



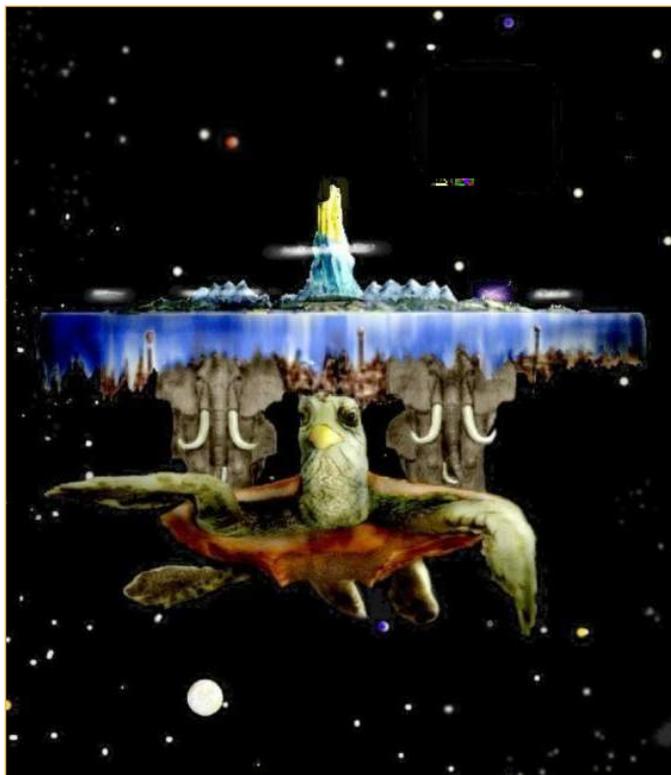
Śrī Utpannā Ekādaśī

Issue no:74

14th November 2017

JAMBHUDVIPA AND MENTAL SPECULATION

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CREATION, ANNIHILATION AND MAINTAINENCE

Sriḷa Jiva Goswami

Just as understanding the sun means knowing it along with its potency, sunshine, understanding the Supreme Lord means knowing Him along with His potencies. According to the tenth chapter of the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the material world is a creation of the Lord and reflects His personality. This world perpetually goes through cycles of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. During annihilation all the material elements are unmanifest because they have merged into the original, dormant state of material nature, called *prakṛti* or *pradhāna*. In this phase the three modes of nature are in balance and thus inactive. At the end of the period of annihilation, the Supreme Lord agitates the modes of nature by glancing upon them, and then the first stage of creation begins. This agitated state of the material modes is called the *mahat-tattva*, which, when further activated by the time factor, gives rise to material ego, *ahaṅkāra*. From *ahaṅkāra* come the five gross material elements (earth, water, fire, air, and ether), the five subtle elements (scent, taste, form, tactility, and sound), and the five perceptive senses (the senses of smell, taste, vision, touch, and hearing). This phase of creation is called *sarga*, or the primary creation. The subsequent creation is conducted by Lord Brahma and is called *visarga*, or the secondary creation. Brahma is also called *Puruṇa* or *Vairāja*.

Lord Vishnu oversees the maintenance of the rules and regulations governing universal affairs, and this maintenance is called *sthiti* or *sthānam*. The maintenance function shows Vishnu's preeminence over Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, who are in charge of the secondary creation and of destruction, respectively. To carry out the function of *sthiti* the Lord incarnates in every millennium, as He states in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8):

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām
vināśāya ca duṅkṛtām
dharma saṁsthā panārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

Each day of Lord Brahma contains fourteen periods, each of which is ruled over by a Manu. Hence it is called *manvantara*. The Manus are godly persons empowered to tend to the welfare of all human beings. The behavior and worship of the Manus and other saintly persons is called *sad-dharma*.

