



BHĀGAVATA PRADĪPIKĀ

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

ALSO

Summon Calls of Eternal Time
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Analogy Arena

Does One Man's Mistake Make Many Culprits?



**FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA**

SUMMON CALLS OF ETERNAL TIME

By His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda

Death cannot be checked by anyone or from any source within this material world

There is no superior power which can check the cruel hands of death. No one wants to die, however acute one's bodily sufferings may be. Even in these days of so-called scientific advancement of knowledge, there is no remedial measure either for old age or for death. Old age is the notice of the arrival of death served by cruel time, and no one can refuse to accept either summon calls or the supreme judgment of eternal time.

Death cannot be checked by anyone or from any source within this material world. Hiraṇyakaśipu wanted to be immortal and underwent a severe type of penance by which the whole universe trembled, and Brahmā himself approached him to dissuade Hiraṇyakaśipu from such a severe type of penance. Hiraṇyakaśipu asked Brahmā to award him the blessings of immortality, but Brahmā said that he himself was subject to death, even in the topmost planet, so how could he award him the benediction of immortality? So there is death even in the topmost planet of this universe, and what to speak of other planets, which are far, far inferior in quality to Brahmāloka, the residing planet of Brahmā. Wherever there is the influence of eternal time, there is this set of tribulations, namely birth, disease, old age and death, and all of them are invincible. (SB 1.13.20 P)

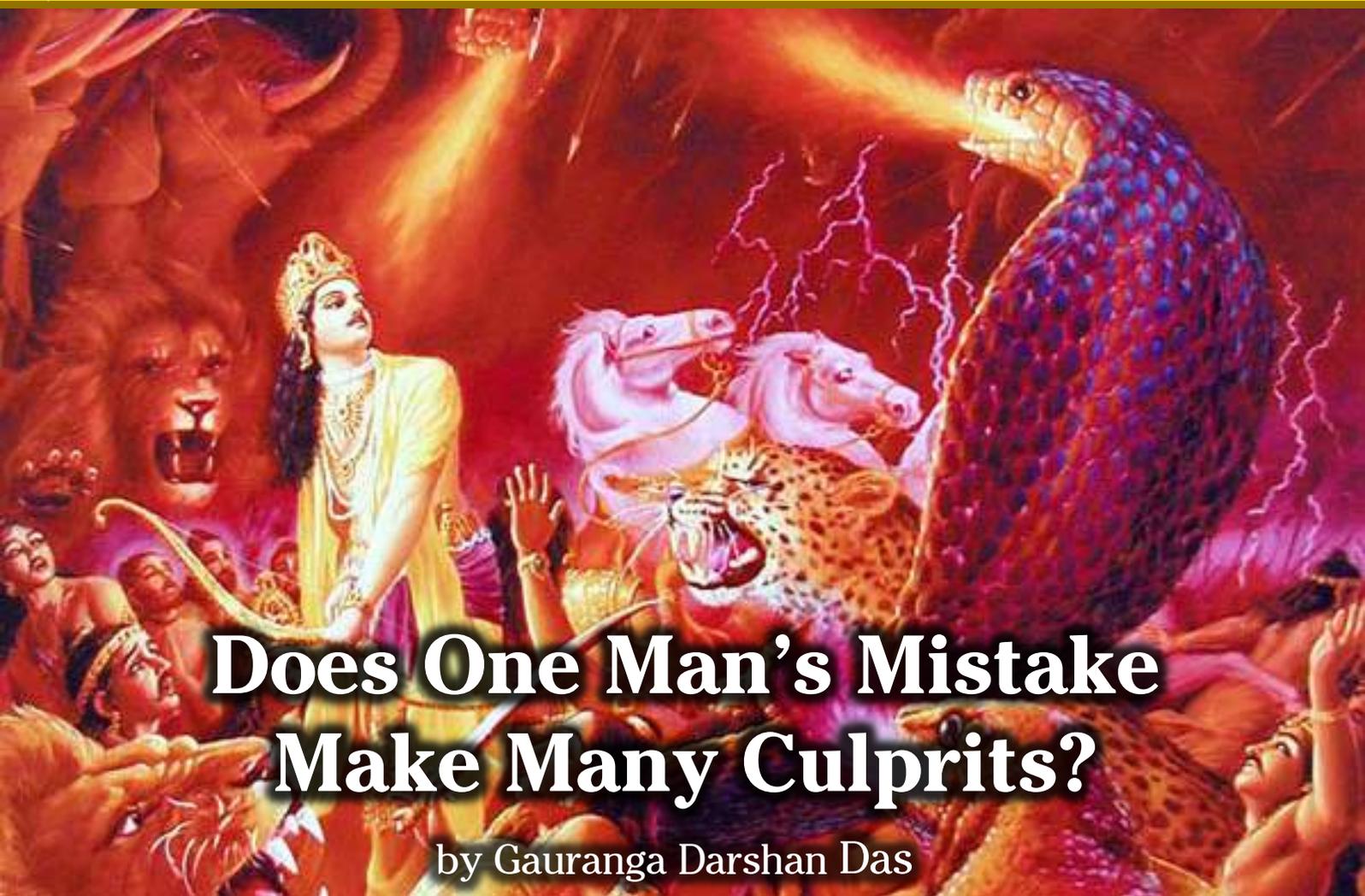
During the political upsurge in India and its division into Pakistan and Hindustan, so many rich and influential Indians had to surrender life, property and honor due to the influence of time, and there are hundreds and thousands of examples like that all over the world, all over the universe, which are all effects of the influence of time. Therefore, the conclusion is that there is no powerful living being within the universe who can overcome the influence of time. Many poets have written verses lamenting the influence of time. Many devastations have overtaken the universes due to the influence of time, and no one could check them by any means. Even in our daily life, so many things come and go in which we have no hand, but we have to suffer or tolerate them without remedial measure. That is the result of time. (SB 1.13.21 P) ☀



