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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

Also
Rising in Love with Kṛṣṇa
Verse of the Month
Analogy Arena
Pari-prasna

On the
SPUR of the
Moment...!





SENSITIVITY IN FOLLOWING ETIQUETTES

**FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA**

By His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda

*Impertinence on the part of the pseudo spiritual master
is very risky to progressive spiritual realization.*

Although one may be well versed in the transcendental science, one should be careful about the offense of *maryādā-vyatikrama*, or impertinently surpassing a greater personality. According to scriptural injunction one should be very careful of transgressing the law of *maryādā-vyatikrama* because by so doing one loses his duration of life, his opulence, fame and piety and the blessings of all the world. To be well versed in the transcendental science necessitates awareness of the techniques of spiritual science.

Uddhava, being well aware of all these technicalities of transcendental science, advised Vidura to approach Maitreya Ṛṣi to receive transcendental knowledge. Vidura wanted to accept Uddhava as his spiritual master, but Uddhava did not accept the post because Vidura was as old as Uddhava's father and therefore Uddhava could not accept him as his disciple, especially when Maitreya was present nearby. The rule is that in the presence of a higher personality one should not be very eager to impart instructions, even if one is competent and well versed. So Uddhava decided to send an elderly person like Vidura to Maitreya, another elderly person, but he was well versed also because he was directly instructed by the Lord while He was about to quit this mortal world. Since both Uddhava and Maitreya were directly instructed by the Lord, both had the authority to become the spiritual master of Vidura or anyone else, but Maitreya, being elderly, had the first claim to becoming the spiritual master, especially for Vidura, who was much older than Uddhava.

One should not be eager to become a spiritual master cheaply for the sake of profit and fame, but should become a spiritual master only for the service of the Lord. The Lord never tolerates the impertinence of *maryādā-vyatikrama*. One should never pass over the honour due to an elderly spiritual master in the interests of one's own personal gain and fame. Impertinence on the part of the pseudo spiritual master is very risky to progressive spiritual realization. (SB 3.4.28 Purport)





On the **SPUR** of the Moment...!

by Gauranga Darshan Das

The art of spontaneously responding to unforeseen happenings

Life doesn't always go according to our expectations! Sometimes most surprising things happen at the least expected moment. Life is an amazing combination of both predictable and unpredictable events. If everything could be foreseen and goes according to our plans, life would probably be boring too!

A student who sincerely studies throughout an academic term can do well in the final exam that lasts only for a couple of hours. After coming out of the examination hall submitting the answer sheet, the student can't go back to revise one's answers. Life is also similar. As a preparation to face sudden situations in life where we need to maturely respond on the spur of the moment, we must associate with wise people, study divine scriptures and practice the principles of spirituality and morality diligently. Then even our spontaneous decisions or responses could be effective.



Flexibility in dealing with the unexpected is expected from all human beings to some degree. While leaving room for the unforeseen, we also need to responsibly plan things properly to the best of our intelligence. One needs to be diligent, and not negligent.

Due diligence in preparation, wise vigilance in execution, and honest acceptance of results that are not always in our hands - make life journey exciting and not exhausting.

INSTANT RESPONSES – MATURE & IMMATURE

Circumstances are not in our control, but our response is. Problems often come unannounced. When we suddenly face a problem, how do we respond to it on the spur of the moment? A person's sense of humor is worth appreciating when he or she cracks a lovely joke with perfect timing without offending anyone. Similarly, a person's sensibility and wisdom are worth admiring when he or she spontaneously takes a wise decision in an emergency on the spur of the moment. But people who are impulsive in nature, and lack maturity often respond negatively in trying circumstances.

While there could be multiple alternatives to respond to a situation suitably, an impulsive person gives into circumstantial anger, envy, pride, and cruelty on the spur of the moment, and creates unnecessary troubles for oneself and others. One's poor responses could be due to the heat of situations or lack of maturity. Even if one knows what is right and what is wrong, one's weaknesses do not allow one to act aptly. The heart's weakness is often due to egoistic pride, undue attachments, and unfair obligations.

The timeless holy text *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* written by sage Vyāsa presents several such instances of people spontaneously responding to sudden situations. Some of them resulted in positive outcomes and some negative too, depending on the sensibleness of people involved. In either case, they provide us great life lessons.