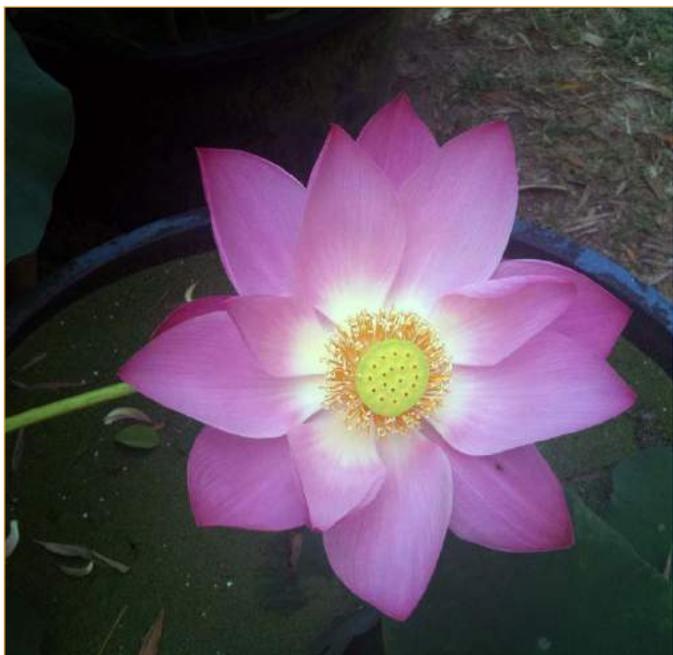
Impelled by their *karma*, living beings perform various material activities during the maintenance of the creation (*sthiti*), and these activities give rise to various desires for further material activities. These desires, in the form of impressions within the mind, are called *ūti*. The stories of the deeds of the *avatāras* of Hari and His followers during the period of maintenance are called *isānukatha*.

The creation cycle begins when the Lord glances at material nature: *saikṣatalokān nu srjeti, saimālokānasṛjata*. "He glanced and desired to create people. Indeed, He created them" (*Aitareya Up.* 1.1).

When it is time for annihilation, the Lord turns His eyes away from the creation, and this turning away is called His sleep, or cosmic rest. Next all the material elements become unmanifest (disappear) in the reverse order to which they appeared, and the material nature then exists in equilibrium. At that time the jivas give up their gross bodies, but they remain conditioned by their subtle bodies, which are composed of their *karmic* impressions. This inactive state of the jivas is called their 'sleep' and it corresponds to the Lord's sleep. This phase of existence is called *nirodha*. When the time comes for the subsequent creation cycle, the jivas receive bodies according to the *karma* they accrued in the previous cycle. During the maintenance period, if a living being takes up the devotional service of the Lord and attains perfection, he is freed from both his subtle and gross bodies and is situated in his original nature. This condition is called *mukti*, which is also a type of *nirodha*. However, in contrast to the *nirodha* that occurs at the time of universal annihilation, when the jiva attains *mukti* he is not compelled to again take birth in the material world. Rather, all his miseries come to an end and he enters the spiritual planets, where he eternally resides in his original, spiritual form. One can attain this state of eternal liberation only by practicing devotional service to Lord Krishna, as Sriḷa Vyasadeva did in His devotional trance.

The Supreme Lord, the tenth topic discussed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is the foundation of the other nine topics. The events that occur under the headings of these topics all take place by His potency; indeed, the very reason why the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes these topics is to help us come to know the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for a person is known by His works and attributes.

— *Śrī tattva-sandarbha* of Sriḷa Jiva Goswami Text 57.3. Translated by Sriḷa Gopiparandhan Das.



A DESCRIPTION OF JAMBUDVIPA

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

r̥ṣi uvāca:

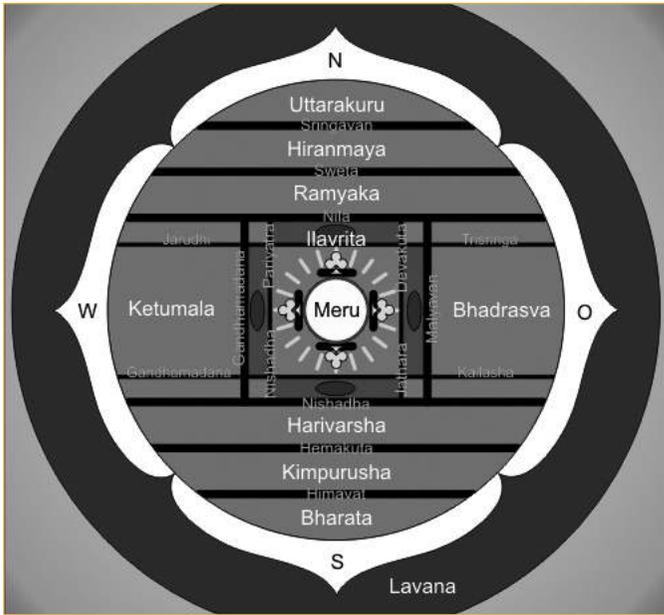
*na vai mahārāja bhāgavato māyā-guṇa-vibhūteḥ
kāṣṭhām manasā vacasā vādhigantum alam
vibudhāyusāpi puruṣas tasmāt
prādhān-yenaiva bhū-golaka-viśesaṁ nāma-rūpa-
māna-lakṣaṇāto vyākhyāsyāmah.*

