



June 2020 | Issue 36



# BHĀGAVATA PRADĪPIKĀ

*Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam*

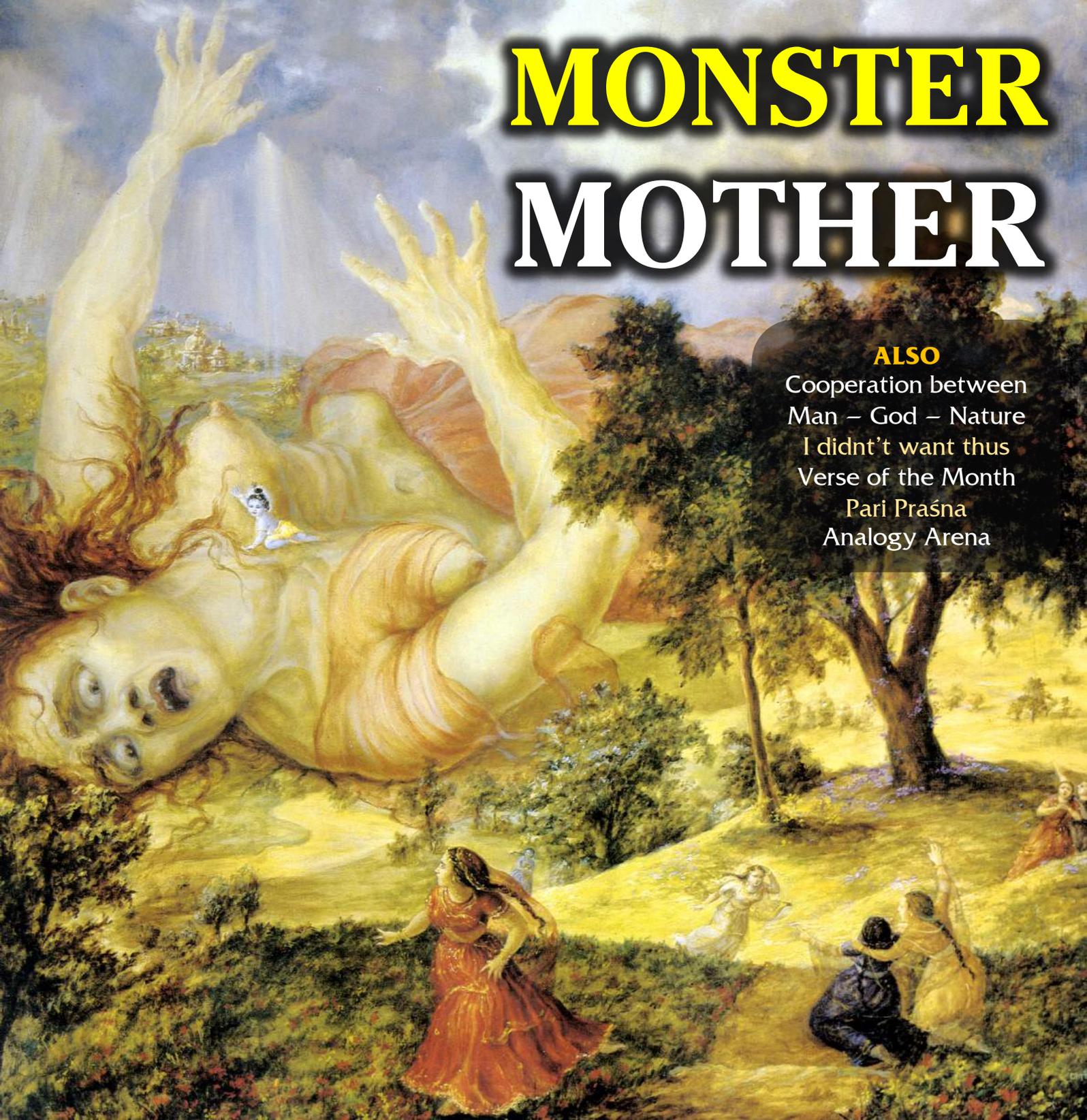
*A Monthly E-Magazine from the Bhaktivedanta Vidyapitha with Illuminating Perspectives on the Srimad-Bhagavatam*