STORY 1: A HAUGHTY BOY & A HUMBLE KING

King Parikṣit was the glorious descendant of celebrated Pāṇḍavas. Once, he went to the forest to hunt. Afflicted by thirst, he approached the hermitage of sage Śamīka and asked for water, but the sage was absorbed in deep meditation and didn't respond. Offended, Parikṣit placed a dead snake around Śamīka Ṛṣi's neck and then returned to his palace. Upon hearing this news, Śrīngi, the five-year-old son of Śamīka, became very angry. On the spur of the moment, he cursed Parikṣit to die in seven days. Parikṣit was a saintly monarch and a great devotee and Śrīngi gave him a severe punishment for an insignificant offense. Śrīngi prematurely became a self-appointed judge, without considering the position of whom he was punishing. Later even Samīka Ṛṣi regretted the impulsive behavior of Śrīngi.

But Parikṣit was mature enough to readily accept Śrīngi's curse when heard of it from Gauramukha, a disciple of Śamīka. He took it as a reaction to his own act of insulting sage Śamīka. Although it was circumstantial, Parikṣit didn't justify it but took responsibility for it. He also saw the curse as an opportunity to renounce worldly attachments and take complete shelter of the Supreme Lord. Although a *brāhmaṇa* boy cursed him, without maintaining any grudge towards the *brāhmaṇas*, he took shelter of another *brāhmaṇa*, Sukadeva Gosvami, and heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from him.

Through this incident, the Supreme Lord Krishna has descended in the form of book *Bhagavatam* for the spiritual upliftment of humanity.

The arrogance and pride of being a *brāhmaṇa* made Śrīngi curse Parīkṣit on the spur of the moment. The maturity of Parīkṣit made him spontaneously respond to it with detachment and devotion.

STORY 2: A PROUD FATHER-IN-LAW & A TOLERANT SON-IN-LAW

Once all the sages, demigods, and other leaders of the universe assembled to perform a thousand-year sacrifice. Dakṣa Prajapati, the expert and chief progenitor, entered that great assembly and everyone except Lord Brahma and Lord Śiva stood up in respect. Dakṣa offered respect to his father Brahma. At that time Lord Śiva was meditating on the Supreme Lord. But seeing Śiva not standing up to honor him, Dakṣa was enraged on the spur of the moment.

Dakṣa considered Śiva to be his subordinate because Śiva married Dakṣa's daughter Sati and thus became his son-in-law. So, Dakṣa expected respect from exalted Śiva. On the pretext of speaking about good manners and culture of respect, Dakṣa criticized Lord Śiva as disrespectful, impure, unclean, mad, and the master of ghosts. He even cursed Śiva not to have a share in the

sacrificial oblations. He angrily left the assembly despite the requests of the members there.

Lord Śiva remained tolerant of Dakṣa's criticism and didn't speak a single word in retaliation. And when the followers of Śiva and supporters of Dakṣa began arguing and cursing each other, Śiva silently got up and left the assembly showing his detachment.

