, could neither trace the source of that lotus nor understand how to carry out the creation. At that time he heard 'tapa, tapa', which is the wealth of the renunciants. Being unable to find the speaker, he thought it is wise to follow the instruction and execute penance. He underwent penances for one thousand celestial years by concentrating his mind and controlling his senses. Being pleased, the Supreme Lord showed Brahmā the supreme planet Vaikuṅṭha, adored by its youthful and effulgent inhabitants. He saw mother Lakṣmī engaged in serving the Lord's lotus feet. Brahmā gazed at the beauty of the Lord, who was sitting on His throne surrounded by His energies. He was overwhelmed with joy. In great ecstasy and with tears, he bowed down before the Lord." The Lord said, "It was Me who spoke (*tapa, tapa*) when you were perplexed in your duty. Please ask a benediction from Me. But you must know that the ultimate benediction of all penances is to see Me. At this point of time, Lord Brahmā poses four questions to the Lord. Answer to these questions constitutes the *Catuḥ-Śloki Bhāgavatam*.

### Brahmā's Questions to The Lord

Q1: Please tell me about Your material and spiritual forms.

Q2: How are Your various spiritual and material energies working? Q3: What are Your activities in relation to Your material and spiritual energies? Q4: Please bestow Your mercy for my execution of Your instructions without pride and bondage. First three questions are similar to few of those asked by Parikṣit to Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

### The Catuḥ-Śloki (CS)

The Lord speaks about the most secret knowledge of His form, realization of that form, *prema-bhakti* and *sādhana-bhakti* which constitute the answers to the four questions of Brahmā. CS1 – I alone existed before creation as the Lord of the spiritual world; after creation as the material universe, the Supersoul and His various *avatāras*; after the annihilation as the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha. CS2 – Whatever appears to be of any value, if it is without relation to Me, has no reality, it is My illusory energy. CS3 – I Myself exist within everything created and at the same time I am outside of everything. [Vision in *prema-bhakti*.] CS4 – One who is searching after the Absolute Truth must perform [*sadhana*] *bhakti* which is determined as the best process. [Only by *bhakti* can one overcome bondage, pride and lethargy.] After thus instructing Brahmā, the Lord disappeared. Brahmā then began to recreate the universe.

This *Catuḥ-Śloki* was further expanded in *paramparā*. Nārada pleased his father by his saintly qualities and desired to know all about the Lord's *māyā*. Thereupon, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which contain ten characteristics was told by Brahmā to Nārada, which was then instructed to Vyāsadeva in succession.

### Ten Topics of Bhāgavatam

The ten topics of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are *Sarga* (Primary Creation), *Visarga* (Secondary Creation), *Sthānam* (Right situation for living entities), *Poṣaṇam* (Maintenance), *Manvantara* (Reign of Manus), *Uti* (Impetus for activity), *Īśa-anukathāḥ* (Science of God), *Nirodha* (Winding up), *Mukti* (Liberation), *Āśraya* (Supreme shelter). Great devotees describe the other nine topics through scriptures and stories, to impart the highest knowledge of the tenth topic (*āśraya*). This supreme shelter or *āśraya* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who by His *aṁśa* (Paramātmā) pervades the entire worlds. After describing the ten topics of a *maha-purana*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī begins to answer other questions of Parikṣit Mahārāja, beginning with the activities of *puruṣa-avatāras*.

### Sarga and Visarga

*Sarga* is the creation of the Virat-rūpa. Maha-Viṣṇu enters into each universe as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and carries out the creation. The ingredients of creation – *dravya, karma, kāla, svabhāva*, and the *jīvas* can produce effects only by connection with Him, otherwise they have no effect. By Lord's desire (to eat, speak, smell etc), the gross sense organs, the subtle sense organs, the sense objects and the gross elements are created of the *virat-rūpa*. The sense *devatās* occupy their place in the corresponding senses of the *virat-puruṣa*. *Visarga* is the creation of forms and activities of the living entities, which is carried out by Brahmā. All species like the Prajapatis, Manus, *devatās*, humans, animals, reptiles etc., are created by the Lord (through Brahmā) based on their *karma*. The Lord, in the form of Viṣṇu, does maintenance of all living entities and as Rudra, He annihilates the complete creation at the end of millennium. Usually *sarga* happens at the beginning of Brahmā's life and *visarga* at the beginning of Brahmā's day.

### Vidura-Maitreya Saṁvāda

Sūta Gosvāmī prepares to speak about Pādma-kalpa. At that time, Śaunaka Ṛṣi inquires about the Vidura-Maitreya saṁvāda and the activities of Vidura. Just as Śaunaka Ṛṣi asked Sūta Gosvāmī about the Vidura-Maitreya conversation, Parikṣit had also inquired Śukadeva Gosvāmī about it.

End of Canto 2



