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THE ELEPHANT GAJENDRA'S CRISIS

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

Sukadeva Goswami said: My dear King, there is a very large mountain called Trikuta. It is ten thousand *yojanas* [one hundred and twenty nine thousand kilometres] high. Due to being surrounded by the Ocean of Milk, it is very beautiful to behold. The length and breadth of the mountain are of the same measurement. Its three principal peaks, which are made of iron, silver and gold, beautify all directions and the sky above. The mountain also has other peaks, which are full of jewels and minerals and are decorated with pleasing trees, creepers and shrubs. The sounds of the waterfalls on the mountain create a pleasant sound. In this way the mountain stands, increasing the beauty of all directions. The ground at the foot of the mountain is always washed by waves of milk that produce emeralds on every side. The inhabitants of the higher planets, namely the Siddhas, Caranas, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, serpents, Kinnaras and Apsaras, all go to that mountain to sport. Thus the

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caves of the mountain are full of these denizens of the heavenly planets. Because of the audible commotion caused by the denizens of heaven singing in the caves, the lions on the mountain, being very proud of their strength, roar with unbearable envy, thinking that another lion is present in that terrain.

The valleys beneath Trikuta Mountain are beautifully decorated by many varieties of jungle animals, and in the trees, which are maintained in gardens by the minor demigods, varieties of birds chirp with sweet voices. Trikuta Mountain has many lakes and rivers, with beaches covered by small gems resembling grains of sand. The water is as clear as crystal, and when the demigod damsels bathe in it, their bodies lend fragrance to the water and the breeze, thus enriching the atmosphere. In a valley of Trikuta Mountain there was a garden called Rtumat. This garden belonged to the great devotee Varuna and was a sporting place for the demigod maidens. Flower and fruit trees grew there in all seasons. Among them were mandaras, parijatas, patalas, asokas, campakas, cutas, piyalas, panasas, mangoes, amratakas, kramukas, coconut trees, date trees and pomegranates. There were madhukas, palm trees, tamalas, asanas, arjunas, aristas, udumbaras, plaksas, banyan trees, kimsukas and sandalwood trees. There were also picumardas, kovidaras, saralas, sura-darus, grapes, sugarcane, bananas, jambu, badaris, aksas, abhayas and amalakis. In that garden there was a very large lake filled with shining golden lotus flowers and the flowers known as kumuda, kahlara, utpala and satapatra, which added excellent beauty to the mountain. There were also bilva, kapittha, jambira and bhallataka trees. Intoxicated bumblebees drank pollen nectar and hummed along with the chirping of the birds, whose songs were very melodious. The lake was adorned with many swans, karandavas, cakravakas, cranes, and flocks of water chickens, datyahas, koyastis and other murmuring birds. Because of the agitating movements of the fish and tortoises, the water was decorated with pollen that had fallen from the lotus flowers. The lake was surrounded by kadamba flowers, vetasa flowers, nalas, nipas, vaśjulakas, kundas, kurubakas, asokas, sirisas,

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kutajas, ingudas, kubjakas, svama-yuthis, nagas, punnagas, jatis, mallikas, satapatras, jalakas and madhavi-latas. The banks were also abundantly furnished with varieties of trees that yielded flowers and fruit in all seasons. Thus, the entire mountain stood re-splendidly glorious.

The leader of the elephants called Gajendra, who lived in the forest of the mountain Trikuta, once wandered toward the lake with his female companions. He broke many plants, creepers, thickets and trees, not caring for their piercing thorns. Simply by catching the scent of that great pachyderm, all the other elephants, the tigers and the other ferocious animals, such as lions, rhinoceroses, great serpents and black and white sarabhas, fled in fear. The camari deer also fled. By the mercy of this elephant, animals like the foxes, wolves, buffalos, bears, boars, gopucchās, porcupines, monkeys, rabbits, the other deer and many other small animals fearlessly loitered elsewhere in the forest as they were not afraid of him. Surrounded by the herd's other elephants, including the females, and followed by the young ones, Gajapati, the leader of the elephants, made Trikuta Mountain tremble because of the huge weight of his body. He was perspiring, liquor dripping from his mouth, and his vision was overwhelmed by intoxication. He was also being served by bumblebees who had drunk pollen, and from a distance he could smell the dust of the lotus flowers, which was carried from the lake by the breeze. Thus surrounded by his associates, who were afflicted by thirst, he soon arrived at the bank of the lake. Gajendra, the King of the elephants entered the lake, bathed thoroughly and was relieved of his fatigue. Then, with the aid of his trunk, he drank the cold, clear, nectarean water, which was mixed with the dust of lotus flowers and water lilies, until he was fully satisfied. Like a human being who lacks spiritual knowledge and is overly attached to the members of his family, the elephant, being deluded by the external energy of Krishna, had his wives and children bathe and drink the water together with him. Indeed, he raised water from the lake with his trunk and sprayed it over them. He did not mind the hard labour involved in this endeavour.