**BHĀGAVATA
PRADĪPIKĀ**

Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam

The best way to establish our relation with the Lord in transcendental sweetness is to approach Him through His recognized devotees. (SB 1.9.22 P)



Does One Man's Mistake Make Many Culprits?

by Gauranga Darshan Das

It's natural to be angry with a person who hurts us. If the pain caused by someone's actions is too severe, one might even consider punishing them. But how appropriate is it to condemn or punish an entire community or family for one person's mistake? Here are some examples from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to explore more on this topic.

Overstepping While Avenging Brother's Death

Once, king Dhruva's younger brother Uttama went on a hunting excursion and was killed by a powerful Yakṣa in the Himālaya Mountains. Overwhelmed with lamentation and anger, Dhruva got on his chariot and went out to attack Alakāpurī, the city of the Yakṣas. A fierce battle took place between Dhruva and Yakṣas and at one point the Yakṣas fled from the battlefield. Doubting his mystic enemies, vigilant Dhruva held his ground and did not retract. As predicted, the Yakṣas attacked Dhruva with many bewildering illusions. Then, great sages appeared and prayed for the well-being of Dhruva. They reminded him of the Nārāyaṇa weapon.

Thus, with the Nārāyaṇāstra, Dhruva destroyed all the illusions created by the Yakṣas. Bouncing back with full force, Dhruva began to indiscriminately kill the Yakṣas, almost to the point of destroying their entire race.

Seeing his grandson Dhruva's overstretched spirit of punishment, Svāyambhuva Manu approached him and said, "My dear Dhruva, enough! Excessive anger (*atiroṣa*) is the sinful path of ignorance. It doesn't befit our dynasty, and especially you, who are destined to achieve the Lord's abode. It has been proved that you are affectionate to your brother and are aggrieved about his death. But for the fault of one Yakṣa, you are killing many. May I remind you, these Yakṣas are not the killers of your brother for the Supreme Lord is the ultimate cause of birth and death. Please note that your overreaction to one man's mistake has been very disrespectful to Kuvera, the king of Yakṣa race. You should immediately pacify him."



Svāyambhuva Manu, the first progenitor of mankind, condemned this attitude and the act of punishing an entire race for one person's mistake. Even devotees are subjected to undue anger at times. This is the nature of anger. If unchecked, it can keep increasing endlessly. By remaining in good association and under the guidance of mature devotees, one can check the force of anger and its actions. Devotees humbly give up anger upon receiving correction and guidance from another devotee.

