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rathe ca vamanam drstva punar janma na vidyate
Simply by seeing the Lord on the chariot, one makes advancement for
stopping the repetition of birth and death. — Srila Prabhupada

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Sat, Feb 7, 2015

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Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, came to America in 1965, at age 69, to fulfill his spiritual master’s request that he teach the science of Krishna consciousness throughout the English-speaking world. In a dozen years he published some seventy volumes of translation and commentary on India’s Vedic literature, and these are now standard in universities worldwide. Meanwhile, travelling almost nonstop, Srila Prabhupada moulded his international society into a world wide confederation of ashramas, schools, temples and farm communities. He passed away in 1977, in Vrindavana, the place most sacred to Lord Krishna. His disciples and followers are carrying forward the movement he started.

To know more about Srila Prabhupada visit www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada

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Learning how to love and serve God is so important that God Himself comes to teach it.

By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

"What the Upanishads describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Supersoul is but His localized plenary portion. Lord Chaitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him."—Chaitanya-charitamrita, Adi-lila 1.3

The author of Chaitanya-charitamrita, Krishna dasa Kaviraja Gosvami, is establishing with great stress that there is no greater truth than Krishna Chaitanya. We are after truth. The author of Chaitanya-charitamrita is asserting, "Here is the Supreme Truth: Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

Krishna has appeared as Krishna Chaitanya. We explained this truth yesterday, according to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's declaration:

vairagya-vidya-nija-bhakti-yoga-
siksartham ekah purusah puranah
sri-krishna-chaitanya-sarira-dhari
krpambudhir yas tam aham prapadye

"Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, who has descended in the form of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to teach us real knowledge, devotional service to Him, and detachment from whatever does not foster Krishna consciousness. He has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto His lotus feet."

The purusah puranah, the oldest person, is Krishna. Govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami: "I worship Govinda [Krishna], the primeval Lord." In many Vedic scriptures Krishna is described as the puranah purusah, the oldest person. Puranah purusam nava-yauvanam ca: "Although He is the oldest of all, still He is always a fresh youth.

How it this possible? People are trying to understand God. Sometimes they paint a picture of God as a very old man. "Because He is the original person, by this time He must have become very old." That is imagination. That old man is not actually the form of the Lord. The form of the Lord is described in the Brahma-samhita and other Vedic scriptures. Even Shankaracharya, an impersonalist, has accepted Lord Krishna as the supreme Narayana, the Personality of Godhead. Commenting on the Bhagavad-gita, Shankaracharya says, narayanah parah avyakata: "Narayana is beyond the material creation." And while describing Narayana, he has affirmed, sa bhagavan swayam krishnah: "Narayana is Krishna." To confirm this he has clearly mentioned, "Now He has appeared as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva," because a person's identity is confirmed when his father's name is given.

Krishna is accepted as para-tattva, the Supreme Truth, by all the acharyas, the great spiritual teachers in the Vedic tradition. We are not talking of the fools and rascals who theorize without any knowledge. We are concerned with the authorities. In India, people follow the Vedic system under the authority of the acharyas. Acharyavan puruso veda: "One who follows the path of the acharyas has real knowledge." We cannot accept anyone as an authority if he does not follow the parampara, the disciplic succession of acharyas. That is the Vedic system.

Proof by Vedic Evidence

Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami is emphatically asserting, na chaityat krishnaj jagati para-tattvam param iha: "There is no greater truth than Krishna and Krishna Chaitanya." According to the Vedic system, if you say something
emphatically you must prove it by Vedic evidence. Otherwise, you can go on talking, but nobody will listen. Sometimes people ask us about Krishna and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu—"What are the Vedic evidences?" The Vedic evidences are given in later chapters of Chaitanya-charitamrita. Kaviraja Gosvami is not falsely asserting. He is a very, very advanced devotee and scholar, not an ordinary human being. To write Chaitanya-charitamrita he was empowered by Madana-mohana, a Deity of Krishna in Vrindavana.

