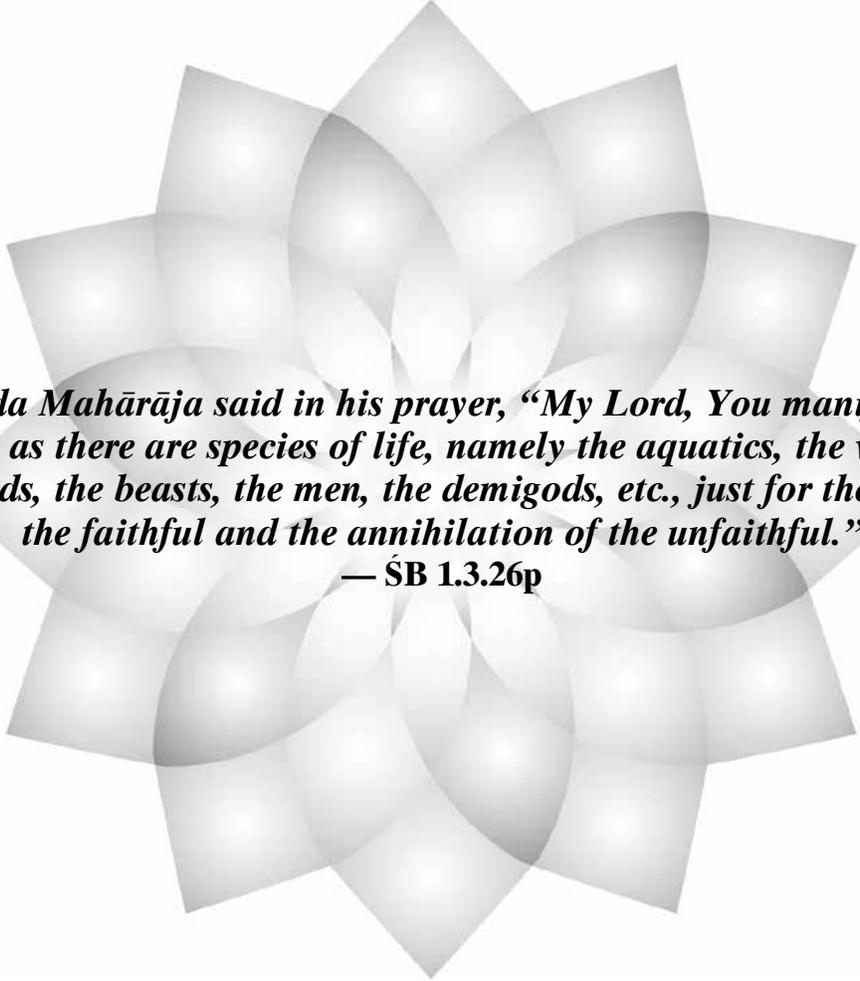




Momma, Is This Corona Kṛṣṇa?

— Presented by Śrīmatī Dāsī and team
ISKCON, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma



Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said in his prayer, “My Lord, You manifest as many incarnations as there are species of life, namely the aquatics, the vegetables, the reptiles, the birds, the beasts, the men, the demigods, etc., just for the maintenance of the faithful and the annihilation of the unfaithful.”

— ŚB 1.3.26p

Momma, Is This Corona Kṛṣṇa?

I've been working from home since the Coronavirus pandemic spun into global crisis mode. And I must say — I really like it! I can pace myself and avoid office gossip — and those nasty train journeys at the beginning and end of every working day no longer have a chance to harass and trouble me.