By the arrangement of providence, O King, a powerful crocodile was angry at the elephant and attacked his leg in the water. The elephant was

certainly strong, and he tried his best to free himself from this formidable danger sent by providence. However, he was unsuccessful and the fight raged on. Seeing Gajendra in that grave predicament, his wives felt very sorry and began to cry. The other elephants also wanted to help Gajendra, but because of the crocodile's great strength, they could not rescue him by grasping him from behind.

O King, the elephant and the crocodile fought in this way, pulling one another in and out of the water, for one thousand years. Upon seeing the fight, the demigods were very surprised.

Thereafter, because of being pulled into the water and fighting for many long years, the elephant weakened in his mental, physical and sensual strength. The crocodile on the contrary, being an animal of the water, increased in enthusiasm, physical strength and sensual power. The King of the elephants saw that by the will of providence, he was under the clutches of the crocodile and, circumstantially helpless. Realizing that he could not save himself from danger, he was extremely afraid of being killed and eaten. He consequently thought for a long time and finally reached the following decision.

Gajendra mused, "The other elephants, who are my friends and relatives, can not rescue me from this danger. What then to speak of my wives? They cannot do anything at all. It is by the will of providence that I have been attacked by this crocodile, and therefore I shall seek shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always the shelter of everyone, including even great personalities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is certainly not known to everyone, but He is very powerful and influential. The serpent of eternal time, which is fearful in force, endlessly chases everyone, ever ready to swallow them. If one who fears this serpent seeks the shelter of the Supreme Lord Visnu or Krishna, the Lord gives him protection, for even death runs away in fear of Him. I therefore surrender unto that Lord who is the great and powerful supreme authority for all and is the actual shelter of everyone.

— *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations » Chapter Two » Verses: 1-33.*



THE CROCODILE-LIKE MAYA

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

In the fighting between the elephant and the crocodile, the difference was that although the elephant was extremely powerful, he was in a foreign place, in the water. During one thousand years of fighting, he was not nourished, and under the circumstances his bodily strength diminished, and subsequently, his mind also became weak and his senses less powerful. The crocodile, however, being an animal of the water, had no difficulties. He was being nourished by the environment and was therefore gaining mental strength and sensual encouragement. Thus while the elephant became weakened, the crocodile became more and more powerful. From this incident we may take the lesson that in our fight with Maya we should not be in a position in which our strength, enthusiasm and senses will be unable to fight vigorously. Our Krishna consciousness movement has actually declared war against the illusory energy, which has all the living entities rotting away in a false understanding of civilization. The soldiers in this Krishna consciousness movement must always possess physical strength, enthusiasm and sensual power. To keep themselves fit, they must therefore place themselves in a normal condition of life. What constitutes a normal condition will not be the same for everyone, and therefore there are social and spiritual divisions of *varṇāśrama*—*brāhmaṇa*, *ksatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*, *brahmacarya*,

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gr̥hastha, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*. Especially in this age, Kali-yuga, it is advised that no one take *sannyāsa*.