No ordinary person should try to write Vedic literature. Vedic literature means the shruti, the smrti, the Puranas, and so on. Srita Rupa Gosvami has confirmed this:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sruti-smrti-puranadi-} \\
\text{pancaratra-vidhim vina} \\
\text{aikantiki harer bhaktir} \\
\text{utpayaya ka kalpate}
\end{align*}
\]

“Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literature like the Upanishads, Puranas, and Narada-pancharatra is simply a needless disturbance in society.” Utpata means “simply a disturbance.” People claim, “I can manufacture my own way.” But this rascaldom has been condemned by Srita Rupa Gosvami. You will find many so-called bhaktas, devotees, imitating the ecstasy of advanced devotees by crying, falling on the ground, and so on. But immediately after their exhibition you will see them smoking. Why? Because they do not follow the injunction of Srita Rupa Gosvami. They chant very loudly, dance, and after the performance is finished—I have seen it—“Can you give me a bidi [cigarette]?” You see? “My throat is now dried up.” This is utpata. Srita Rupa Gosvami has described this kind of so-called devotional attitude as simply a disturbance.

Srita Bhaktivinoda Thakura has condemned these imitators. There are so many apa-sampradayas, deviant sects, pretending to be Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's devotees. Who are they? Aula, baula, kartabhaja, neda, daravesa, sani, sahajya, sakhibheki, smarta, jata-gosani, ativadi, cudadhari, and gauranga-nagari. Bhaktivinoda says, “I do not associate with these classes of men.” After the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, many apa-sampradayas sprang up. We should be very careful not to be fooled by them.

Sampradaya means those who carefully follow the Vedic principles. Therefore Kaviraja Gosvami, although asserting the truth, is prepared to give Vedic evidences. Now with today's verse he has begun, by citing the Upanishads. The Vedic literature includes the four Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Vedanta-sutra, then the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

The Srimad-Bhagavatam is the explanation of the Vedanta-sutra. Therefore at the end of each chapter of the Srimad-Bhagavatam Vyasadeva states, brahma-sutrasyasya bhasya: "The Srimad-Bhagavatam is the commentary on the Brahman-sutra." Brahman-sutra, or Vedanta-sutra, gives the gist of the Vedic literature in codes. And the Srimad-Bhagavatam explains these codes. The Vedanta-sutra begins, athato brahma-jijnasa: "Now is the time to inquire into the Absolute Truth." And the Srimad-Bhagavatam states, jivasya tatvam-jijnasa: "The only business for living beings is to inquire about the Absolute Truth."

That is the only business. People are in trouble because they have given up their real business. Human life is meant for this business—brahma-jijnasa, to inquire about the Absolute Truth. We human beings have been given so many facilities by nature. There are so many living entities who must stand rooted to the ground for many years—the trees, the plants. The aquatics are in the water for many, many years. The flies and insects remain in their condition for many, many years. And gradually, by the soul's evolution, we come to this form of human life.

The Aryans, especially—the advanced, civilized human beings—have all the necessary facilities for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Uncivilized men, such as those living in the jungle, cannot utilize such resources. Therefore Narottama Dasa Thakura, in a simple Bengali song, says, hari hari biphale janama gonainu: "O Lord Hari, Krishna, I've wasted my life." This is our position. We have the human form of life, but we are simply spoiling it. In the Krishna consciousness movement we are traveling all over the world, and according to our view, how people are spoiling their very valuable human life in the false identification that "I am this body! Under big, big names—"I am American," "I am Indian," "I am German"—they are spoiling their life by this bodily conception.

According to shastra, scripture, anyone who identifies himself with his body is a fool. That is the first instruction of the Bhagavad-gita. Krishna brought Arjuna to fight with the Kurus, and because Arjuna identified himself as the body, Arjuna thought, "Killing my cousin-brothers will not be good, because I have a bodily relation with them." So to dissipate that conception of life, Krishna rebuked him, asocyan anvasocas tvaam prajna-vadams ca bhasase: "While speaking learned words, you are mourning for what is not worthy of grief."