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

## MONSTER MOTHER

**ALSO**

Cooperation between  
Man – God – Nature  
I didn't want thus  
Verse of the Month  
Pari Praśna  
Analogy Arena





# MONSTER MOTHER

by Gauranga Darshan Das

*When one is sincere in seeking Kṛṣṇa's shelter, He will divert us from fake gurus and direct us towards authentic gurus of bhakti.*

Lord Kṛṣṇa displays His mercy to an unimaginable extent in Vṛndāvana, His divine abode. He gave the position of a mother to a monster who came to kill Him. She was Pūtanā, a *rākṣasi*, whose business was to search for infants, kill them and suck their blood. She represents a fake *guru* or the fickle mind that distracts a spiritual seeker from one's goal in *bhakti-yoga*.

## Uninvited Yet Unobstructed

As a witch who was accustomed to black arts, Pūtanā, the baby-catcher flew in the sky and landed in Gokul. She was specifically instigated by evil Kāmsa to kill babies who were born in the last ten days. Pūtanā changed her form into a beautiful woman. Seeing her, innocent ladies thought that the goddess of fortune, holding a lotus in her hand, had come to see her husband Nārāyaṇa who was being worshiped in the house of Nanda Mahārāja. Everyone trusted her spontaneously beyond doubt.

Her heart was fierce and cruel, but she presented herself like a very affectionate mother. She resembled a sharp sword in a soft sheath.

She entered Nanda Mahārāja's house without anyone's permission or obstruction. Overwhelmed by her beauty, and apparent motherly love, mother Yaśodā and mother Rohiṇī didn't stop her. Pūtanā went into the inner chambers and saw baby Kṛṣṇa sleeping in bed, His unlimited power covered like fire under ashes. As if afraid of her, He closed His eyes. Pūtanā understood that the child wasn't ordinary, but bent upon fulfilling her purpose, she took Kṛṣṇa on her lap who was to be her own end, just as a fool places a sleeping snake on one's lap, thinking it to be a rope.

## Gentle Conduct – Brutal Heart

The fierce *rākṣasi* then started feeding her breast milk to baby Kṛṣṇa. She had smeared a dangerous poison on her breast to kill Him. That poison was so intense that even touching it could cause death.



Kṛṣṇa took hold of her breast, squeezed it hard with

His tender yet thunderbolt-like hands. He then sucked out both the poison and her life. *Though God presents Himself as an infant as a part of His pastimes, His powers remain the same. However powerful a demon may be, he or she cannot overpower God.*

Kṛṣṇa manifested anger towards Pūtānā, because she had planned to kill many children of Gokul. The power of His anger sucked out her impure and evil propensities along with her life, just as a man with an axe cuts down a tree. Kṛṣṇa's anger, however, was temporary, because it got transformed into the greatest mercy within no time. *God's anger is only to rectify and reform demoniac people, but not to take revenge on them. As the supreme well-wisher of all, His ultimate disposition towards anyone is 'mercy.'*

Pūtānā screamed out in severe pain, "Please leave me! Get away from me!" Perspiring, her eyes wide open and her arms and legs flailing, she cried loudly again and again. As all directions vibrated, people fell down, fearing that thunderbolts were about to fall upon them. She could not maintain her disguise as a beautiful woman and reverted to her original form of a witch. And everyone realized that she was a *rākṣasi*. *No one can perpetually control or cheat people. By higher powers, one's power ultimately gets nullified and one's real colors get revealed to the world.*

## Punished, But Purified

In this way Pūtānā lost her life. She fell down in the pasturing ground and smashed all the trees within a limit of twelve miles. These trees belonged to Kāmsa's garden. It was remarkable that only the trees were crushed, and not the houses of the village or the cowsheds. *Those who want to cause harm to God or godly people are themselves ruined.*

Child Kṛṣṇa was fearlessly playing on Pūtānā's huge body. The *gopis* immediately picked Him up. The simple-hearted *gopis* took precautions and did necessary rituals to invoke protection for the child Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśodā gave Kṛṣṇa her milk and then laid Him in the bed.