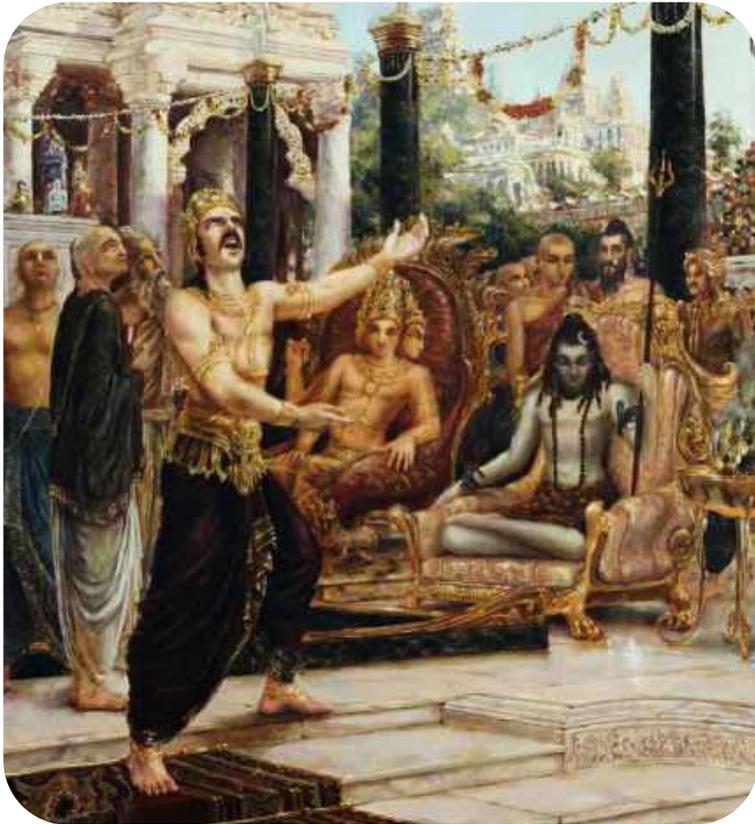
Due to his deep-rooted envy and hatred for Śiva, Dakṣa cursed Śiva on the spur of the moment. But Śiva was unagitated as he was detached and tolerant. Later Dakṣa faced the consequences of his poor mentality and misbehavior.

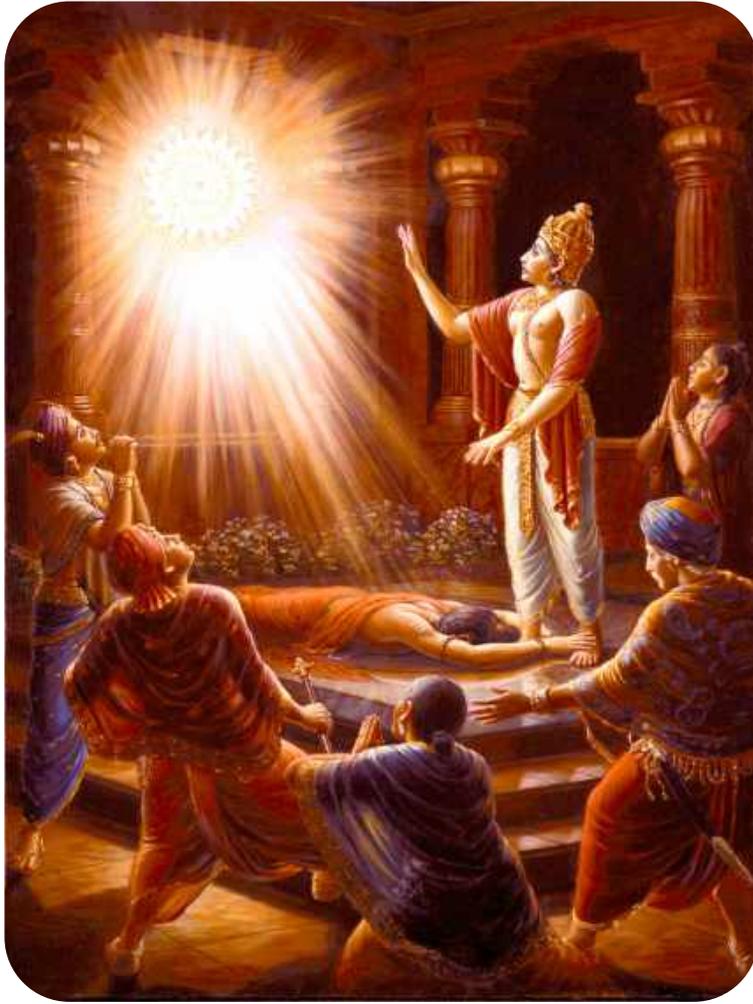
STORY 3: AN IMPULSIVE BRĀHMAṆA & A FORBEARING KṢĀTRIYA

King Ambarīṣa, a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, invited sage Durvāsā to his home for meals on an Ekadasi day. Durvāsā accepted the request and went to take bath but didn't return for a long time. Concerned that the recommended time to break his fast was passing, Ambarīṣa took a little water before the arrival of Durvāsā. When Durvāsā returned, he understood by his mystic power that Ambarīṣa drank water. Durvāsā became very furious on the spur of the moment and created a fiery demon to destroy Ambarīṣa instantly. Ambarīṣa spontaneously took shelter of the Supreme Lord and fearlessly stood facing the imminent danger. However, Sudarsana-cakra, the disc weapon of Lord Vishnu, burnt the fiery demon and noble Ambarīṣa was thus protected.