Thereafter Dhruva apologized and pacified Kuvera. And being pleased with Dhruva, Kuvera granted him the benediction of unflinching faith in and remembrance of the Supreme Lord.

Aggressive While Defending Master's Honour

Once all the sages, demigods, fire-gods and other leaders of the universe assembled to perform a thousand-year sacrifice. Dakṣa Prajāpati, the expert and chief progenitor, entered that great assembly. Seeing him, everyone except Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva stood up in respect. Dakṣa offered obeisances to his father Brahmā. But seeing Śiva sitting without showing him respect, Dakṣa was enraged.

On the pretext of speaking about good manners and culture of respect, Dakṣa criticized Lord Śiva, "This Śiva is shameless and proud. He married my daughter and thus accepted himself as my subordinate. He is impure, unclean, mad and the master of ghosts in ignorance."

Vaiṣṇava culture teaches us to be humble and not to expect respect for oneself. But proud and envious people desire respect and worship for themselves. They however, do not offer the same to others.

Due to his deep-rooted envy, Dakṣa cursed Śiva, "May this Śiva not have a share in the sacrificial oblations." Dakṣa then angrily left the assembly in spite of the requests of assembly leaders.

Nandiśvara, the devout servant of Lord Śiva, became angry due to Dakṣa's behavior. He cursed Dakṣa and all his *brāhmaṇa* supporters who tolerated his impudence. He angrily uttered, "Let Dakṣa have the head of a goat shortly and his followers continue in *samsāra*, remaining attached to material activities." Thus, Nandi condemned not only Dakṣa for his offense, but extended his anger to the *brāhmaṇas* as well for being on Dakṣa's side.

Triggered by Nandi's angry outburst against all *brāhmaṇas*, sage Bhṛgu counter cursed. He cursed not only Nandi, but the entire clan of Lord Śiva's followers: "Let the followers of Lord Śiva become atheists, be diverted from scriptural injunctions, become addicted to wine, flesh and take shelter of heretical views."

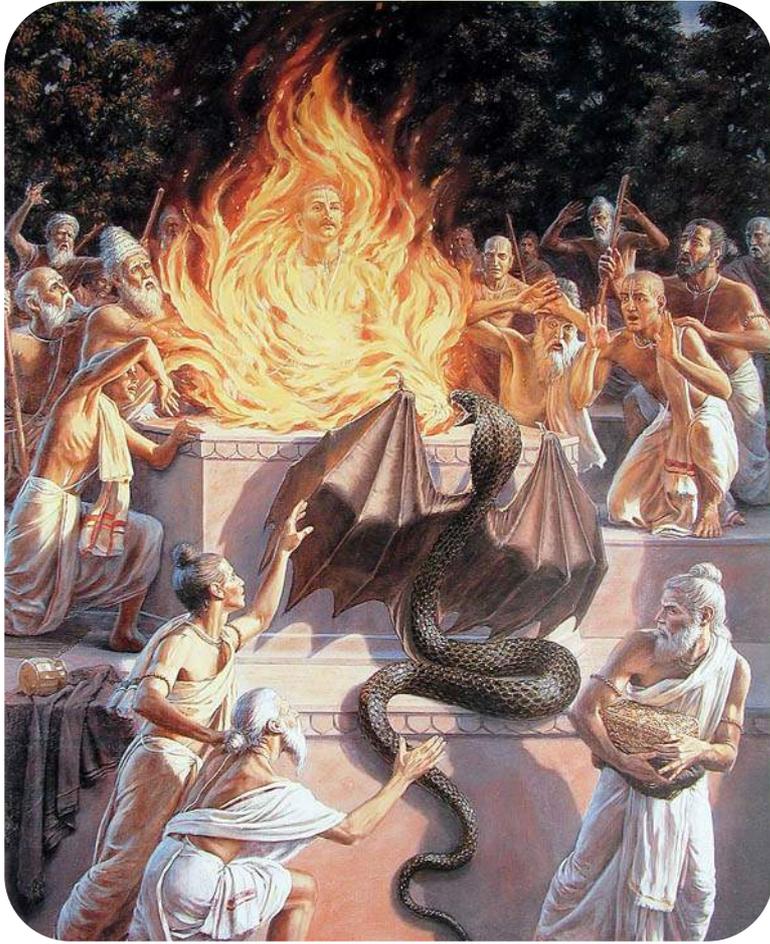


Seeing the atmosphere surcharged with intense vibrations of anger, Lord Śiva became morose and left the place. He found this a better way to stop the cursing and counter cursing. Pride, envy and resultant anger makes one blaspheme and offend exalted personalities. But great souls exemplify the quality of tolerance even in provoking situations.