By Kṛṣṇa's touch, Pūtānā's body was sanctified, and she was freed of all sinful reactions and material contamination. When her body was being burnt by the Vrajavasis, the smoke that emanated was fragrant like *aguru* incense. *Kṛṣṇa's transcendental touch spiritualizes matter and purifies both the bodies and hearts of even the most wicked demons.*

## Reward For An Imitation Offering

Pūtānā always hankered for the blood of infants, and desired to kill Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa disapproved Pūtānā's attitude, but He rewarded her for her attire. Pūtānā pretended to have the sentiments of a mother. She just imitated the dress and emotion of a mother, but her intent was most malicious. Kṛṣṇa also imitated to suck her breast and embraced her body, just as a child does with his mother. Just by this imitation, Kṛṣṇa elevated her to the position of a nurse and maidservant to assist mother Yaśodā in Goloka Vrindāvan. How can one find a person more merciful than Kṛṣṇa? *Kṛṣṇa's nature is to find some opportunity or the other to show His mercy even on demoniac people. If one contacts Kṛṣṇa somehow or the other, even with a negative attitude, Kṛṣṇa purifies him or her and bestows His causeless mercy.*

If Pūtānā could attain such a result by neglectfully and enviously making an offering to Kṛṣṇa, what is to be said of mother Yaśodā, the *gopis* and the cows who offered their milk to Kṛṣṇa with sincerity, affection, love and joy, for His satisfaction? *Service rendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, whether directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, becomes successful. God's mercy is unparalleled, unimaginable, inconceivable and beyond human logic!*

One who has crossed the oceans by ship may have sufficient experience of such dependence upon the mercy of the ocean. But one can ply over the ocean of material existence by the grace of the Lord very easily, without any fear of storm or fog. (SB 2.8.21 P)

## Who was Pūtanā in her past life?

According to the *Garga-Samhita*, in her past life, Pūtanā was Ratnamālā, the daughter of Bali Mahārāja (*Brahma-vaivarta Purana* mentions that she was Bali's sister). Seeing the charming form of Lord Vāmana as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa* boy in Bali's sacrifice, Ratnamālā felt for the Lord a mother's love for her son. She thought, "What a wonderful boy? If I had a beautiful son like Him, then I would offer Him my milk." The Lord sanctioned her spontaneous desire. However, when Vāmanadeva took away the entire kingdom of Bali, Ratnamālā's loving mood changed into one of hatred. Within her mind she thought, "If I have him as my son, I shall kill him by feeding poison!" Thus at the end of Dvāpāra-yuga she became known as Pūtanā and fulfilled her desires. Then, by Lord Kṛṣṇa's touch, she attained liberation too. Pūtanā had two brothers named Bakāsura and Aghāsura who also attacked Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa kindly liberated them too.

## What does Pūtanā represent?

Pūtanā appeared as a loving mother externally but she was a dangerous demon internally. Thus Pūtanā represents a pseudo *guru*, or a so called teacher who seems to be genuine, but actually unauthentic and deviant. A pseudo *guru* may appear in multiple forms. A fake *guru* is one who teaches one's students sense gratification or liberation or both.

### 1. Teachers who favour Sense gratification (bhukti):

Some money and basic enjoyment are the common needs of people in this world. And one has to responsibly earn one's livelihood by honest means and live happily abiding by the laws of nature. But being greedy, foolish people desire excessive material wealth and undue enjoyment, and seek so-called *gurus* who suggest them shortcuts that appear religious. These fake *gurus* often seek wealth and enjoyment for themselves from and through the ignorant masses who approach them for the same. These materialistic *gurus* misdirect such people with some *mantras* or rituals to attain material wealth, fame, influence and so on. However, ultimately all material prosperity is temporary and is lost at any moment.

### 2. Teachers who favour Liberation (mukti):

There are other people who are frustrated with sense gratification and thus develop some spiritual inclinations. Unfortunately they sometimes approach *gurus* who direct them towards impersonal liberation.



These *gurus* teach detachment from material enjoyment, and emphasize that liberation (*mokṣa*), i.e., merging in the effulgence of God (Brahman) as all in all. However, detachment from material enjoyment has to be accompanied by attachment to spiritual enjoyment. And the ultimate spiritual enjoyment of the soul is in the eternal activity of loving and serving (*bhakti*) Kṛṣṇa, and not just merge in His effulgence to be inactive. Thus the *gurus* who direct people towards liberation are cheating and depriving people of their real fortune of loving company of God in His eternal abode.