Sudarśana cakra then started chasing Durvāsā who then fled everywhere in the universe including the abodes of Brahma, Śiva and Vishnu. Finding shelter nowhere in the three worlds, Durvāsā came back to Ambarīṣa and fell at his feet. Ambarīṣa felt so embarrassed to see the *brāhmaṇa* fall at his feet. He immediately prayed to Sudarśana to release Durvāsā in exchange for his own spiritual credits. Such is the spontaneous compassion and forgiveness of a pure devotee.

The superiority complex of Durvāsā Muni of being a sage and *brāhmaṇa* made him attempt to kill Ambarīṣa, a *kṣatriya* and a householder, on the spur of the moment. But Ambarīṣa readily accepted the situation considering it to be God's will and spontaneously forgave and prayed for Durvāsā Muni when he came for protection.





STORY 4: A CRUEL BROTHER & A CLEVER BROTHER-IN-LAW

Kaṁsa loved his dear sister Devakī very much. On the day of her wedding with Vasudeva, Kaṁsa personally drove the chariot of his sister and brother-in-law. At that time, Kaṁsa suddenly heard a prophetic voice from the sky announcing that the eighth child of Devakī would kill Kaṁsa. On the spur of the moment, wicked Kaṁsa took up his sword to chop off the head of Devakī at once. He didn't consider that she was a woman, his sister and the object of his affection. He was just concerned about his own life and didn't even care for the reputation of his dynasty, and prepared himself to kill her in public, on her wedding day, in front of thousands of people. Selfish people can give up their love for relatives, but not material enjoyment.

Vasudeva, who was witnessing this, had very little time to think and respond. He had to immediately do something to save Devakī from Kaṁsa's invincible sword.

Vasudeva was so wise and devoted to the Supreme Lord, that he spontaneously gave several arguments and suggestions to Kaṁsa not to be so cruel. Finally, he convinced Kaṁsa to spare Devakī's life, promising him to bring her children to him when they will be born. On the spur of the moment, instead of becoming agitated, frustrated or hopeless, virtuous Vasudeva expertly negotiated with cruel Kaṁsa and pacified him with wise words and saved the life of Devakī. Such is the maturity of a devotee.

The selfishness of Kaṁsa made him so cruel that he wanted to kill his sister on the spur of the moment. The diligence and wisdom of Vasudeva made him speak timely words and save Devakī's life.

QUICK DECISION MAKING

Decision making is an art and it's a day to day necessity in life. Hasty decisions made on the spur the moment sometimes lead people into serious difficulties. Therefore, a general recommendation is to make diligent decisions after considering the issue from different angles. A well thought out decision with proper planning often gives supposedly good results.

Yet life presents situations where we don't get an open-ended time to make decisions. At times, we need to make very quick decisions. The sensibility of such decisions depends on the maturity we acquire over the years and decades of experience. Our instant positive or negative responses to life situations are products of the impressions and conceptions that we carry in mind for a long time.

Maturity is not a product available in the market. It is a result of one's sincerity in following principles of morality and spirituality, good habits, and associating with wise and realized people.

People who lack such wisdom and maturity fail to appropriately respond to situations and run into complications.





Rising in LOVE with KṚṢṆA

The Art of Expressing one's Heart

By Hari Bhakti Das

*Learning through Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam a method of coming closer to Kṛṣṇa
by offering heartfelt prayers to Him.*

A greedy person desires wealth. A lusty person desires sense enjoyment. An intellectual person desires to research on new topics. But, is having a desire sufficient? Desires turn into reality only if the element of endeavour is added, and if it is in one's destiny to attain it. This applies for anyone who wishes to attain success in any field, including spiritual life. A devotee, however, cannot attain perfection merely by endeavour. The additional ingredient known as 'prayer' is crucial. The prayers of exalted devotees from the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam teach us how to pray.

