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## Maharaja Bharatas Fall Down:: Accident Or Intentional ?



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## BHARATA MAHARAJA, DEER AND MYSTIC YOGA *Srila Sukadeva Goswami*

Bharata Maharaja was a topmost devotee of the Lord. Following the orders of his father, who had previously decided to install him on the throne, he began to rule the entire earth. Whilst doing so he followed the orders of his father and married Pancajani, the daughter of Vishvarupa. Just as the false ego creates the subtle sense objects, Maharaja Bharata created five sons in the womb of Pancajani, his wife. These sons were named Sumati, Rastrabharta, Sudarshana, Avarana and Dhumraketu. Formerly this planet was known as *Ajanābha-varṣa*, but since Maharaja Bharata's reign it has become known as *Bhārata-varṣa*.

### VARIOUS SACRIFICES

Among those who ruled the earth, Maharaja Bharata was a very learned and experienced king. Situating himself in his prescribed duties, he perfectly ruled the citizens, keeping them engaged in their occupational duties. Maharaja Bharata was as affectionate to the citizens as his father and grandfather had formerly been. With great faith he performed various kinds of sacrifice such as the sacrifices known as *agni-hotra*, *darśa*, *pūrṇamāsa*, *cāturmāsya*, *paśu-yajña* [wherein a horse is sacrificed] and *soma-yajña* [wherein a kind of beverage is offered]. Sometimes these sacrifices were performed completely and sometimes partially. In all the sacrifices the regulations of *cātur hotra* were strictly followed and in this way Bharata Maharaja worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After performing the preliminaries of various sacrifices, Maharaja Bharata offered the results in the name of religion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva. It is thus clear that he performed all the *yajñas* for the satisfaction of Lord Vasudeva, Krishna. Maharaja Bharata thought that since the demigods who are explained in the Vedic *mantras* are different parts of Vasudeva's body, He is the controller of them. By thinking in this way, Maharaja Bharata was freed from all material contamination, such as attachment, lust and greed. When the priests were offering the sacrificial ingredients into the fire, Maharaja Bharata wisely understood how the offering made to different demigods were simply offerings to the different limbs of the Supreme Lord. For instance, Indra is considered the arm of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Surya [the sun] is His eye. Thus Maharaja Bharata considered that the oblations offered to different demigods were in actuality offerings unto the different limbs of Lord Vasudeva. In this way, the heart of Maharaja Bharata was purified by ritualistic sacrifices

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

and became completely uncontaminated. His devotional service unto Vasudeva, Lord Krishna, increased day after day. Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva, is the original Personality of Godhead manifest as both the Supersoul [Paramatma] and the impersonal Brahman. *Yogīs* meditate upon the localized Paramatma situated in the heart; *jnānīs* worship the impersonal Brahman as the Supreme Absolute Truth, and devotees worship Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose transcendental body is described in the *śāstras*. The Lord's body is decorated with the *Śrīvatsa*, the *Kaustubha* jewel and a flower garland, and His hands hold a conchshell, disc, club and lotus flower. Devotees like Narada always think of Him within their hearts.

### MAHARAJA BHARATA LEAVES FOR FOREST

Destiny fixed the time for Maharaja Bharata's enjoyment of material opulence at one thousand times ten thousand years. When that period had elapsed, he retired from family life and divided among his sons the wealth he had received from his forefathers. He left his paternal home, the reservoir of all opulence, and started for the *āśrama* of Pulaha from where *śālagrāma-śilās* are obtained which is situated in Hardwar. At *Pulaha-āśrama*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, out of His transcendental affection for His devotees, becomes visible to them and satisfies their heart's desires. In *Pulaha-āśrama* is the Gandaki River, which sanctifies everywhere it flows. In that best of all rivers are found the *śālagrāma-śilā*, the marble pebbles, upon which circles like navels are visible. Maharaja Bharata lived alone in the gardens of *Pulaha-āśrama*, and foraged there collecting a variety of flowers, twigs and tulasi leaves. He also collected water from the Gandaki River, and various roots, fruit and bulbs. These he offered as food to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, and thus worshiping Him, he remained satisfied. Living in this way his heart was completely uncontaminated, and he did not have the least desire for material enjoyment. All material desires simply vanished. Being fixed in this lifestyle Maharaja Bharata felt completely content and was well established in devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