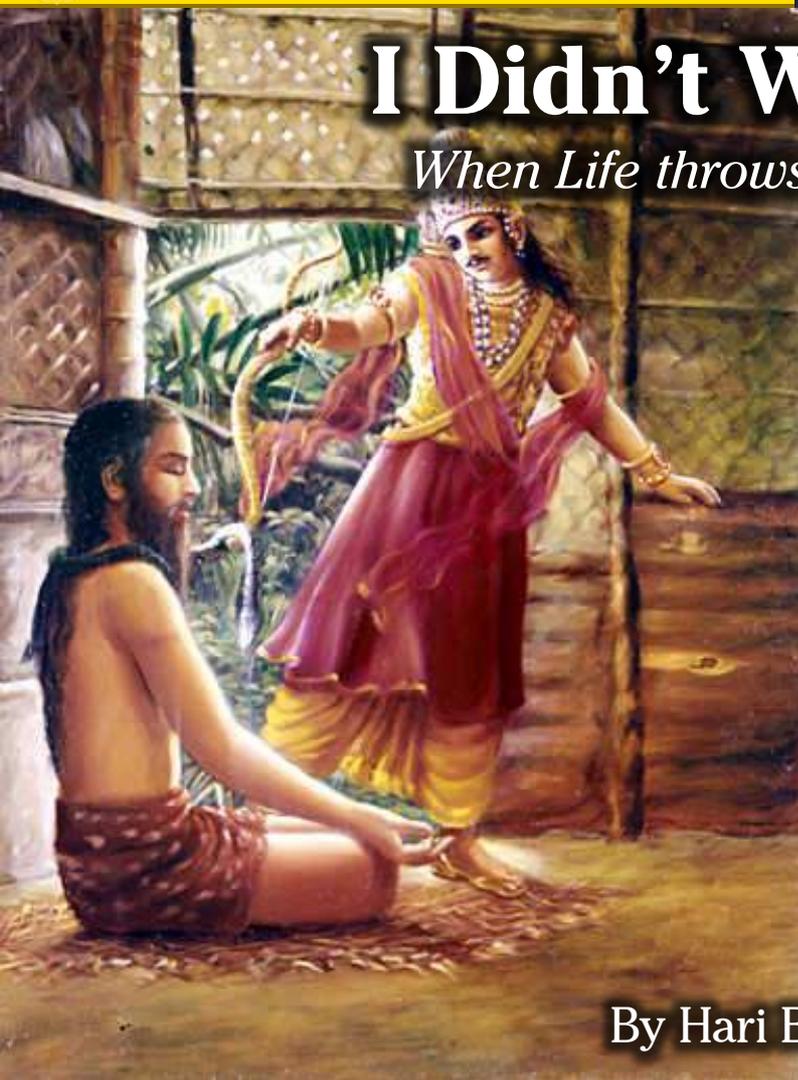
### 3. Distracted Mind:

Sometimes one's materially contaminated mind also acts like a pseudo *guru*. The mind carries millions of material impressions from past lives and is the storehouse of unlimited material desires for selfish enjoyment. Such mind inwardly presents mundane reasoning and manifests as a so-called spiritual guide. Trusting the deviant and distracted mind, a spiritual seeker gives into its desires and obsessions. The right course of action recommended for a devotee, however, is to sharpen one's intelligence with spiritual knowledge presented in the scriptures. With deliberate spiritual intelligence one must control the fickle mind and make it focus on one's spiritual practices and come closer to God.

A sincere spiritual seeker has to diligently protect oneself from falling into the clutches of above pseudo *gurus* who manifest outwardly (fake *gurus*) and inwardly (fickle mind). And one must seek shelter of the real *gurus* who appear inwardly as the Supersoul (Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā in our hearts) and outwardly as a pure devotee. One must learn the science of *bhakti* from pure devotees who are bona fide teachers or *ācāryas*. If we are sincere in seeking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, He will divert us from fake *gurus* and direct us towards authentic *gurus* of *bhakti*. Under the guidance of such *gurus*, we can easily attain the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa in His eternal abode.