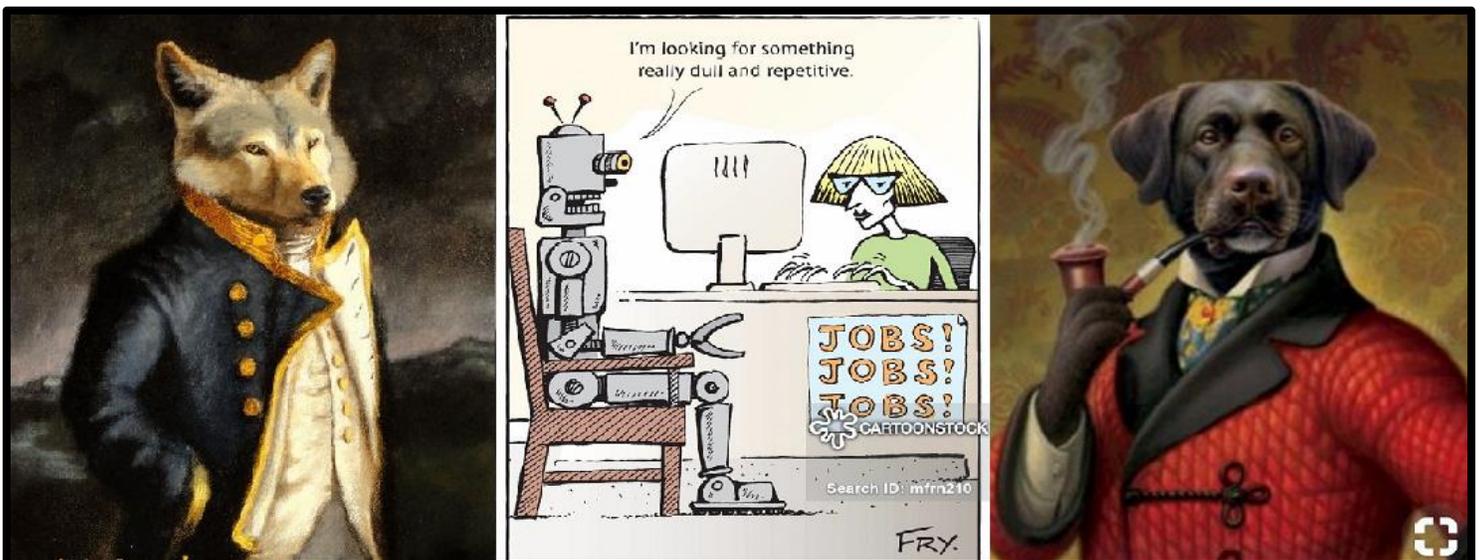
I've completed my assigned duties for today well ahead of time, and so I've decided to make some fresh, crispy bread rolls for Nitāi-Gaurasundara. This is something I really like to do. But for the last couple of years such inspirations have been regularly and very soundly defeated by a very powerful *mantra* — ***No time! No time! You have no time!***

I walk over to place the trays in the oven and am greeted by a very familiar voice. It's that of Lalitā, my six-year old daughter.

- * ***Momma, I have a question for you.***
- * ***Sure! What is it, my darling one?***
- * ***Momma, is this Corona Kṛṣṇa?***

It was a real stomp-the-teacher question — but not unusual for my Lalitā. She's a very precocious child with a very, very active mind and an ongoing limitless list of questions. There was a time when I would dismiss all her thoughts as childish gibberish and give her an emphatic NO for an answer. But I've realized that her vision is much broader than mine and that I can truly learn from her. I hesitated before replying ***What could I say to help ground her? To help her clearly focus and speak her thoughts?*** I decided to answer with a question....

- * ***My dear Lalitā, why would Kṛṣṇa incarnate as such a nasty, bothersome bug? Why would He want to hurt and harass so many people so much?***



- * *That's a good question, Momma. I've already thought about it a lot. You know what?! Kali and his age are very, very nasty — and he's very, very clever. It's clear to me that his program is to turn all we humans into animals or machines. That makes his work much easier. But Kṛṣṇa can't bear to see this. He can't come in human form at this time because animals and machines don't listen to reason or commonsense. And so He decided to come as a bug and create havoc in terms all can clearly understand. This is all just a big wake-up call, Momma! Kṛṣṇa wants us to wake up to all the daily madness we accept as normal.*
- * *That's interesting, Lalitā, but can you think of anything in Śrīla Prabhupāda's Bhagavad-gītā that supports what you're saying?*
- * *Yes, Momma. In yesterday's skype class, Govinda Mātājī taught us Bg 4.7:*

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham*

Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion — at that time I descend Myself.

She also told us that in his ŚB 1.3.26 purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions that Kṛṣṇa incarnates in every species of life. That really got me thinking! Momma, this Corona virus is no ordinary bug. He's creating global havoc and bringing all the big world leaders and nations to their knees. This is a special quality of Kṛṣṇa — no one is greater than Him, and no one is equal to Him!

- * *Lalitā, you just mentioned that Kṛṣṇa has come in this form to give us a global wake-up call. What exactly do you mean by that?*
- * *Momma, everyone in this Age is suffering like anything — and everyone is thinking that it's normal. Isn't that madness?!*
- * *Are you suffering, Lalitā?*
- * *Oh yes, Momma. I've been suffering so much for such a long time, but I've just been tolerating it — and praying every day to Kṛṣṇa.*