As the exalted Maharaja Bharata, constantly engaged in this devotional service to the Lord, naturally his love for Vasudeva, Krishna, progressively increased and his heart melted. Thus he gradually lost all attachment for mechanical performance of regulative duties. At times the hairs of his body stood on end, and all the other bodily symptoms of transcendental ecstasy were manifest. Tears flowed from his eyes, to such an extent that he could not see anything. In this way he constantly meditated on the reddish lotus

feet of the Lord. At that time, his heart, which was like a lake, was filled with the ‘water’ of ecstatic love. When his mind was immersed in that lake, he even forgot the regulative service to the Lord. Maharaja Bharata appeared very beautiful. He had an abundance of curly hair on his head, which remained wet from bathing three times daily. He dressed in a deerskin, and worshiped Lord Narayana, whose body was composed of golden effulgent rays and who resided within the sun. Maharaja Bharata worshiped Lord Narayana by chanting the hymns given in the *Rg Veda*, and he recited the following verse as the sun rose.

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated in pure goodness. He illuminates the entire universe and bestows all benedictions upon His devotees. The Lord has created this universe from His personal spiritual potency. According to His desire, the Lord entered this universe as the Supersoul, and by virtue of His different potencies He is maintaining all living entities who desire material enjoyment. Let me offer my respectful obeisance unto the Lord, who is the source of all intelligence.”

#### AFFECTION FOR THE DEER

One day, after finishing his morning duties – clearing bodily waste and ablutions - Maharaja Bharata sat for a few minutes on the bank of the river Gandaki and began chanting his *mantra*, beginning with *omkāra*. While Bharata Maharaja was sitting on the bank of that river, a thirsty doe came there to drink. While the doe was contentedly drinking a lion, which was nearby, roared very loudly. By nature the doe was always looking about fearfully being afraid of predators. When she heard the lion’s tumultuous roar which is frightful to all creatures, she became very agitated at heart. Glancing around with disturbed eyes, the doe, suddenly leaped across the river although she had not drunk her fill.

Because the doe was pregnant when it jumped out of fear, a baby deer fell from its womb into the flowing waters of the river. Having crossed the river and feeling separated from its flock and distressed by its miscarriage, the black doe, was distraught. Indeed, it fell down in a cave and died immediately.

The great King Bharata, while sitting on the bank of the river, saw the small deer, bereft of its mother, floating helplessly down the river. Seeing this, he felt a surge of compassion. Like a sincere friend, he lifted the infant deer from the waves, and, knowing it to be motherless, brought it to his *āśrama*.

Gradually Maharaja Bharata became affectionate toward the deer. He began to raise it and maintain it by feeding it grass. He carefully protected it from the attack of tigers and other animals. He also



petted it, and sometimes kissed it out of love. In this way he always tried to keep it in a comfortable condition. Becoming attached to raising the deer, Maharaja Bharata forgot the rules and regulations for the advancement of spiritual life; he gradually even forgot to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After a few days, he forgot everything. The great King Maharaja Bharata began to think: Alas, this helpless young deer, by the force of time, an agent of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has now lost its relatives and friends and has taken shelter of me. It does not know anyone but me, and thus I have become its father, mother, brother and relatives. This deer is thinking in this way, and it has full faith in me. It does not know anyone but me; therefore I should not be envious and think that for the deer my own welfare will be destroyed. I should certainly raise, protect, gratify and fondle it. When it has taken shelter with me, how can I neglect it? Even though the deer is disturbing my spiritual life, I realize that a helpless person who has sought our shelter cannot be neglected. That would be a great fault. Even though one is in the renounced order, one who is advanced certainly feels compassion for suffering living entities. Surely one should neglect his personal interests- although they may be very important- to protect one who has surrendered to him.

Due to attachment for the deer, Maharaja Bharata lay down, walked, bathed and even ate with it. Thus his heart became bound in affection to the deer. When Maharaja Bharata wanted to enter the forest to collect *kusā* grass, flowers, wood, leaves, fruit, roots and water, he would fear that dogs, jackals, tigers and other ferocious animals might kill the deer. He would therefore always take the deer



with him. When going to the forest, the animal would appear very attractive to Maharaja Bharata because of its childish behavior. Due to affection Maharaja Bharata would sometimes even take the deer on his shoulders and carry it. His heart became so filled with love for the deer that he would sometimes keep it on his lap or, when sleeping, on his chest. In this way he felt great pleasure in fondling the animal. When Maharaja Bharata was worshiping the Lord or was engaged in some ritualistic ceremony, although his activities were unfinished, he would still, at intervals, get up and see where the deer was. In this way he would look for it, and when he could see that the deer was comfortably situated, his mind and heart would be very satisfied, and he would bestow his blessings upon the deer, saying, “My dear calf, may you be happy in all respects.