Supporting and siding with a bad person is a mistake. But everyone who is circumstantially on the side of a bad person need not be bad. Therefore, one shouldn't condemn an entire group for the mistake of one or few persons in that group. For instance, Bhīṣmadeva circumstantially sided evil Duryodhana and fought against the virtuous Pāṇdavas and Lord Kṛṣṇa. But Bhīṣma was a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and knowing this very well, Kṛṣṇa gave him His *darśana* at the time of Bhīṣma's departure.

Overlooking An Overreaction

Once King Parīkṣit was fatigued and thirsty while on a hunting excursion to the forest. In search of water, he entered the hermitage of sage Śamika. Parīkṣit asked him for some drinking water but the sage who was absorbed in meditation, didn't respond. The King felt unwelcomed and momentarily angry. With his bow, he placed a dead snake on the sage's shoulder as a gesture of return for a cold welcome. He then left for his palace.



Shortly thereafter, Śṛṅgi the son of the hermit, came to know about these events at their hermitage. Being an immature boy, he arrogantly cursed Parīkṣit to die in seven days by the biting of a snake-bird. Short-sighted Śṛṅgi couldn't understand the severity of his punishment and its grave implications. Finding out about his son's thoughtless overreaction towards the sinless King, Śamīka Ṛṣi regretted the curse. He prayed to the Supreme Lord to pardon the impudence of his son.

Anger and arrogance in people who possess power cause undue disturbances to others. Power without self-control turns out to be destructive.

Meanwhile in his palace, Parīkṣit contemplated on his act and repented for his misbehavior towards the sage who he realized was in trance. He condemned himself for offending a *brāhmaṇa*. He not only expected a punishment for his mistake, but also desired a punishment, so that he wouldn't repeat such mistakes and his family members do not suffer due to his offenses.

The world can conveniently blame innocent family or friends of a wrongdoer simply held guilty by association. Thus, those who are connected to the culprit are also sometimes condemned or doubted. Being a sincere person, Parīkṣit took full responsibility for his mistake. He didn't want his family members or any other person to suffer on account of his personal slipup.

As Parīkṣit was repenting thus, a student of Śamīka Ṛṣi named Gauramukha arrived at the palace. He informed Parīkṣit with deep embarrassment that he was cursed to die in seven days. Hearing this, Parīkṣit didn't become angry or impulsive to counter curse Śamīka or Śṛṅgi. A powerful devotee never misuses power out of momentary anger or condemn an entire race for one person's impulsive behavior.

The punishment that Parīkṣit received was inappropriate and highly disproportionate to the insignificant mistake he had done. But being a mature devotee, Parīkṣit happily welcomed the curse as a blessing in disguise. He considered it an opportunity to retire from royal life and dedicate himself fully to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Though one *brāhmaṇa* boy Śṛṅgi cursed Parīkṣit severely, Parīkṣit didn't condemn the entire *brāhmaṇa* race. Rather he took the association of several *brāhmaṇas* on the banks of sacred Ganges and accepted another *brāhmaṇa* boy Śukadeva Gosvāmī as his *guru*, heard Śṛmad Bhāgavatam from him and perfected his life!

Overreaching Reply to Father's Death

After Parīkṣit heard the *Bhāgavatam* for seven days, as cursed by Śṛṅgi, Takṣaka, the infamous bird-snake bit him. The body of the great self-realized *rājārṣi* Parīkṣit immediately burnt to ashes by the fire of the snake's poison. With everyone astonished, a terrible cry all over the universe echoed.

Janamejaya, son of Parīkṣit, became extremely angry at his father's death by the snake bite. He resolved to perform a mighty sacrifice to offer all the snakes in the world into the sacrificial fire. Because of one snake's biting his father, Janamejaya wanted to destroy all the snakes in the entire world! As Janamejaya's fire sacrifice begun, many snakes were falling into that sacrificial fire. Takṣaka however, was not to be seen. Janamejaya inquired from the *brāhmaṇas* the reason for this. The *brāhmaṇas* replied that Indra was protecting Takṣaka. Because Takṣaka out of fear approached Indra and took his shelter.