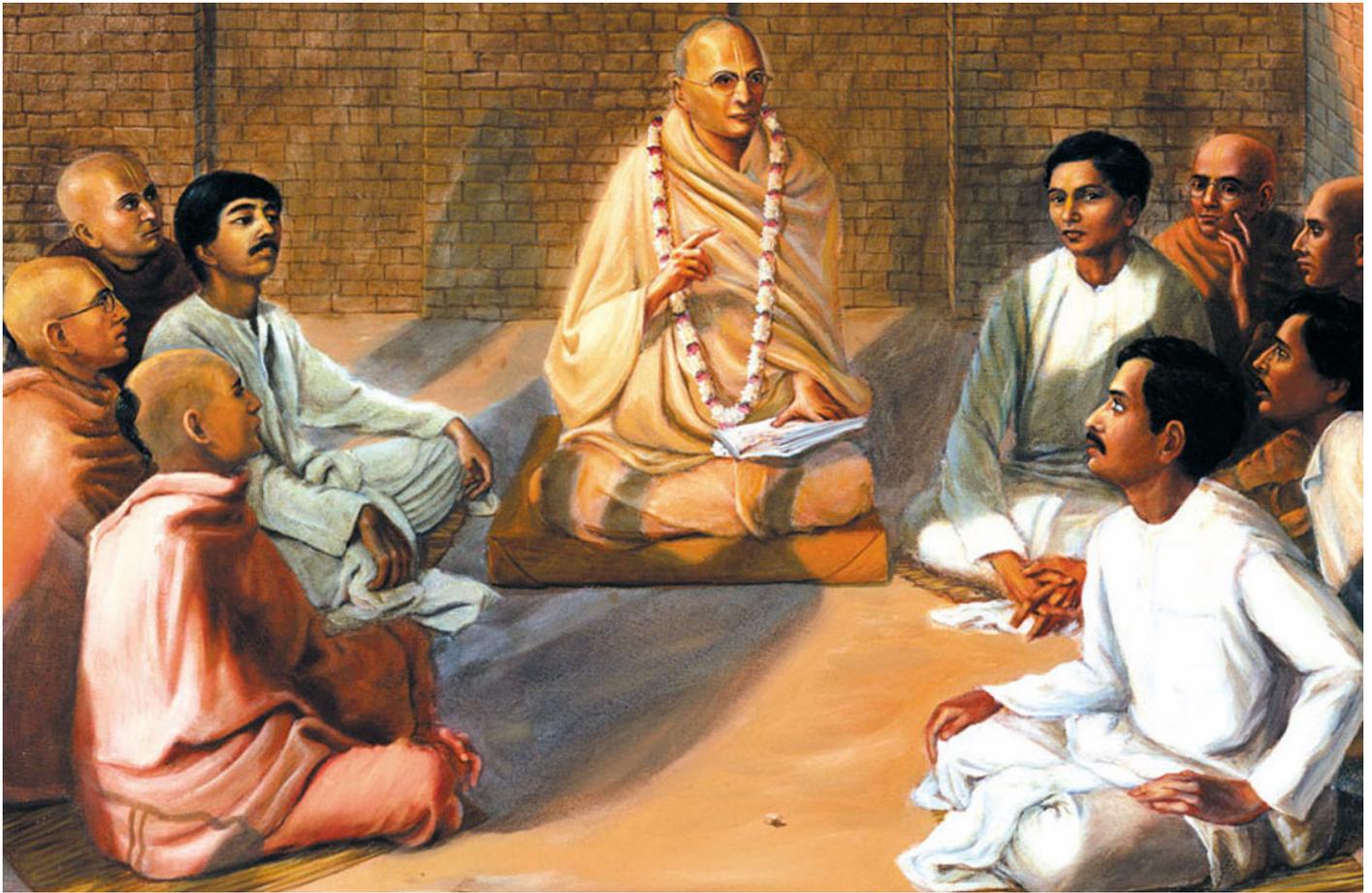
*aśvamedham̐ gavālbham̐
sannyāsam̐ pala-paitṛkam̐
devareṇa sutotpattim̐
kalau pañca vivarjayet*

(*Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*)

From this verse we can understand that in this age the *sannyāsa-āśrama* is generally not recommended because people are not spiritually strong. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu showed us an example in taking *sannyāsa* at the age of twenty-four years, and therefore Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya advised Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to be extremely careful because He had taken *sannyāsa* at an early age. For preaching we place young men in the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, but actually it is being experienced that they are not fit for *sannyāsa*. There is no harm, however, if one thinks that he is unfit for *sannyāsa*; if he is agitated sexually, he should go to the *āśrama* where sexual activity is permitted, namely the *gr̥hastha-āśrama*. That one has been found to be very weak in one *āśrama* does not mean that he should stop fighting Maya, the crocodile. One should take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, as we shall see Gajendra do, and at the same time one can be a *gr̥hastha* if he requires sexual interaction. There is no need to give up the fight. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore recommended, *sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vān-manobhiḥ*. One may stay in whichever *āśrama* is suitable for him; it is not essential that one take *sannyāsa*. If one is sexually agitated, he can enter the *gr̥hastha-āśrama*. However, one must continue fighting. For one who is not in a transcendental position, to take *sannyāsa* is artificial and is not a very good idea. If *sannyāsa* is not suitable for him, one may enter the *gr̥hastha-āśrama* and fight Maya with great strength. Whatever the case one should not give up the fight against Maya and go away.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations » Chapter Two » Verses :30, Purport