#### SPEAKING LIKE A MADMAN

Sometimes if Bharata Maharaja could not see the deer, his mind would be very agitated. He would become like a miser, who, having obtained some riches, had lost them and become very unhappy. When the deer was gone, he would be filled with anxiety and would lament due to separation. Thus he would become completely deluded and speak as follows: Alas, the deer is gone. I am now very unfortunate. My mind is like a cunning hunter, for it is always filled with cheating propensities and cruelty. The deer has put its faith in me, just as a virtuous man who has a natural interest in good behavior forgets the misbehavior of a cunning friend and puts his faith in him. Although I have proved faithless, will this deer return and again place its faith in me? Alas, is it possible that I shall again see this animal who must be protected by the Lord and thus fearless of tigers and other animals? Shall I again see him wandering in the garden eating soft grass? I do not know. The deer might have been eaten by a wolf or a dog or by the boars that move in flocks or the tiger who travels alone. Alas, when the sun rises, all auspicious things begin. Unfortunately, they have not begun for me. The sun-god is the *Vedas* personified, but I am bereft of all Vedic principles. That sun-god is now setting, yet the poor animal who trusted in me since its mother died has not returned. That deer is exactly like a prince. When will it return? When will it again show its natural behavior which is so pleasing? When will it again pacify a wounded heart like mine? I certainly must have no pious assets, otherwise the deer would have returned by now. Alas, the small deer, while playing with me and seeing me feigning meditation with closed eyes, would circumambulate me due to anger arising from love, and it would fearfully touch me with the points of its soft horns. That touch felt like soft rain. When I placed all the sacrificial

ingredients on *kuśa* grass, the deer, would playfully touch the grass with its teeth and thus pollute it. When I chastised the deer by pushing it away, it would immediately become fearful and sit down motionless, exactly like the son of a saintly person. Thus it would stop its play.

After speaking like a madman in this way, Maharaja Bharata got up and went outside. Seeing the footprints of the deer on the ground, out of love he praised the footprints, saying: O unfortunate Bharata, your austerities and penances are very insignificant compared to the penance and austerity undergone by this earth planet. Due to the earth's severe penances, the footprints of this deer, which are soft, small, beautiful and most auspicious are imprinted on the surface of this fortunate planet. This series of footprints show a person like me, who am bereaved due to loss of a beloved, how the animal has passed through the forest. Following them I can regain my lost wealth. By these footprints, this land has become a proper place for *brāhmaṇas* desirous of attaining the heavenly planets or liberation execute sacrifices to the demigods. Maharaja Bharata continued to speak like a madman. Seeing above his head the dark marks which resembled a deer, on the rising moon, he said: Can it be that the moon, who is so kind to unhappy men, might also be kind upon my deer, knowing that it has strayed from home and has become motherless? This moon has given the deer shelter near itself just to protect it from the fearful attacks of a lion. Whilst looking at the moonlight Maharaja Bharata continued speaking like a crazed person. He said: This small deer was so submissive and dear to me that due to its separation I am feeling as if separated from my own son. Due to the burning fever of this separation, I am suffering as if consumed by a forest fire. My heart, which is like the lily of the land, is now burning. Seeing me so distressed, the moon is deliberately splashing its shining nectar upon me just as a friend throws water on another friend who has a high fever. Thus, the moon is bringing me some relief.

#### ACQUIRING BODY OF A DEER

In this way Bharata Maharaja was overwhelmed by an uncontrollable desire which was manifest in the form of affection for the deer. In due course of time, insurmountable death, which is compared to a venomous snake that enters the hole created by a mouse, came before him. At the time of death, the King saw that the deer was sitting by his side, exactly like his own son, and was lamenting his death. Actually the mind of the King was absorbed in the body of the deer, and consequently, like those bereft of Krishna consciousness, he left his material body, thus in his subsequent birth he acquired the



body of a deer. However, there was one advantage. Although he lost his human body and received the body of a deer, he did not forget the incidents of his past life. In the body of a deer, Bharata Maharaja, due to his rigid devotional service in his past life, could understand the cause of his birth in that body. Considering his past and present life, he constantly repented his activities, speaking in the following way. In the body of a deer, Bharata Maharaja began to lament: What a misfortune! I have fallen from the path of the self-realized. I gave up my real sons, wife and home to advance in spiritual life, and I took shelter in a solitary holy place in the forest. I became self-controlled and self-realized, and I engaged constantly in devotional service of hearing, thinking, chanting, worshiping and remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva. I was successful in my attempt, so much so that my mind was always absorbed in devotional service. However, due to my own foolishness, my mind again became attached- this time to a deer. I have obtained the body of a deer and have fallen far from my devotional practices.