We are talking very big talks and plans, but actually we are nothing better than cats and dogs. This is our position, because we identify with the body. "My country, my community, my society, my family." This is the basic ignorance.
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Aham mameti: "I and my." People do not know the truth. They are thinking, "I am this body, and anything in relationship with the body is mine." This is ignorance. But this ignorance is going on all over the world. Therefore in the beginning of the Chaitanya-charitamrita the author says:

vande sri-krishna-chaitanya-
nityanandau sahoditau
gaudodaye puspavantau
citrau sandau tamo-nudau

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauda to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all." Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu have come to deliver the fallen souls of the material world who are in the darkness of false conceptions. Somebody just told me that the king of Saudi Arabia has been killed by his own nephew. This is going on. Even in family affairs it is going on. Why? Because of this darkness: aham mameti, "I and mine."

The First Lesson

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu along with His associates—Nityananda Prabhu, Advaita Prabhu, Gadadhara Prabhu, Srivasa, and other devotees—are trying to dissipate the darkness of this false identification. Krishna instructed Arjuna about Arjuna's darkness as to his identity. Krishna chided him, "You are talking very big, big words, but you are lamenting about a subject for which no learned person laments." Then Krishna said, gatasun agatsums ca nanusocanti panditah: "You are fool number one. No learned person talks like that. Now try to understand the real position."

Krishna then said:

dehino 'smin yatha dehe
kaumaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantara-praptir
dhiras tatra na muhyati

"As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change." Or in other words, "First of all try to understand what you are."

That is the beginning of Bhagavad-gita. Bhagavad-gita is not politics. It is knowledge, pure knowledge. The politicians take advantage of it, and the sociologists and the so-called swamis and yogis take advantage of it to try to prove their nonsensical theories. But what they present is not at all Bhagavad-gita. Bhagavad-gita "as it is" is pure knowledge, beginning with the first knowledge one has to understand: that we are not the body. Because the basic principle of ignorance is this: "I am this body," "I am American," "I am Indian," "I am a brahmana," "I am this," "I am that."

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu points out the same ignorance in a different way. He says, "I am not a brahmana. I am not a kshatriya [warrior]. I am not a vaishya [merchant]. I am not a shudra [labourer]. I am not a brahmachari [celibate student]. I am not a grahamasta [householder]. I am not a vanaprastha [retired person]. I am not a sannyasi [renunciant]." These are negations. Then what is the positive? He says, gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor dasa-
dasanudasah: "I am the servant of the servant of the servant of the gopi-bhartuh, Krishna, who maintains the gopis, His cowherd girl friends."

So this is also our identity, but we have forgotten. We have forgotten our real relationship with Krishna, and we are trying to be happy by material adjustments. This is modern civilization. One is thinking, "If I get a nice house, a nice motorcar, a nice business, a nice bank balance, a nice wife, nice children..." This is material civilization. But people do not know that this way they will never be happy. Now, you Europeans and Americans have a good qualification: As I have described many times, you are no longer very much interested in all these "nice" things. The real nice thing is spiritual understanding. That nice thing begins, aham brahmasmi: "I am not this body." That is the beginning of the Bhagavad-gita. Krishna is instructing Arjuna, "You are not this body. You are spirit soul. Try to understand."

Unchanged Message

We should learn from Krishna. We should learn from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Krishna Himself. Therefore the author of Chaitanya-charitamrita says, "Accept this authority."
When Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared five hundred years ago, people had already become fools and rascals. They did not care for the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita. Therefore He came as a devotee of Krishna to teach us how to serve Krishna, how to love Krishna. This is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's cult. When Krishna appeared He said, sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja: “Give up everything, all your rascaldom. Just surrender to Me.” And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, as a devotee, said the same thing. Yare dekha, tare kaha krishna-upadesha: “Whomever you meet, tell him about Krishna's instructions.” Lord Chaitanya said nothing new. That is the sign of authenticity. Those who say “I have manufactured some way” are all rascals. In your country it is said, “Old wine in a new bottle.” Similarly, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is teaching the same thing as Krishna. Krishna says, mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya: “There is no truth superior to Me.” Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says the same thing: yare dekha, tare kaha krishna-upadesha. And we are saying the same thing, na chaitanyat krishnaj jagati para-tattvam: "There is no truth superior to Krishna Chaitanya." Why? Because He is the same truth as Krishna. This is called the parampara system: We are repeating what Krishna said and what Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said.