Glorification of Lord's Supreme Position

A boy who is in love with a girl appreciates her beauty on meeting her. A good son gratefully acknowledges his mother's sacrifice on seeing her. Similarly, the devotees offer prayers in glorification of the Lord's supremacy.

Supremely Powerful

When Aśvatthāmā killed the five sons of Draupadī, Arjuna chased him. Being fearful, Aśvatthāmā released

a *brahmāstra* towards Arjuna. It's glaring effulgence caused great heat everywhere. Arjuna was dumbfounded. Being unable to ascertain the cause, he started praying to Kṛṣṇa. Interestingly, the initial prayers of Arjuna were not for saving himself. He simply glorified Kṛṣṇa as being mighty-armed, the bestower of fearlessness and the deliverer of those burning in the fire of material existence. He prayed,

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bāho bhaktānām abhayaṅkara
tvam eko dahyamānānām apavargo 'si saṁsṛteḥ*

For one who has the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa who is feared even by the fear personified, nothing in this world can harm Him. The Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa are non-different from Him. Anyone who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare has the fortune of being with the Lord, and thereby one can achieve freedom from all fear.

Supremely Merciful

Power and kindness are rare to be found in a single



person. Kṛṣṇa is not only supremely powerful and beautiful, but His mercy unlimitedly exceeds the qualification of the recipient. **Kṛṣṇa's power provides protection, His beauty offers solace, and His mercy awards shelter.** This is the Absolute Supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Expression of one's Fallen Condition

Observing and understanding the greatness of the Lord also makes one realize one's insignificance. Just as one feels very tiny in front of a huge mountain, a devotee feels unqualified in front of the Lord. One understands the predicament one is in, being swayed by the material modes, attacked by the anarthas and bound by material desires. Recognition of one's pitiable condition is one of the crucial elements to fervently take shelter of the Lord.

Unhappy Situation

The demigods, during the creation offer their prayers unto the Lord. They say, "O Lord, the living entities being overwhelmed by the miseries cannot obtain any happiness. Therefore they take shelter of the shade of Your lotus feet, which are full of knowledge, and we also thus take shelter of them." (SB 3.5.40)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Material existence is temporary, illusory and full of miseries. There is no happiness at all. There is just the futile attempt to get rid of the miseries, and temporary cessation of misery is falsely called happiness." (SB 1.2.6 P)

Unrestricted Gratification

Furthermore, the senses never take a break! Just as a man having many wives is pulled in so many directions, a person with uncontrolled senses is dragged piteously. The eyes demand to see scenes of enjoyment, the sense of touch wishes to contact soft things, the belly wants to eat more and the tongue is attracted to palatable dishes.

Unconditional Submission

A person burning in the sweltering heat, unable to tolerate frantically looks for some shelter. Similarly, a devotee helplessly surrenders to Kṛṣṇa. The devotee's desperation attracts Kṛṣṇa's attention. When one is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one cannot be hopeless. Kṛṣṇa's mercy can extricate one from the deepest well of material existence.

Petition for Fulfilment of Benediction

A devotee's insignificance is not an impediment to approach the Lord for some benediction. Kṛṣṇa can fulfil all our desires. He can award any benediction. A devotee, knowing this, puts a petition before the Lord. What should we ask from Kṛṣṇa? Pure devotees are a storehouse of the highest echelons of desires connected to Kṛṣṇa. They teach us what is truly of value.

Unflinching Attachment and Association

After being cursed to die in seven days, Mahārāja Parīkṣit went to the bank of Ganges. He undertook a vow of fasting until death. He expressed his desire to the sages if he had to take another birth. He said,

*punaś ca bhūyād bhagavaty anante
ratiḥ prasaṅgaś ca tad-āśrayeṣu
mahatsu yām yām upayāmi sṛṣṭim
maitry astu sarvatra namo dvijebhyaḥ*

"I pray that if I should again take my birth in the material world I will have complete attachment to the unlimited Lord Kṛṣṇa, association with His devotees and friendly relations with all living beings." (SB 1.19.16)

Unfailing Compassion

A devotee doesn't wish to be happy oneself. Kṛṣṇa's love impels the devotee to share that love with others. One feels for the suffering of all humanity, and desires everyone's happiness, perfectly echoing Kṛṣṇa's sentiments. Prahlāda Mahārāja exhibited the quintessence of compassion. He prayed to Lord Nṛsimhadeva only for the deliverance of all fallen souls of this world, not desiring anything for himself.