# I Didn't Want This !!!

*When Life throws Unpalatable Dishes...*



By Hari Bhakti Das

It is easy, if not natural, to question the bitter experiences in life. The spirit soul being an eternal part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa is meant to engage eternally in His service. When unforeseen circumstances such as loneliness, depression, heartbreak, betrayal, neglect, humiliation and similar such things are brought forth by the river of life, they have a tremendous potential to disarray the individual's faith in the Lord, in the process, in the scriptures or in the devotees. A scrutinizing study of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* helps to revive, rebuild, and rejuvenate that faith. The fabulous examples of the fabulous devotees in this fabulous literature act miraculously on the heart of the individual. Their extraordinary responses shine forth over the unreasonable treatments that they were offered. They remind us of what is to be truly valued in life.

## Choosing remission over retaliation

Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the grandson of the Pāṇḍavas and the emperor of the world that time, was once on his hunting expedition. By the force of circumstances, he felt thirsty and approached a sage's hermit. The

sage, being situated in trance failed to receive and greet the sage. Overwhelmed by thirst, Parīkṣit nonchalantly put a dead snake around the neck of the sage and departed. When this incident was conveyed to the young brāhmaṇa child of the sage, with intense anger he cursed Parīkṣit Mahārāja to die in seven days. ॐ

The ultimate punishment of death for such a trivial mistake is unjust, isn't it? Parīkṣit's reply shows his greatness. Although capable of retorting the curse, Parīkṣit accepted it as the will of the Lord. Moreover, he regretted his mistake and was ready to forego anything for the same. A devotee seeks opportunity in coming closer to the Lord rather than using rationality to justify his actions. He took shelter of Śukadeva Goswāmī on the banks of Ganges fasting for seven full days. His tolerance and surrender gave birth to this epic of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Most of the times, best things come from reversals. Unfavourable situations open the doors of unlimited opportunities. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "A Vaiṣṇava is personally tolerant for the benefit of



others. When he does not show his prowess, this does not mean that he is lacking in strength; rather, it indicates that he is tolerant for the welfare of the entire human society." Because Parikṣit was consciously surrendered to the Lord, he didn't fear death. He gracefully took shelter of the Lord and attained perfection. When eternality is primarily valued, then temporality naturally turns valueless. This enables the devotees to imbibe all saintly qualities. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The devotees have no desire for material gain. They are conducted by one single desire: to go back to Godhead. This awaits them in due course on quitting the material body. Because they have the highest aim of life, going back to Godhead, they are never envious of anyone, nor are they proud of being eligible to go back to Godhead." (SB 1.6.26 P)

### Selecting meekness over harshness

Ambarīṣa Mahārāja was a great king in the days of yore. He was famous, charitable, devoted, responsible, courageous and a reservoir of all good qualities. He undertook a one year fast for the benefit of his entire kingdom which expanded over the entire world. Just at the end of his fast, the great mystic Durvāsā Muni happened to visit him. Ambarīṣa welcomed him generously. Durvāsā chose to first take bath before honouring meal at Ambarīṣa's place. While he was bathing, Ambarīṣa's fast breaking time was getting over. Consulting with the brāhmaṇas, he drank water which is equivalent both to breaking as well as not breaking fast. Durvāsā, seeing through his mystic powers that his host had eaten before him, got enraged. Coming on the spot, he pulled his hair and out came a massive demon to kill Ambarīṣa. Again, the punishment of killing just for drinking water? And that too, which is apt according to Vedic regulations?

And what was Ambarīṣa's response? He didn't respond, but the Lord responded on his behalf. Lord's Sudarśana chakra cut off the demon's head and then started chasing Durvāsā. Durvāsā frantically went to all places and finally Lord Nārāyaṇa told him to take shelter of Ambarīṣa. Durvāsā found that Ambarīṣa had been waiting one full year for Durvāsā to honour the meal first. A devotee forgives even before the offense is committed. When the poison of hatred is thrown toward devotees, they choose to shower back the nectar of love. Durvāsā was thoroughly ashamed, embarrassed and fell to the feet of Ambarīṣa and begged his pardon. Humble and sensitive dealings even affect the offender to reorient perceptions and reorganise values. Durvāsā was thoroughly enchanted by the behaviour of Ambarīṣa and spread

his glories everywhere.