Although Bharata Maharaja received the body of a deer, by constant repentance he became completely detached from everything material. He did not disclose his realization to anyone, and silently left his mother in a place known as Kalanjara Mountains, where he was born. He again went to the forest of Salagrama and to the *āśrama* of Pulastya and Pulaha. Remaining in that *āśrama*, the great King Bharata Maharaja was now

very careful not to fall victim to bad association. Without disclosing his past to anyone, he remained in that *āśrama* and ate only dry leaves. He was not exactly alone, for he had the association of the Supersoul. In this way he waited for death in the body of a deer. Bathing in that holy place, he finally gave up that body.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (BhāgavataPurāṇa)* » Canto 5: *The Creative Impetus*  
» Chapter 7: *The Activities of King Bharata.* » Verses: 1-14 & Chapter 5.8: *A Description of the Character of Bharata Maharaja* » Verses: 1-31. 🙏

## WAS MAHARAJA BHARATAS ADDICTION TO THE DEER INTENTIONAL?

*His Divine Grace*

*A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Bharata Maharaja, at the time of death, was forced to accept the body of a deer due to his attraction for the deer. In this regard, a question may be raised. How can a devotee be affected by his past misconduct and virtuous activities? In *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.54) it is said, *karmāṇi nirdahati kintu ca bhakti-bhājām*: "For those engaged in devotional service, *bhakti-bhajana*, the results of past deeds are indemnified." According to this principle, Bharata Maharaja could not be punished for his past misdeeds. The conclusion must be that Maharaja Bharata purposefully became over-addicted to the deer and neglected his spiritual advancement. To immediately rectify his mistake, for a short time he was awarded the body of a deer. This was just to increase his desire for mature devotional service. Although Bharata Maharaja was awarded the body of an animal, he did not forget what had previously happened due to his purposeful mistake. He was very anxious to get out of his deer body, and this indicates that his affection for devotional service was intensified, so much so that he quickly attained perfection in a *brāhmaṇa* body in the next life. It is with this conviction that we declare in our Back to Godhead magazine that devotees like the goswamis living in Vrindavana who purposely commit some sinful activity are born in the bodies of dogs, monkeys and tortoises in that holy land. Thus they take on these lower life forms for a short while, and after they give up those animal bodies, they are again promoted to the spiritual world. Such punishment is only for a short period, and it is not due to past *karma*. It may appear to be due to past *karma*, but it is offered to rectify the devotee and bring him to pure devotional service.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (BhāgavataPurāṇa)* » Canto 5: *The Creative Impetus*  
» Chapter 8: *A Description of the Character of Bharata Maharaja* » Verse: 26, Purport. 🙏



### MAHARAJA BHARATA PRETENDED TO BE MATERIALLY AFFECTED? *Srila Sanatana Goswami*

We should understand that when saintly devotees like Bharata Maharaja, deeply absorbed in the moods of loving service to the Lord, seem to exhibit material attachment (as when Bharata became obsessed with the care of an infant deer) and when they seem to fall into bad association and miserable conditions (as when Bharata took his next birth as an animal), they are only pretending to be materially affected, in order to keep the confidential moods of devotional service hidden from public view. Such devotees would rather be treated with undeserved contempt than honored and worshiped.

Shouldn't advanced devotees, in order to deliver the world from ignorance, let everyone see their greatness?

Yes, but the so-called anomalous behavior of Vaishnavas like Bharata Maharaja is in fact their way of teaching *sad-ācāra*, civilized human behavior. By the examples of their own lives they show the consequences of violating the laws of God and material nature, for if people fail to learn how to act according to civilized standards their hearts will remain contaminated by sinful desires and they will never become inclined toward the Lord's devotional service.

Bharata Maharaja showed by his own life the danger of wrong association. Although almost perfectly devoted and renounced, he was distracted

into caring for a newborn deer and therefore had to suffer birth as a deer. A similar case is that of Saubhari Ṛṣi, who was deviated from meditation by seeing two fish engaged in sexual activities. However, in reality these elevated souls were faultless.