We learn from Parīkṣit Mahārāja what to ask for ourselves. And Prahlāda Mahārāja teaches what to ask for others. Desiring to develop love for Kṛṣṇa, to go back home, back to Godhead is not a selfish desire. An orphan desiring to go back to his lost parents is not selfishness. Rather, it is a rightful claim. And when one is nicely situated in one's spiritual position, one also sees other orphans, and tries to help them in all possible ways to get back to their homes.

Prayers form the very core of one's spiritual practices. A beggar has to beg to receive alms. Simply lying down on the side of the road may not help. Devotees are known as beggars of mercy. This simple act of Lord's glorification, expressing one's miserable condition, and seeking the mercy of the Lord helps us greatly in receiving Kṛṣṇa's grace. And what is His grace? Kṛṣṇa awards the shelter of His own lotus feet, which are the reservoir of all pleasure. That is the be-all and end-all of all desires.

The Pracetās, who are great devotees, pray

*pārijāte 'ñjasā labdhe sārāṅgo 'nyan na sevate
tvad-aṅghri-mūlam āsādyā sākṣāt kiṁ kiṁ vṛṇīmahī*

"Dear Lord, when the bee approaches the celestial tree called the pārijāta, it certainly does not leave the tree, because there is no need for such action. Similarly, when we have approached Your lotus feet and taken shelter of them, what further benediction may we ask of You?" (SB 4.30.32)

PARI PRAŚNA

Question: Does perfection of pure devotional service mean to bring about a negation to all other affections ?

Answer: Perfection of pure devotional service is attained when all attention is diverted towards the transcendental loving service of the Lord. To cut off the tie of all other affections does not mean complete negation of the finer elements, like affection for someone else. This is not possible. A living being, whoever he may be, must have this feeling of affection for others because this is a symptom of life.

The symptoms of life, such as desire, anger, hankerings, feelings of attraction, etc., cannot be annihilated. Only the objective has to be changed. Desire cannot be negated, but in devotional service the desire is changed only for the service of the Lord in place of desire for sense gratification. The so-called affection for family, society, country, etc., consists of different phases of sense gratification. When this desire is changed for the satisfaction of the Lord, it is called devotional service. (SB 1.8.42 P)

Question: If Lord loves the living entities then why does He allow them to be subjected to the influence of the external energy?

Answer: The Lord does not desire that a living being be illusioned by external energy. Yet, 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. (SB 1.7.5 P)

Question: Does to renounce mean to possess nothing?

Answer: A living being is finished as soon as there is nothing to possess. Therefore a living being cannot be, in the real sense of the term, a renouncer. A living being renounces something for gaining something more valuable. A student sacrifices his childish proclivities to gain better education. A servant gives up his job for a better job. Similarly, a devotee renounces the material world not for nothing but for something tangible in spiritual value.

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*.

VERSE OF THE MONTH

Lord's Māyā Bewilders Even the Learned

*vadanti viśvam kavayaḥ sma naśvaram paśyanti cādhyātmavido vipaścitaḥ
tathāpi muhyanti tavāja māyayā suvismitam kṛtyam ajaṁ nato 'smi tam*

O unborn one, learned Vedic scholars who are advanced in spiritual knowledge certainly know that this material world is perishable, as do other logicians and philosophers. In trance they realize the factual position of this world, and they preach the truth as well. Yet even they are sometimes bewildered by Your illusory energy. This is Your own wonderful pastime. Therefore, I can understand that Your illusory energy is very wonderful, and I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. (SB 5.18.4 – Bhadraśravā to Lord Hayaśīrṣa)





As a fire, although existing in one place, can expand its light and heat everywhere, so the omnipotent Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, although situated in His spiritual abode, expands Himself everywhere, in both the material and spiritual worlds, by His various energies. (SB 6.8.32-33 P)

This universe is just like a great fort in which all the conditioned souls are kept, and they cannot leave it unless they are liberated by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (SB 5.23.3 P)