The great *r̥ṣi* Sukadeva Goswami said: There is no limit to the expansion of the material energy of Supreme Personality of Godhead. This material world is a transformation of the material qualities (*sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*), yet no one can possibly explain it perfectly, even in a lifetime as long as that of Brahma. No one in the material world is perfect, and an imperfect person could not describe this material universe accurately, even after continued speculation. I shall nevertheless try to explain to you the principal regions, such as *bhūloka*, with their names, forms, measurements and various symptoms.

The planetary system known as *bhū-maṇḍala* resembles a lotus flower, and its seven islands resemble the whorl of that flower. The length and breadth of the island known as Jambudvīpa, which is situated in the middle of the whorl, are one million *yojanas* (12874752 kilometers). Jambudvīpa is round like the leaf of a lotus flower. In Jambudvīpa there are nine divisions of land, each with a length of 9,000 *yojanas* (115872 kilometers). There are eight mountains which mark the boundaries of these divisions and definitively separate them. Amidst these divisions,

or *varṣas*, is the *varṣa* named *Ilāvṛta*, which is situated in the middle of the whorl of the lotus. Within *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* is Sumeru Mountain, which is made of gold. Sumeru Mountain is like the pericarp of the lotus like *bhū-maṇḍala* planetary system. The mountain's height is the same as the width of Jambudvīpa, or in other words, 100,000 *yojanas* (1287475 kilometers). Of that, 16,000 *yojanas* (205996 kilometers) are within the earth, and therefore the mountain's height above the earth is 84,000 *yojanas* (1081479 kilometers). The mountain's width is 32,000 *yojanas* (411992 kilometers) at its summit and 16,000 *yojanas* (205996 kilometers) at its base. Just north of *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* and going further northward, one after another are three mountains named Nila, Sveta and Sṛngavan. These mark the borders of the three *varṣas* named Ramyaka, Hiranmaya and Kuru and separate them from each another. The width of these mountains is 2,000 *yojanas* (25749 kilometers). Lengthwise, they extend east and west to the beaches of the ocean of salt water. Going from south to north, the length of each mountain is one tenth that of the previous mountain, but the height of them all is the same.

Similarly, south of *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* and extending from east to west are three great mountains named (from north to south) Ninadha, Hemakūṭa and Himalaya. Each of them is 10,000 *yojanas* (128747 kilometers) high. They mark the boundaries of the three *varṣas* named *Hari-varṣa*, *Kimpuruṣa-varṣa* and *Bhārata-varṣa* (India). In the same way, west and east of *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* are two great mountains named Malyavan and Gandhamadana respectively. These two mountains, which are 2,000 *yojanas* (25749 kilometers) high, extend as far as Nila Mountain in the north and Ninadha in the south. They indicate the borders of *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* and also the *varṣas* known as Ketumala and Bhadrashva. On the four sides of the great mountain known as Sumeru are four mountains Mandara, Merumandara, Suparshva and Kumuda which are like its belts. The length and height of these mountains are calculated to be 10,000 *yojanas* (128747 kilometers). Standing like flagstaves on the summits of these four mountains are a mango tree, a rose apple (jambu) tree, a kadamba tree and a banyan tree. Those trees are calculated to have a width of 100 *yojanas* (1287 kilometers) and a height of 1,100 *yojanas* (14162 kilometers). Their branches also spread to a radius of 1,100 *yojanas*. O Maharaja Parikṣit, best of the Bharata dynasty, between these four mountains are four huge lakes. The water of the first tastes like milk; the water of the second, like honey; and that of the third, like sugarcane juice. The fourth lake is