—*Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī*» Volume 2 » Chapter 3 Bhajana: Worship »Verses: 170-172 »Translated by Gopīparādhana Dāsa. 🌸

### ARE THE TESTS MANIFESTATIONS OF LORDS MERCY?

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

Teachers mercifully arrange for examinations in order to take students to a higher class. For attentive, intelligent students, examinations are a source of happiness. Only the inattentive students are afraid of or dislike examinations.

Those who glorify material enjoyment and who speak accordingly to their audience's taste do not face danger, inconvenience, or obstacles in their preaching, but those who preach about devotional service and the soul's eternal propensity face many difficulties. These inconveniences come and try to cause discouragement. But those who have taken shelter of devotional service should definitely know that these obstacles have come to test our love and determination for the Lord's service; they are actually assisting us in our progressive advancement on the devotional path.

We should remain firmly fixed in devotional

service while accepting the ideal examples of *nāmācārya* Haridāsa Thakura and the topmost devotee, Prahlada Maharaja. Both of them exhibited a wonderful service attitude and a high degree of tolerance. Simply to achieve something temporary, human beings are baffled for hundreds of lifetimes. If in spite of seeing thousands of examples of failure, such people will even dare to give up their lives to attain insignificant enjoyment, then can not intelligent and fortunate devotees dedicate their temporary lives to understand the Supreme Lord, who is the Absolute Truth for all time?

—*AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality by Srīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Compiled by Śrīpāda Bhakti Mayukha BhāgavatMaharaja. Adapted and Published by Īśvaradāsa Translated from Bengali by Bhumipatidāsa.*

### UNFAVORABLE TO DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

*Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura*

*tuwā-bhakti-pratikūla dharma jā 'te roy  
parama jatane tāhā tyajibo niścoy*

I will assuredly abandon with utmost endeavor all things in which aversion to Your devotional service is inherent.

*tuwā-bhakti-bahir-mukha saṅga nā koribo  
gaurāṅga-virodhi-jana-mukha nā heribo*

I will never keep company with those who have turned their face away from pure devotional service, nor look at the faces of those inimical toward Lord Gauranga.

*bhakti-pratikūla sthāne nā kori vasati  
bhaktira apriya kārye nāhi kori rati*

I will never reside at a place unfavorable for devotional practices, and I will never take pleasure in non-devotional activities.

*bhaktira virodhī grantha pātha nā koribo  
bhaktira virodhī vyākhyā kabhu nā śunibo*

I will not read any scripture opposed to devotional service and will never listen to any scriptural explanation that is opposed to devotional service.

*gaurāṅga-varjita sthāna tūrtha nāhi māni  
bhaktira bādhaka jñāna-karma tuccha jāni*

I do not regard any places as a sacred place of pilgrimage that is not connected to Lord Gauranga.

All Knowledge or action hindering pure devotional service I consider worthless.

*bhaktira bādhaka kāle nā kori ādar  
bhakti bahir-mukha nija-jane jāni par*

Any seasonal observance which poses obstacles to the execution of devotional service finds no favor with me, and I consider as strangers all my own relatives or family members who are averse to devotional service.

*bhaktira bādhikā spṛhā koribo varjan  
abhakta-pradatta anna nā kori grahan*

I will totally abandon all desires that hinder devotion, and I will not touch foodstuffs offered to me by non-devotees.

*jāhā kichu bhakti-pratikūla boli 'jāni  
tyajibo jatane tāhā, e niścoya vāni*

I vow to carefully avoid whatever I know to be contrary to devotional service. This is a most definite proclamation.

*bhaktivinoda poḍi 'prabhura carāṇe  
māgaye śakati pratikūlyera varjane*

Falling at the Lord's lotus feet, Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays for the strength to give up everything that is unfavourable to devotional service.

— *Śaraṅāgati: "Surrendered to the Lord's Shelter" » Fifth Principle of Surrender: Bhakti-Pratikūla-BhāvaVarjanāṅgikāra » Renunciation of Conduct Unfavorable to Pure Devotion » Translation by Vrajsevika Devi Dasi.*

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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# Bhāgavata

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- A weekly program mainly led by the congregational leaders for their congregation members.
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# Bhāgavata

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# Bhāgavata

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# Bhāgavata

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- Selected speakers will speak exclusively on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam throughout the day.
- NBS Team is available for facilitating this festival.
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