### Seeking promotion over stagnation

Bharata Mahārāja, yet another emperor, gave up everything including his wife, children and kingdom to dedicate himself fully in Lord's service. While being in forest, he inadvertently got attached to a small deer and had to take his next life as a deer. Desires form the very core of one's existence. Material nature as well as the Lord, both reciprocate based on our desires. Bharata, although in deer's body, remembered his previous life. Mistakes in life can impede devotional service, but they cannot impair it. Lord's merciful hand guides the sincere practitioner on the path of success. His sincere repentance even in the body of deer washed away his attachments. Leaving his mother, he came near the sages' hermitage and ate only dry leaves. Rather than changing the situation, Bharata changed his consciousness. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa readied the hesitant Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. It is not the circumstance, but the quality of response that determines one's progress in spiritual life. The alteration of desires can happen very easily in the association of devotees. A moment's association can award eternal residence in the kingdom of God. The deer Bharata would hear regularly from sages, and as a consequence, took birth in a brāhmaṇa family in the next life. Having had a prior experience, he was extremely cautious not to indulge in anything that will distract his absorption in Kṛṣṇa. He perfected his life and instructed a great king Rahūgaṇa in spiritual matters.

### Conclusion

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam shows ideal precepts to handle life's uncanny experiences. Following the footsteps of great souls by responding in a befitting manner must be kept in the priority list of the prospective devotee. This endeavour has a tremendous potential to attract Kṛṣṇa's attention. Kṛṣṇa is an expert artist. The all invisible hand of God is all throughout shaping the lives of devotees in the most perfect way. When struggling *sadhakās* see such marvellous art, it boosts the faith in the artist's protection and also in the art's genuine devotion. A few stain marks on the canvas of one's life for a flash of time should not bring moroseness in the *sadhakā*. The sincere faith that Kṛṣṇa is the genuine well-wisher and the firm conviction that He shall develop the masterpiece of our life also to perfection has an immense potential to act as a powerful catalyst in the *sadhakā's* journey towards Kṛṣṇa. This is the life of the devotee of the Lord.





# PARI PRAŚNA

**Question:** What is the significance of money given in charity?

**Answer:** Money given in charity to a suitable person is guaranteed bank balance in the next life. Such charity is recommended to be given to a *brāhmaṇa*. If the money is given in charity to a *non-brāhmaṇa* (without brahminical qualification) the money is returned in the next life in the same proportion. If it is given in charity to a half-educated *brāhmaṇa*, even then the money is returned double. If the money is given in charity to a learned and fully qualified *brāhmaṇa*, the money is returned a hundred and a thousand times, and if the money is given to a *veda-pāra* (one who has factually realized the path of the Vedas), it is returned by unlimited multiplication. (SB 2.3.17 P)

**Question:** What is the process of spiritual culture aimed at?

**Answer:** The whole process of spiritual culture is aimed at changing the heart of the living being in the matter of his eternal relation with the Supreme Lord as subordinate servant, which is his eternal constitutional position. So with the progress of devotional service, the reaction of change in

the heart is exhibited by gradual detachment from the sense of material enjoyment by a false sense of lording it over the world and an increase in the attitude of rendering loving service to the Lord. (SB 2.3.24 P)

**Question:** Is devotional service of a devotee hampered by rising age?

**Answer:** Transcendental service to the Lord is not mundane. The service attitude of the devotee gradually increases and never becomes slackened. Generally, in old age a person is allowed retirement from mundane service. But in the transcendental service of the Lord there is no retirement at all; on the contrary, the service attitude increases more and more with the progress of age. In the transcendental service there is no satiation, and therefore there is no retirement.

Materially, when a man becomes tired by rendering service in his physical body, he is allowed retirement, but in the transcendental service there is no feeling of fatigue because it is spiritual service and is not on the bodily plane. Service on the bodily plane dwindles as the body grows older, but the spirit is never old, and therefore on the spiritual plane the service is never tiresome. (SB 3.2.3 P)

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*.