Unrelenting Janamejaya then asked his priests to make Takṣaka, along with his protector Indra, fall into the sacrificial fire. The powerful priests then chanted *mantras* for offering Takṣaka together with Indra and the entire band of demigods as an oblation into the sacrificial fire. As a result, Indra, along with his airplane and Takṣaka were thrown from their positions, and Indra became very disturbed.

Seeing the plight of Indra, Bṛhaspati came and spoke to King Janamejaya, "This king of snakes has drunk

the nectar of the immortal demigods. Consequently, he is not subject to the ordinary symptoms of old age and death. Please understand that life, death and afterlife are all caused by oneself through one's own activities. No other agent is actually responsible for creating one's happiness and distress. When someone is killed by snakes or thieves, that person is just experiencing the reaction to their own past work. Please stop this sacrifice intended of do harm to others. Many innocent snakes have already been burned to death. Remember, all persons must suffer the unforeseen consequences of their own past activities."

When Bṛhaspati advised Janamejaya in this way, Janamejaya humbly honored his words and desisted from performing the snake sacrifice. He was aggrieved due to his beloved father's death, and became angry, but upon receiving the suggestions and counsel of an exalted *brāhmaṇa*, he gave up his anger.

Even great souls might succumb to extreme emotions at times, but they are humble enough to admit their mistakes, rectify them and not repeat them.

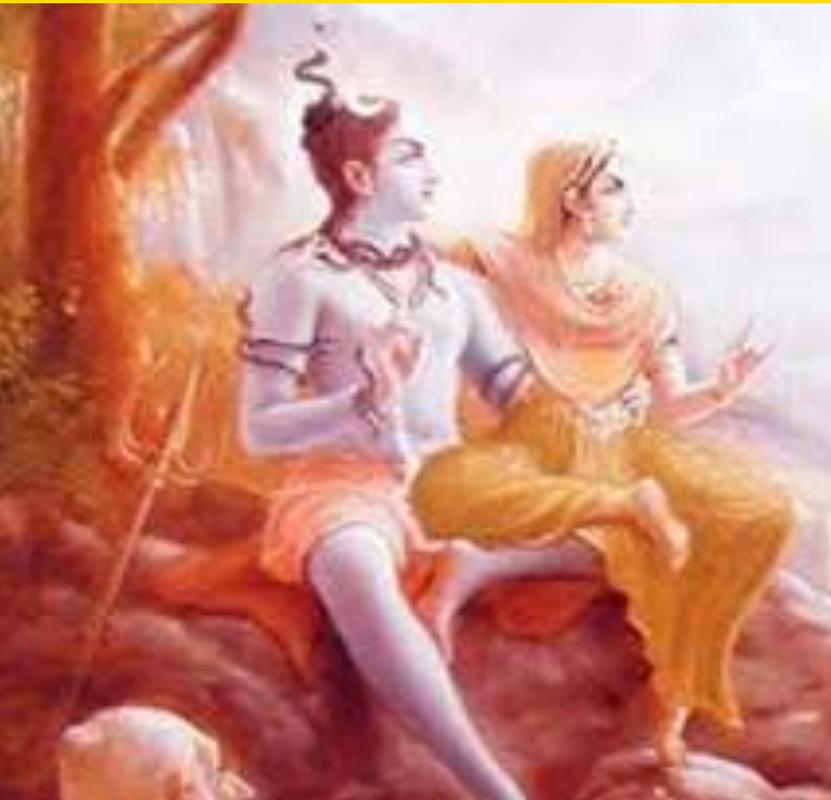
A Balanced Outlook

Drawing inspiration from the above cases, when we encounter people who commit mistakes, we need to be careful not to label their communities or families as sinful or partners in the crime. And not overstep or overreach with our response! However, we also need to understand that when we ourselves commit a mistake, our families or organizations that we belong could be condemned, lose reputation or even be liable for punishment.