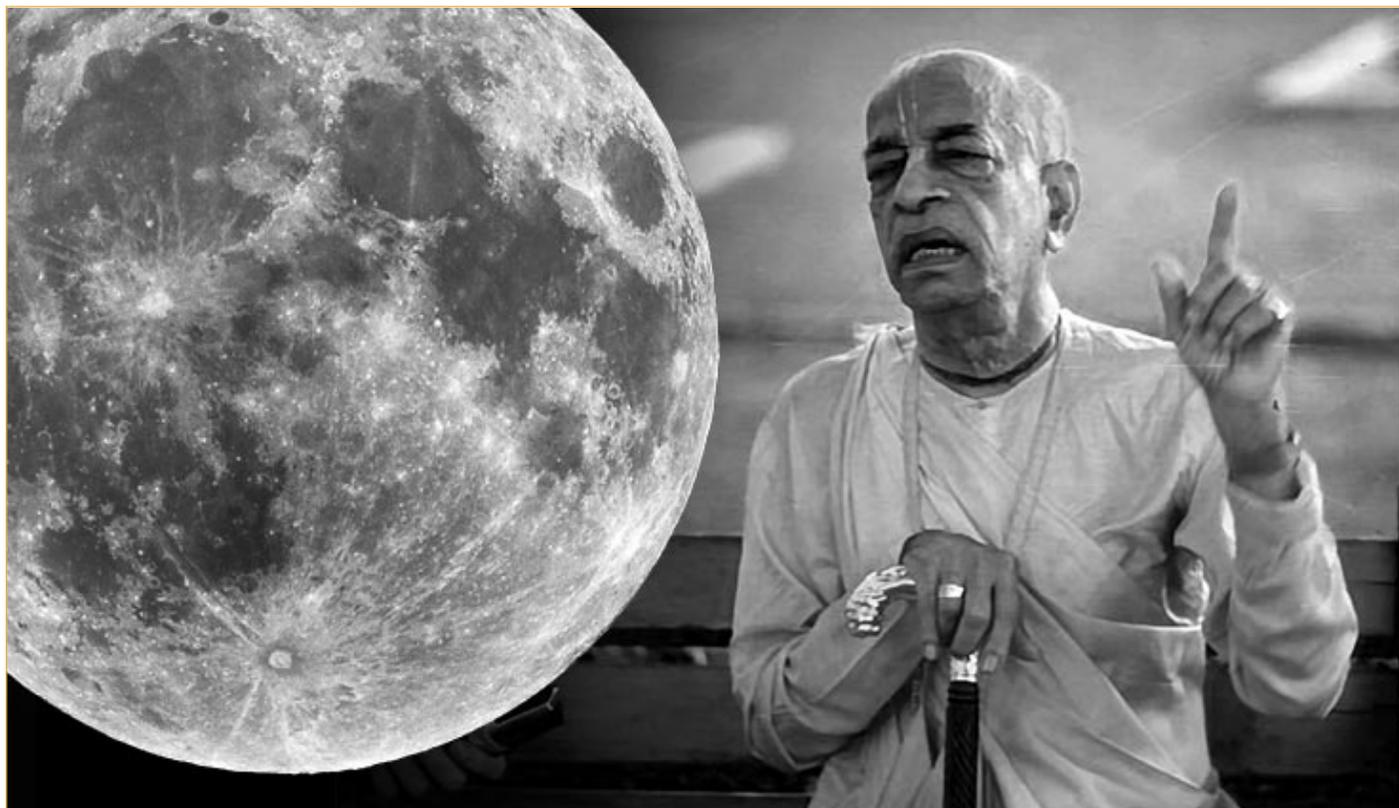
filled with pure water. The celestial beings such as the Siddhas, Charanas and Gandharvas, who are also known as demigods, enjoy the facilities of those four lakes. Consequently they have the natural perfections of mystic *yoga*, such as the power to become smaller than the smallest or greater than the greatest. There are also four celestial gardens named Nandana, Caitraratha, Vaibhrajaka and Sarvatobhadra. The best of the demigods, along with their wives, who are like ornaments of heavenly beauty, meet together and frolic within those gardens, while their glories are sung by lesser demigods known as Gandharvas.