## VERSE OF THE MONTH



## Art of Perfect Speech

*cāru citra-padaṁ ślakṣṇaṁ  
mṛṣṭaṁ gūḍhaṁ aviklavam  
sarveṣāṁ upakārārthaṁ  
tadā anuvadann iva*

Mahārāja Pṛthu's speech was very beautiful, full of metaphorical language, clearly understandable and very pleasing to hear. His words were all grave and certain. It appears that when he spoke, he expressed his personal realization of the Absolute Truth in order to benefit all who were present. (SB 4.21.20 – Maitreya Ṛṣi to Vidura)





When a mad elephant enters a beautiful garden, it destroys everything, leaving a barren field. Similarly, the power of vaiṣṇava-aparādha is so great that even an advanced devotee becomes almost devoid of his spiritual assets if he commits it. (SB 5.1.5 P)



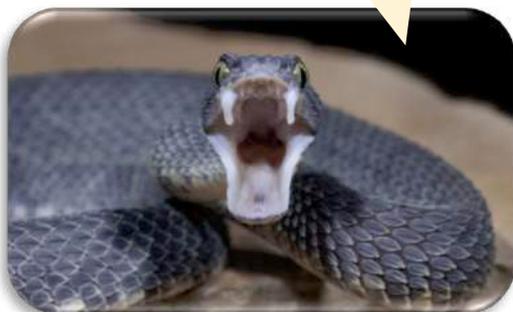
A dream that we see at night is certainly false, but a horrible dream certainly affects the person seeing it. The soul's fatigue is not factual, but as long as one is immersed in the illusory bodily conception, one is affected by such false dreams. (SB 5.10.21 P)



When a bumblebee enters the opening of a lotus flower and drinks its honey, it is fully protected by the petals of the lotus. The bee is undisturbed by sunshine and other external influences. Similarly, one who always seeks shelter at the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead is protected from all dangers. (SB 5.1.19 P)

## ANALOGY ARENA

The sense organs are certainly our greatest enemies, and they are therefore compared to venomous serpents. However, if a venomous serpent is bereft of its poison fangs, it is no longer fearful. Similarly, if the senses are engaged in the service of the Lord, there is no need to fear their activities. (SB 5.1.17 P)



A businessman is always very eager to go to a place where business is transacted. Similarly, a devotee is very eager to hear from the lips of liberated devotees. (SB 4.29.39-40 P)



If one gets a good manager, his estate is very nicely managed, but if the manager is a thief, his estate is spoiled. Similarly, in his material, conditional existence, the living entity gives power of attorney to his mind. As such, he is liable to be misdirected by his mind into enjoying sense objects. (SB 4.29.7 P)



# BHAGAVATA PRAVAHA

# Canto 5

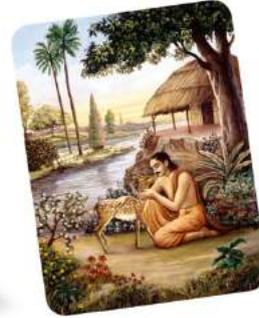
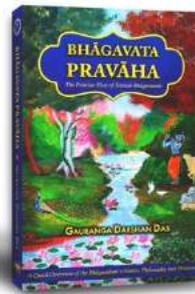
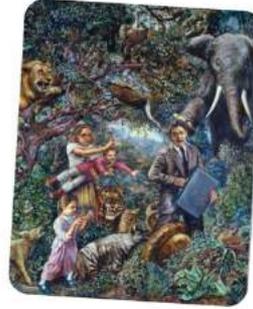


4-6  
June  
2020

The Pristine Flow of Srimad Bhagavatam

By Gauranga Darshan Das

7.00 – 8.00 pm



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## Nectar Verses

#### 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 PRAVĀHA

The Pristine Flow of Srimad Bhagavatam

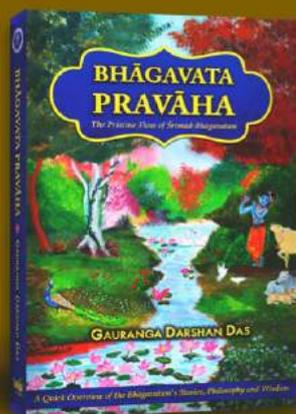
By Gauranga Darshan Das



Canto  
**6**

7-11  
June  
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