- * *Really?! You are suffering Lalitā? I thought you were happy. Your Papa and I are working so hard to give you only the very best of everything.....*
- * *Yes, I know that — and I love you for it. But let me share my angle on life, Momma. I am six years old but I don't ever remember Papa giving me a hug and putting me to bed — he comes home from work too late or too tired to do that. You both work six days a week, but he has Monday as a holiday and you have Sunday. That means we never get to spend time together as a family. Life just means Run, run, run. Work, work, work! It's HORRIBLE!*
- * *So you think Kṛṣṇa has come as this nasty Coronavirus just to answer your prayers, Lalitā?*

Placing her little hands on her little hips in controlled but obvious indignation, and fighting back fast swelling tears, Lalitā emphatically — and very emotionally — replied,

- * *Momma, there are countless kids all over the planet who feel just like I do. We're just little people and so nobody takes us seriously — except Kṛṣṇa! Only Kṛṣṇa knows what we're really going through! Everyone is bad naming the Coronavirus, but I am seeing so many good things. Now when I go into the front garden to play, my throat and eyes don't get itchy. And I don't cough all the time because of the polluted air. I can breathe freely. I don't hear cars — I hear birds. It's so wonderful! One of my class mates has relatives in China — and she says the people there are seeing a blue sky for the first time in many, many years. Isn't that all good, Momma? Don't we need to make some big changes in this world? And don't we need Kṛṣṇa's special help to do that?*



- * *Lalitā, how can you see the present global madness as Kṛṣṇa's special help?! Devotees are SUFFERING! Everyone is SUFFERING!*

- * *Momma, when we make mistakes, we suffer. And when we make big mistakes, we suffer big time. Is it kindness to give someone all facility to keep making mistakes — and keep suffering?! And besides that, the devotees I know are not suffering. There's quite some inconvenience, that's for sure — but it's nothing compared to what they usually have to tolerate in their daily lives. Now they finally have time to chant quality japa and read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books with some focus. And there is so much nectar online they can tune into anytime anywhere on the planet. They also have time to spend quality time with their families. Kṛṣṇa is really giving His devotees some very much needed breathing space. He's giving them the very badly needed time and space to make sense of their lives. Isn't this all good, Momma?! Oops! I have to go now — It's 3.20 p.m.!*
- * *Lalitā, it's a full lockdown — how can you go anywhere?*
- * *Govinda Mātājī is giving a skype class at 3.30 and I really want to join it.*
- * *Oh, that sounds good — what's the topic for the class?*
- * *Nāma saṅkīrtana. Mātājī said it's time to follow in the footsteps of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu — it's time to close the class books and just come together for Harināma. That's what the world really needs right now.*
- * *You're going to perform Harināma by skype? Won't there be sound distortion from so many devotees chanting?*
- * *No problem — we'll figure it out. Mātājī says we have to outsmart Kali.*
- * *Lalitā! What does that mean?!*
- * *Well, he thinks he can destroy Mahāprabhu's saṅkīrtana mission by having the world's leaders impose social isolation. We're going to prove him wrong! I really have to go, Momma — I'm scheduled to lead the first kīrtana.*
- * *No problem — mega prayers for a very dynamic and enlivening Harinama!*
- * *Thank youuuu! Love you, Momma!*



No sooner had my very special daughter left the kitchen, than something amazing seered across the sky of my mind. It was a chart my Bhakti-śāstrī teacher had presented in a *Bhagavad-gītā* class many, many years ago — but it puts my recent chat with Lalitā in crystal clear perspective. I'd like to share it with you

— Moment by Moment, Day by Day — The Choice Is Mine!

Culture of Lust

(Impersonalism — Me centered)



Envy



Exploitation

(I, Me and Mine)



Sense of Alienation, Fear



Isolated individual

struggle for existence



Hard-hearted

(Material Life → Death)

Culture of Love

(Personalism — Kṛṣṇa centered)



Friendship



Service

(“*Īṣāvāsvam idam sarvam*” - *Īṣo* 1)



Sense of Encouragement, Security



Insulated group

struggle to become Kṛṣṇa conscious



Open-hearted

(Progressive Spiritual Life)

— Which Culture Did Śrīla Prabhupāda Give? Which Culture Am I Living? —

Hmm! All I see is death and disease, anxiety and fear — *so many people are suffering*. But maybe my daughter is right. Maybe I do need to see the bigger picture — and Kṛṣṇa's all powerful — and all merciful! — hand in it. A friend called this morning to tell me that environmental scientists are saying that the ozone layer is self-healing because of the global lockdown — that's pretty amazing!

Anyway, I definitely need to make some conscious, careful and prayerful decisions about how I want to live my life. That's a given — and the most crucial question I need to honestly answer is.....

Do I Want to Live the Culture of LOVE — Or the Culture of LUST?! —

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

*(jaya) śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*