On the lower slopes of Mandara Mountain is a mango tree named Devacuta. It is 1,100 *yojanas* high. Mangoes as big as mountain peaks and as sweet as nectar fall from the top of this tree for the enjoyment of the denizens of heaven. When all those solid fruits fall from such a height, they break, and the sweet, fragrant juice within them flows out and becomes increasingly more fragrant as it mixes with other scents. That juice cascades from the mountain in waterfalls and becomes a river called Arunoda, which pleasantly flows through the eastern side of Ilavrita. The pious wives of the Yaksas act as personal maidservants to assist Bhavani, the wife of Lord Shiva. Because they drink the water of the river Arunoda, their bodies become fragrant, and as the air carries that fragrance, it perfumes the entire atmosphere for eighty miles in all directions. Similarly, the fruit of the jambu tree, which are full of pulp and have very small seeds, fall from a great height and break to pieces. Those fruit are the size of elephants, and the juice gliding from them becomes a river named *Jambū-nadī*. This river falls a distance of 10,000 *yojanas*, from the summit of

Merumandara to the southern side of Ilavrita, and floods the entire land of Ilavrita with juice. The mud on both banks of the river *Jambū-nadī*, becomes moistened by this flowing juice and then dried by the air and sunshine, and thus produces huge quantities of gold called *Jāmbū-nada*. The denizens of heaven use this gold for various kinds of ornaments. Therefore all the inhabitants of the heavenly planets and their youthful wives are fully decorated with golden helmets, bangles and belts, and thus they enjoy life. On the side of Suparshva Mountain stands a big tree called Mahākadamba, which is very glorious. From the hollows of this tree flow five rivers of honey, each about five *vyāmas* wide. This flowing honey falls incessantly from the top of Suparshva Mountain and flows all around *Ilāvṛta-varṣa*, beginning from the western side. Thus the whole land is saturated with the pleasing fragrance. The air carrying the scent from the mouths of those who drink that honey perfumes the land for a hundred *yojanas* in all directions.

Similarly, on Kumuda Mountain there is a great banyan tree, which is called Shatavalsha because it has a hundred main branches. From those branches come many roots, from which many rivers are flowing. These rivers flow down from the top of the mountain to the northern side of *Ilāvṛta-varṣa* for the benefit of those who live there. Because of these flowing rivers, all the people have ample supplies of milk, yogurt, honey, clarified butter (ghee), molasses, food grains, clothes, bedding, sitting places and ornaments. All the objects they desire are sufficiently supplied for their prosperity, and therefore they are very happy. The residents of the material world who enjoy the products of these flowing rivers have no wrinkles on their bodies and no grey hair. They never feel fatigue, and their perspiration does not give their bodies a bad odor. They are not afflicted by old age, disease or untimely death, they do not suffer from chilling cold or scorching heat, nor do their bodies lose their luster. They all live very happily, without anxieties, until death.

There are other mountains beautifully arranged around the foot of Mount Meru like the filaments around the whorl of a lotus flower. Their names are Kuranga, Kurara, Kusumbha, Vaikanka, Trikuta, Shishira, Patanga, Rucaka, Ninadha, Sinivasa, Kapila, Sankha, Vaidurya, Jarudhi, Hamsa, Rsabha, Naga, Kalanjara and Narada. On the eastern side of Sumeru Mountain are two mountains named Jathara and Devakuta, which extend to the north and south for 18,000 *yojanas* (231745 kilometers). Similarly, on the western side of Sumeru are



two mountains named Pavana and Pariyatra, which also extend north and south for the same distance. On the southern side of Sumeru are two mountains named Kailasa and Karavira, which extend east and west for 18,000 *yojanas*, and on the northern side of Sumeru, extending for the same distance east and west, are two mountains named Trishrngga and Makara. The width and height of all these mountains is 2,000 *yojanas* (25749 kilometers). Sumeru, a mountain of solid gold shining as brilliantly as fire, is surrounded by these eight mountains. In the middle of the summit of Meru is the township of Lord Brahma. Each of its four sides is calculated to extend for ten million *yojanas* [eighty million miles]. It is made entirely of gold, and therefore learned scholars and sages call it Shatakumbhi. Surrounding Brahmapuri in all directions are the residences of the eight principal governors of the planetary systems, beginning with King Indra. These abodes are similar to Brahmapuri but are one quarter the size.

-*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* » Canto 5: » Chapter 16 » A Description of Jambudvīpa
» Verses:1-29.