SUBORDINATION TO MAYA
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Subordination to Maya and subordination to the Supreme Lord are not synonymous. Neither is it possible to take shelter of both of them at the same time. Either we are under Maya's control or we are under Krishna's shelter. If we are subordinate to Maya, it means we are attached to family life or to material life in general. Being subordinate to Krishna means we are attached to Krishna and His service. Therefore Prahlada Maharaja says, "Give up the dark well of family life and take shelter of the Lord by approaching the saintly persons." If, due to weakness of mind, we are unable to leave home, then at least we should become detached from family life and worship the Lord in the association of devotees. This will certainly bring about ultimate fortune. If a person makes a show of serving the Lord while remaining attached to home and family life, then he will not awaken the propensity to eternally serve the Lord. Instead he will remain drowned forever in the ocean of material existence.

After taking shelter of the Lord, if we remain attached to household duties and decide that serving

and pleasing one's wife and children is the aim of life; if we remain ever indifferent to serving the Lord, giving more importance to our family life, then what is the use of pretentiously taking shelter of the Lord? By serving the Lord we must become convinced that we are His eternal servants. Is that happening? We can judge by the fruit. The fruit of service is to want more service and to progressively increase in that way. We should analyze carefully what we are doing. Where is our shelter? In what direction does our mind rush? Don't let yourself be cheated.

A woman leaves her father's house and takes shelter of her husband's house. As a result, her surname is changed. She no longer remains attached to her father's house. It is natural to develop love for those whom we serve. Hence we should serve Krishna and thus naturally become attached to Him.

— *AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality; His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada; Compiled by Sripada Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavat Maharaja; Adapted and Published by Isvaradasa; Translated from Bengali by Bhumipati dasa.*





MAYA: UNIQUE AMONG THE ENERGIES OF
SRI KRISHNA
Sri la Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Lahiri Mahasaya, “Master, I have grasped *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, the truth about the Supreme Godhead, Sri Krishna, and have also understood *jīva-tattva*, the truth of the individual souls. Kindly elaborate upon *māyā-tattva*, the principle of the illusory material creation.”

Vaisnava dasa Babaji, “Maya, the illusory material energy, is unique among the energies of Sri Krishna. This potency is also designated as the *aparā-śakti*, inferior potency, and further as *bahirāṅgā-śakti*, the external potency. Darkness is always far away from the light; similarly, Maya remains at a good distance from Sri Krishna and His devotees. The *māyā-śakti* has created this material world with its fourteen planetary systems by the material ingredients of earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and the mundane mistaken identification with the material body known as *ahaṅkāra*, false ego. The gross and subtle bodies of the conditioned jiva are both products of *māyā-śakti*, but attaining

liberation removes this material contamination that covers the spiritual identity of the jiva.

“As deep as the jiva is in the clutches of Maya, to the same extent he is alienated from Sri Krishna. To the degree he has shrugged off the mantle of servitorship to Maya, he has advanced towards the lotus feet of Sri Krishna. The material world, which has come into existence by the desire of Krishna, is to assist the jiva in his attempt to exploit and enjoy Maya. However, this mundane universe is not a permanent residence for the jiva but merely a prison-house lodging him temporarily.”

— *Jaiva-dharma*, Published by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. Translated by Sarvabhāvanadāsa.

THE CHAIN OF MAYA

Sri la Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

*kṛṣṇera sevaka jiva kṛṣṇera māyāya
kṛṣṇa nā bhajile ei-mata duḥkha pāya*

“Due to the illusory energy of Krishna, the individual soul who is a servant of Krishna suffers continual miseries if he does not worship Krishna.”

Every living entity is constitutionally a Vaisnava, an eternal servant of Visnu or Krishna. As soon as he turns from the service of Visnu, he comes under the control of the covering and throwing potencies of Krishna’s deluding external energy. The mentality of measuring every object through one’s sensory knowledge, is due to the influence of this illusory energy. This tendency is certainly deluding and born of the desire for material enjoyment; therefore it is the source of unlimited miseries.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya 20.117-118, 120) it is stated: “Forgetting Krishna, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature of the Lord from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy [Maya] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence. In the material condition, the living entity is sometimes raised to higher planetary systems and enjoys material prosperity and sometimes he drowns in a hellish situation. His state is exactly like that of a criminal whom a king punishes by repeatedly dunking him in water. If the conditioned soul becomes conscious of Krishna by the mercy of saintly persons who voluntarily preach scriptural injunctions



which help him to attain Krishna consciousness, he is liberated from the clutches of Maya, who voluntarily gives him up.”