Due to Indra's mistake of offending Durvāsa by dishonoring his garland, all the demigods lost their positions in heaven. On another instance, Indra neglected to welcome his *guru* Bṛhaspati, consequently all the demigods eventually lost of their opulence. So, one should be careful not to cause difficulties or ill reputation to one's community, family or institution, by inattentive and inappropriate behaviour.

We need to conduct ourselves with integrity and responsibility, and try to carefully avoid conduct which may be deemed inappropriate. One person's mistake could turn out to be a black spot on an entire community and become a cause of unnecessary problems to a larger group of innocent bystanders or future generations. ☀

VERSE OF THE MONTH

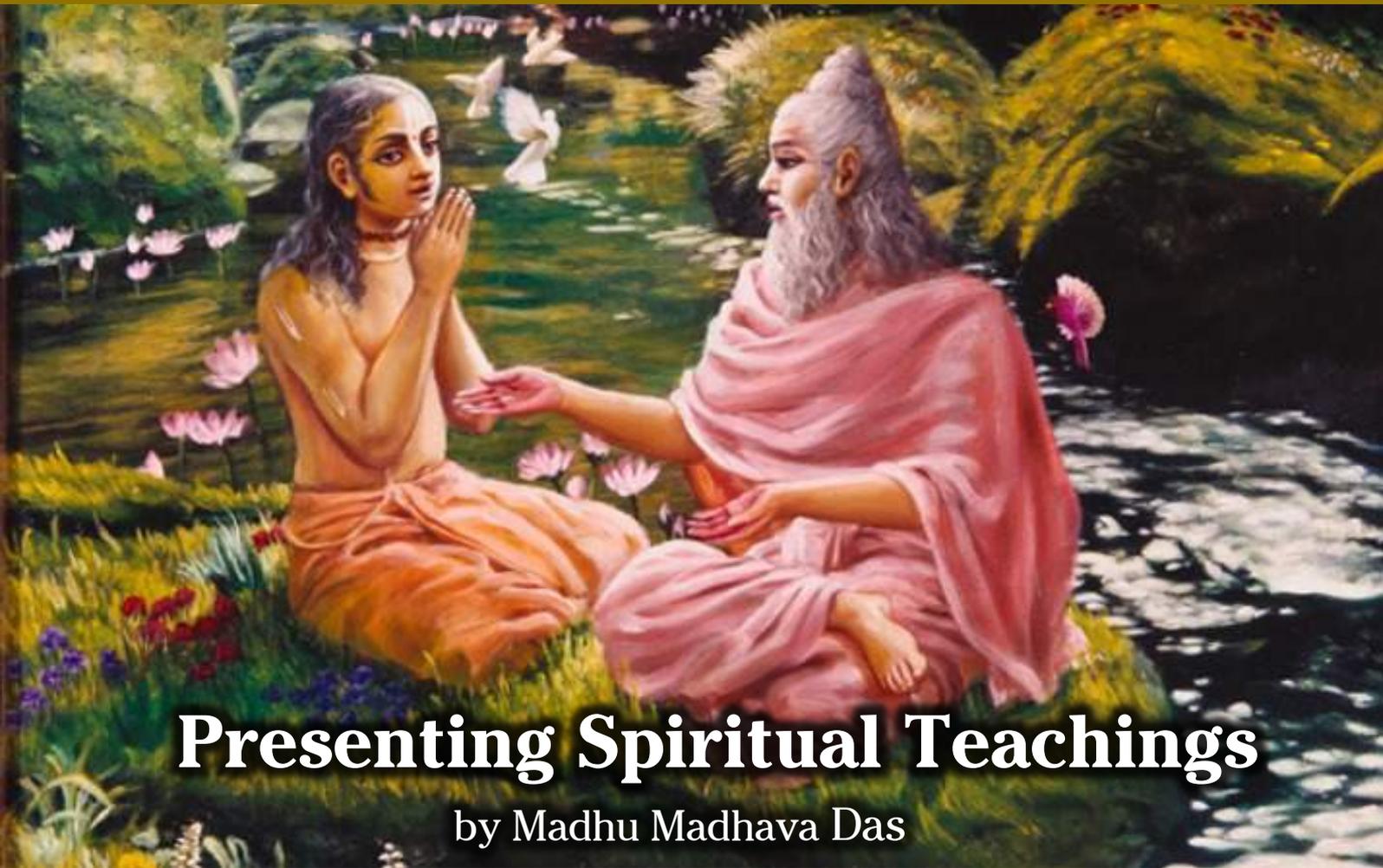


A Devotee Fears Nowhere

nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve
na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv
api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ

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

(SB 6.17.28 – Lord Śiva to Mother Pārvatī)



Presenting Spiritual Teachings

by Madhu Madhava Das

Spiritual seekers, by dint of their advanced spiritual knowledge can bring harmony in the lives of people and peace to the world. While engaged in spreading spiritual knowledge, a devotee need to be thoughtful and compassionate.

Being Humble and Loyal

Devotees need to have the pure intent to glorify Lord Krishna. The urge to minimise others using one's philosophy has to be subsided by real glorification of Krsna and His prestine message. Such intent was exhibited by Maitreya Rsi in his conversation with Vidura:

tathāpi kīrtayāmy aṅga yathā-mati yathā-śrutam

kīrtiṁ hareḥ svāṁ sat-kartuṁ giram anyābhidhāsātīm

“In spite of my inability, whatever I have been able to hear [from the spiritual master] and whatever I could assimilate I am now describing in glorification of the Lord by pure speech, for otherwise my power of speaking would remain unchaste.” SB 3.6.36

Srila Prabhupada comments: “Maitreya's statement is that in order to avoid unchaste conscious

activities, he was trying to describe the unlimited glories of the Lord, although he did not have the ability to describe them perfectly. This glorification of the Lord is not a product of research, but the result of hearing submissively from the authority of the spiritual master. It is also not possible to repeat all that one has heard from his spiritual master, but one can narrate as far as possible by one's honest endeavour.”

Being Innovative and Accommodative

The Bhagavatam presents a lot of innovative approaches adopted by devotees to enlighten their audiences. We have the instance of Jada Bharata instructing the Head of State, King Rahugana, using an analogy of The Forest. Thus, Rahugana's illusion and disease of royal pride are treated by Vedic wisdom in a way appreciated by the King.

In the Fourth Canto, Narada Muni uses an allegorical story of a fictional hero called Puranjana to Maharaja Pracīnabarhi who is thoughtlessly addicted to religious ceremonies and animal sacrifices. The imaginary character Puranjana represents a common Kaliyuga man - a deluded





soul suffering from misidentification with his temporary body and transient material life. Narada is able to help Pracinabarhi visualise his false attachments and turn to Krsna Consciousness.

Being Thoughtful and Tactful

Devotees need to adopt to a mode of presentation which presents unpalatable truths in a sensitive and thoughtful way. Speaking agitating words under the plea of speaking the Absolute Truth only further agitates the audience.

Srila Prabhupada writes in the 1st Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam: “Distress comes upon us in its own way by the laws of nature, so one should not aggravate it by propaganda.” While presenting Krsna Conscious philosophy we need to consider the time, place, circumstance and our audience.

A classic example of an exemplary sense of speaking was exhibited by Vasudeva when his brother-in-law, the powerful and wicked Kamsa, wanted to kill his own sister and Vasudev’s newly wed wife, Devaki. Vasudev could have lost his cool or fought with Kamsa but he won Kamsa’s trust by talking sense to him in a respectful and reassuring way. We also have the instance of how Lord Vishnu intelligently tricked the demoniac but foolish Vrikasura, who wanted to kill Lord Shiva by using the same boon he had received from Shiva.

In essence, in our presentation of philosophy, the core principles should be preserved but the externals can change i.e. the tools and techniques can be adopted in a contemporary way. ☀

PARI PRAŚNA

Question: Why does a living entity experience so much of bondage or miseries in the material world?

Answer: Imagine the experience of a man seeing his head having cut off in a dream. If a person's head is severed he loses his power to see. Therefore if a man sees that his head has been cut off and is frightened, it means that he thinks like that in hallucination. Actually there is no bondage or misery for the living entity. The miseries of the pure soul or this hallucination are managed by the external energy of the Lord, which controls those mischievous living entities who want to go against the will of the Lord. (SB 3.7.10 P)

Question: How can the mischievous activities of the senses be stopped?