MEASURING THE UNIVERSE

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The material world is only one quarter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's creation, but it is unlimited and impossible for anyone to know

or describe— even with the qualification of a life as long as that of Brahma, who lives for millions and millions of years. Modern scientists and astronomers try to explain the cosmic situation and the vastness of space, and some of them believe that all the glittering stars are different suns.

From *Bhagavad-gītā*, however, we understand that all these stars (*nakṣatras*) are like the moon, in that they reflect the sunshine [Bg. 15.12]. They are not independent luminaries. Bhuloka is explained to be that portion of outer space through which the heat and light of the sun extend. Therefore it is natural to conclude that this universe extends in space as far as we can see and encompasses the glittering stars.

Srila Sukadeva Goswami admitted that to give full details of this expansive material universe would be impossible, but nevertheless he wanted to give the King as much knowledge as he had received through the *paramparā* system. We should conclude that since one cannot comprehend the material expansions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one certainly cannot estimate the expansiveness of the spiritual world.

There are many mountains, even on this planet earth. We do not think that the measurements of all of them have actually been calculated. While passing over the mountainous region from Mexico to Caracas, we saw so many mountains that we doubt whether the height, length and



breadth of all have been properly measured. Therefore, as indicated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by Sukadeva Goswami, we should not try to comprehend the greater mountainous areas of the universe merely by our calculations. Sukadeva Goswami has already stated that such calculations would be very difficult even if one had a duration of life like that of Lord Brahma. We should simply be satisfied with the statements of authorities like Sukadeva Goswami and appreciate how the entire cosmic manifestation has been made possible by the external energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The measurements given herein, such as 10,000 *yojanas* or 100,000 *yojanas*, should be considered correct because they have been given by Sukadeva Goswami. Our experimental knowledge can neither verify nor disprove the statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We should simply hear these statements from the authorities. If we can appreciate the extensive energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that will benefit us.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* » Canto 5: » Chapter 16 » A Description of Jambudvīpa
» Verses: 4 and 10, Purport.

WHO IS A MENTAL SPECULATOR?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Mental speculators are those who dare to approach the Absolute Truth in a challenging mood. Mental speculation - the path of argument - is the opposite to what is taught in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34).

There are two kinds of spiritually inquisitive people; those who want to become inclined toward Krishna by hearing from a bona fide spiritual master who glorifies the Absolute Truth, and those who want to challenge the transcendental Absolute Truth on the strength of the knowledge they have gained through their senses. The former is the authorized descending path of disciplic succession, and the latter is the path of argumentation. When knowledge is accepted directly, that is the path of disciplic succession, and when it is accepted indirectly, that is the path of argumentation. The five of philosophical work (*darśanas*) are based on argument. Only the *Vedāntadarśana* has accepted the authorized path of disciplic succession. In order to bewilder ordinary people, Sripada Sankaracarya has mixed argument into the *Vedāntadarśana* and thus adulterated it with the descending method. One becomes a mental speculator when he enhances his material knowledge, even while apparently pursuing spiritual understanding.

Vaishnavas do not concoct or speak from their imagination. Rather, they lead people to

the guru's lotus feet. There are not five or ten spiritual masters; guru is one. And the Absolute Truth requires no challenge from anyone.

—*AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality by His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada* » Compiled by *Śrīpāda Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavat Maharaja* » Adapted and Published by *Ishvara Das*.

THE ATTEMPT TO REALISE THE TRANSCENDENTAL TRUTH *Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura*

The misguided attempt to realise the transcendental, Absolute Truth, lying beyond the grasp of the material, mental faculty is known as the deductive process, mental speculation - a method not supported by the Vedas. Lord Krishna is unconquerable and imperceptible to the mundane senses. The independent pursuit of speculative knowledge is to be rejected as it depends on the imperfect material senses, which are habituated to only gather information about the external phenomena. One should instead approach and hear from mature spiritually realised devotees, who are freed from the four inherent human faults namely making mistakes, falling into illusion, possessing imperfect senses, and the cheating propensity. The instructions thus received help the aspirants to develop sincere faith in pure devotional service, inspiring them to dedicate their lives to hearing, chanting and serving the Lord. With mind, body and words, they become dedicated to the all-purifying message of unalloyed surrender to the Supreme Lord Krishna, which destroys the malevolent effects of Kali-yuga. These devotees can now remain in any spiritual or social order or upon any planet within the three worlds. And although *Sri Krishna* is hidden, yet to such devotees, the Lord becomes gradually revealed. Eventually, they begin serving with unalloyed loving devotion, thus bringing the Supreme Lord Krishna under their control. After accruing heaps of devotional credits over many lifetimes, the living entity, obtains *śraddha* - faith with an inclination for devotional service. With this blossoms the devotional attitude, which enables him to interact with matter only for the purpose of keeping body and soul together.