It is further stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.12-15, 24-25, 33, 35, 37, 41): “Apart from the ever-liberated devotees, there are the conditioned souls who always turn away from the service of the Lord. They are perpetually conditioned in this material world and are subjected to the material tribulations brought about by different bodily forms in hellish conditions. Due to his being opposed to Krishna consciousness, the conditioned soul is punished by the external energy, the witch Maya. He is thus ready to suffer the threefold miseries brought about by a) his body and mind; b) the inimical behavior of other living entities; and c) natural disturbances caused by the demigods. In this way the conditioned soul becomes the servant of sense gratificatory desires, and when these are not fulfilled, he becomes enslaved by anger and continues to be punished by

the external energy, Maya. Wandering continually through the universe, he may by chance get the association of a devotee who is like a physician, and whose instructions and hymns make the witch-like external energy flee. The conditioned soul thus gets into touch with the devotional service of Lord Krishna, and in this way he can progressively approach the Lord. The living entity is bound around the neck by the chain of Maya because he has forgotten that he is eternally a servant of Krishna. If the conditioned soul serves the Lord and simultaneously serves and obeys the orders of his spiritual master, he can get out of the clutches of Maya and become eligible for shelter at Krishna’s lotus feet. One is immediately freed from the clutches of Maya if he seriously and sincerely prays saying, ‘My dear Lord Krishna, although I have forgotten You for so many years in the material world, today I am surrendering unto You. I am Your sincere and serious servant. Please engage me in Your service.’ Due to bad association,

the living entity desires material happiness, liberation or merging into the impersonal aspect of the Lord. Otherwise he practices mystic yoga to gain subtle material power. If such a person becomes truly wise, he takes to Krishna consciousness and engages himself in intense devotional service to Lord Sri Krishna. If those who desire material enjoyment or merging into the existence of the Absolute Truth engage in the Lord's transcendental loving service, they will immediately attain shelter at Krishna's lotus feet, although they did not ask for it. Krishna is therefore very merciful. When someone engages in Lord Krishna's devotional service for the satisfaction of the senses and instead acquires a taste to serve Krishna, he gives up his material desires and willingly offers himself as an eternal servant of Krishna."

— Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata; Madhya-khaṇḍa, Chapter 1, text 233. Purport by His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada

THE ASSOCIATION OF SAINTLY SOULS

Srila Jagadananda Pandita

"When the living entity desires to enjoy separately from Krishna and turns away from Him, the illusory potency of the Lord, Maya, immediately takes the soul in her clutches."

"Being Maya's captive, he becomes bewildered, acting like someone possessed by a witch." "The jiva soul, having forgotten his constitutional position as the eternal perfect and pure servant of Krishna, remains Maya's slave while going from one body to the next."

The jiva goes through many births, sometimes being born as a king, sometimes as an ordinary citizen, sometimes as a *brāhmaṇa*, and sometimes as a *śūdra*. Sometimes he is suffering, and sometimes he is happy. Sometimes he is born as an insect."

"Sometimes he goes to heaven. Then, he has to come down to earth again, or maybe he has to go to hell. Sometimes he is born as a deva, sometimes as a demon, sometimes as the master, and at other times as the servant."

"While transmigrating from birth to birth in this material universe, if by chance the living entity comes into contact with a saintly person, he immediately becomes aware of his true iden-

tity as a pure spiritual soul, the eternal servant of Krishna."

"Enlightened by this knowledge, he desires material entanglement no longer, lamenting, "Alas! Why have I served this illusory material energy for so long?"

"He bitterly cries out, "Krishna, my Lord, I am your eternal servant. Ever since I left the shelter of Your lotus feet, my life has been completely devastated."

"Sri Krishna is so merciful that if anyone entreats Him earnestly, He immediately releases him from material entanglement."

"When the jiva breaks away from Maya's captivating spell and strives for attainment of Sri Krishna by rendering devotional service, he regains the supreme shelter of the Lord's lotus feet."

"Sri Krishna fortifies him with His transcendental, internal potency, and this overbearing power of the Lord's spiritual potency weakens Maya's influence upon the living entity."

"The only desirable goal is to chant *harināma* in the association of pure and saintly devotees. This is the best and only way to conquer nescience."

— Prema-Vivarta—Srila Jagadananda Pandita, Chapter 6, verses 1 – 14
BBT; translated by Sarvabhavana dasa



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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