Answer In Bhagavad-gītā (2.59) it is said that one ceases all material activities only when satisfied by contact with a better engagement. Artificially stopping a mischievous child is not the real remedy. The child must be given some better engagement so that he will automatically stop causing mischief. In the same way, the mischievous activities of the senses can be stopped only by better engagement in relation with the Supreme Lord. When the eyes are engaged in seeing the beautiful form of the Lord, the tongue engaged in tasting prasāda, or remnants of foodstuff offered to the Lord, the ears are engaged in hearing His glories, the hands engaged in cleaning the temple of the Lord, the legs engaged in visiting His temples—or when all the senses are engaged in transcendental variegatedness—then only can the transcendental senses become satiated and eternally free from material engagement. (SB 3.7.13 P)

Question: Which is the recommended path to attain liberation?

Answer: The path of liberation, as recommended by all authorities, is to serve the mahātmā transcendentalists. Even if one has no assets of favorable austerity, if he nevertheless takes shelter of the mahātmās, who are engaged in chanting and hearing the glories of the Lord, he is sure to make progress on the path back home, back to Godhead. (SB 3.7.20 P)

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.



Just as a deer, because of ignorance, cannot see the water within a well covered by grass, but runs after water elsewhere, the living entity covered by the material body does not see the happiness within himself, but runs after happiness in the material world. (SB 7.13.29)



As one mistakenly considers a flower garland to be a snake or experiences happiness and distress in a dream, so, in the material world, by a lack of careful consideration, we differentiate between happiness and distress, considering one good and the other bad. (SB 6.17.30)



The spiritual master should be considered to be directly the Supreme Lord because he gives transcendental knowledge for enlightenment. Consequently, for one who maintains the material conception that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being, everything is frustrated. His enlightenment and his Vedic studies and knowledge are like the bathing of an elephant. (SB 7.15.26)

ANALOGY ARENA

When a tree is uprooted it immediately falls down and begins to dry up. Similarly, if one doesn't take care of the body, which is supposed to be untruth—in other words, if the untruth is uprooted—the body undoubtedly becomes dry. (SB 8.19.40)



For a person who has suitable shoes on his feet, there is no danger even when he walks on pebbles and thorns. For him, everything is auspicious. Similarly, for one who is always self-satisfied there is no distress; indeed, he feels happiness everywhere. (SB 7.15.17).



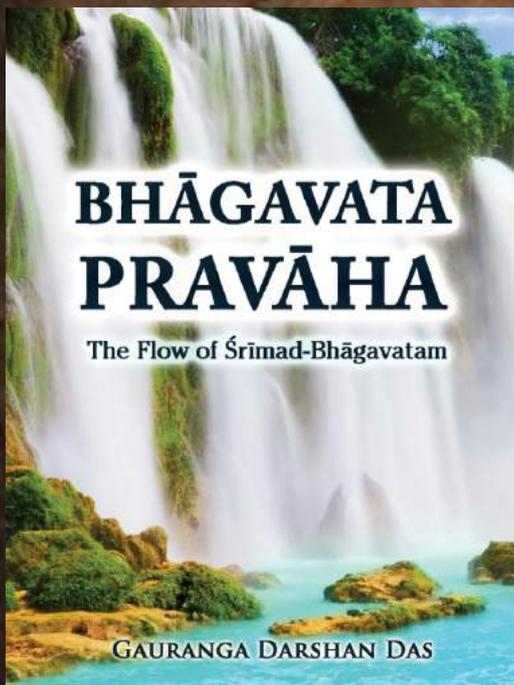
In dreams we sometimes enjoy eating sweet rice and sometimes suffer as if one of our beloved family members had died. Because the same mind and body exist in the same material world of duality when we are awake, the so-called happiness and distress of this world are no better than the false, superficial happiness of dreams. (SB 6.17.30 P)





BHĀGAVATA PRAVĀHA

The Pristine flow of Srimad Bhagavatam Wisdom



COMING SOON

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NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

CC: Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

BG: Bhagavad-gītā

BS: Brahma-saṁhitā

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

Without Krishna, all the supplementary literatures like the Puranas and Mahabharata are simply stories or historical facts. But with Krishna they become transcendental, and when we hear of them we at once become transcendently related with the Lord. (SB 1.7.12 P)