— *Dāsa-mūla-tattva* » Chapter Ten - Pure Devotion » *The Only Means of Perfection*, Translated by *Sarvabhāvana dāsa*.





A RARE HUMAN BIRTH IN
THE LAND OF BHĀRATA-VARṢA
Śrīla Vrīndavana Das Thakura

*ye nara-śarīra lāgi' deve kāmya kare
tāhā vyartha yāya mithyā sukhera vihāre*

"The human form of life, which is desired even by the demigods, is wasted in the pursuit of false happiness."

Human birth is favorable for worshipping Lord Hari and therefore it is desired even by the demigods. The demigods prayers in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.19.21-25) in this regard are as follows:

*etad eva hi devā gāyanti—
aho amiśam kim akāri śobhanam
prasanna eśam svid uta svayam hariḥ
yair janma labdham nṛṣu bhāratājire
mukunda-sevaupayikam sprhā hi naḥ*

"Since the human form of life is the sublime position for spiritual realization, all we demigods in heaven speak in this way: How wonderful it is for these human beings to have been born in the land of *Bhārata-varṣa*! They must have executed pious acts and austerity in the past, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself must have been pleased with them. Otherwise, how could they engage in devotional service in so many ways? We demigods can only aspire to achieve human births in *Bhārata-varṣa* to execute devotional service, but these human beings are already doing that."

*kim duṣkarair naḥ kratubhis tapo-vratair
dānādibhir vā dyujayena phalgunā
na yatra nārāyaṇa-pāda-pankaja-
smṛtiḥ pramuṣṭātīśayendriyotsavāt*

"After performing the very difficult tasks of executing Vedic ritualistic sacrifices, undergoing austerities, observing vows and giving charity, we have achieved this position as inhabitants of the heavenly planets. But what is the value of this achievement? Here we are certainly absorbed in material sense gratification, and therefore we can hardly remember the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. Indeed, because of our excessive sense gratification, we have almost forgotten His lotus feet.

"A short life in the land of *Bhārata-varṣa* is preferable to a life achieved in Brahmaloka for millions and billions of years because even if

one is elevated to Brahmaloka, he must return to repeated birth and death. Although life in the lower planetary system of *Bhārata-varṣa*, is very short, one who lives there can elevate himself to full Krishna consciousness and achieve the highest perfection, even in his short life, by fully surrendering unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Thus one attains *Vaikuṇṭhaloka*, where there is neither anxiety nor repeated birth in a material body.

*kalpāyusām sthānajayāt punar-bhavāt
kṣanāyusām bhārata-bhūjayo varam
kṣaṇena martyena kṛtam manasvinaḥ
sannyasya samyānty abhayaṁ padam hareḥ*

"An intelligent person does not take interest in a place, even in the topmost planetary system, if the pure Ganges water of topics concerning the Supreme Lord's activities does not flow there, if there are not devotees engaged in service on the banks of such a river of piety, or if there are no festivals of saṅkīrtana-yajña to satisfy the Lord (since saṅkīrtana-yajña is specifically recommended for this age).

"*Bhārata-varṣa* affords one the proper land and circumstances in which to execute devotional service, which can free one from the results of jñāna and karma. If one obtains a human body in the land of *Bhārata-varṣa*, with full sensory organs with which to execute the saṅkīrtana-yajña, but in spite of this opportunity does not take to devotional service, he is certainly like liberated forest animals and birds who are careless and are therefore again captured by a hunter."

— Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata » Śrīla Vrīndavana dāsa Thakura » Ādi-khaṇḍa Chapter Eight, Verse: 208 and the Gauḍīya-bhāṣya Commentary and Chapter Summary of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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Our heart felt thanks to Isha Prakash Das for helping as Copy Editor, Vrajsevika Devi Dasi for her Sanskrit and Bengali Translations, Rasa Manjari Devi Dasi for her assistance.

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of

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