Sometimes one who is very alert so as not to commit sinful acts is victimized by sinful life again. I therefore consider this process of repeated sinning and atoning to be useless. It is like the bathing of an elephant, for an elephant cleanses itself by taking a full bath, but then throws dust over its head and body as soon as it returns to the land. (SB 6.1.10)

ANALOGY ARENA

Within a garden, a flowering tree attains a good reputation because of its fragrant flowers. Similarly, if there is a famous man in a family, he is compared to a fragrant flower in a forest. (SB 5.15.16 P)

If one chants the holy name of the Lord, even in a helpless condition or without desiring to do so, all the reactions of his sinful life depart, just as when a lion roars, all the small animals flee in fear. (SB 6.2.7 P)

Sometimes it is found that a small child eats dirty things but his parents take away the dirty things and offer him a sandeśa or some other sweetmeat. Devotees who aspire for material benedictions are compared to such children. The Lord is so kind that He takes away their material desires and gives them the highest benediction. (SB 5.19.27 P)





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*Nectar
Verses*

NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

CC: Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

BG: Bhagavad-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**

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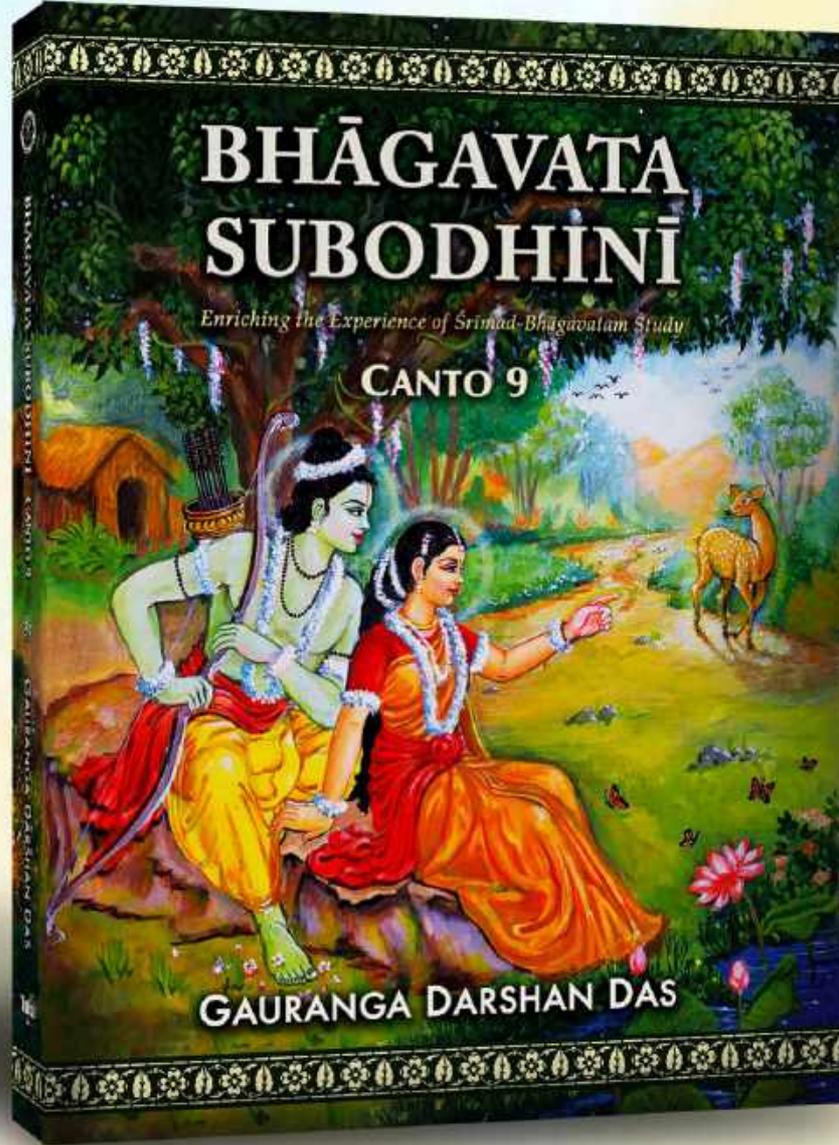
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