So it is not difficult to understand the Absolute Truth. Krishna says directly, “Surrender to Me.” And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says, “Preach Krishna's message.” We are not going to teach anything but what is spoken by Krishna and supported by Krishna Chaitanyaadeva. This is our principle. This is the principle of the Krishna consciousness movement. Krishna preached about Himself, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu preached the same principle, and we are preaching the same thing. We do not preach anything else. We do not manufacture anything. That is not our business.

By the grace of Krishna, by the mercy of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, you European boys and girls joined this movement at my soliciting. I went to your country with this word only. I did not show you any magic, nor do I have any knowledge of how to play magic. I simply repeat the same message: "Here is Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Here is Krishna Chaitanyadeva, the devotional form of Krishna. Accept Them, and your life will be successful."

Thank you very much.

Sri V. P. Singh, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam and Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/lectures-and-conversations
Srila Prabhupada (with an airliner roaring overhead): The airplane botheration was not in Switzerland. They do not fly so low, for fear of the mountain peaks. That was the only place in the world where there was no such sound. Otherwise, everywhere. In America we have got so many temples. Even in West Virginia, quite a hilly tract, there is also the sound of airplanes, although less loud. Anyway, here it is near London, so there must be this sound. Yes. Formerly, people were satisfied to remain in their village. That is the defect of the modern civilization.

Mother: In India, you mean. You’re talking of India now.

Srila Prabhupada: Everywhere.

Mother: Everywhere.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Everywhere.

Mother: What about India? I mean, do they believe in this Vedic culture—the villagers?

Srila Prabhupada: In India, actually, they do so.

Mother: Yes.

Srila Prabhupada: The villagers have cows and land. That is sufficient for their economic problem. But the industrialists are alluring them: "To get more money, come here."

So the villagers are going to the cities. And the food production in the village is neglected. And therefore the grain price is rising. Actually, everyone should be engaged to produce food, but the modern setup of civilization is that few people are engaged in producing food, and others are eating.

The industrialists are artificially getting money. And they are offering paper: “Here is one hundred dollars.” Although it is simply a piece of paper—cheating. The ordinary people are captivated by cheating. They are thinking, “I have got now one hundred dollars.”

What is this hundred dollars? It is paper. So some people are cheating, and some people are being...
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Mother: But I think one has to be clever enough not to let people cheat you.

Srila Prabhupada: “Clever” means that the person must stay on his own land. He should not be cheated by the paper and go to the city.

Mother: But we have to teach our young to be able to define between those who cheat and those who... be able to tell people who...

Srila Prabhupada: The whole civilization is a plan for cheating others. That’s all. And they’re all sinful. According to our Vedic understanding, there are four things sinful, four pillars of sinful life: illicit sex, unnecessary killing of animals, intoxication, and gambling.

Mother: But you can lead a very happy life, still.

Srila Prabhupada: Our students are trained in that way.

Mother: There are a lot of very good people in the world.

Srila Prabhupada: Just see. You can see from your son. These devotees can sit down anywhere. They can lie down. There is no artificial living. They are satisfied with nice foodstuffs made from vegetables and milk. And chanting Hare Krishna, the holy name of God.

Mother: I see my son Michael is happy. But, you know, he came from a very happy home. So he should be happy, shouldn’t he?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Mother: Very happy home. Brothers and sisters. And we’ve all been very happy. And I hope he will remain happy.

Srila Prabhupada: Now he’s even happier.

Mother: Yes, I can see.

Srila Prabhupada: He was happy; now he’s happier. That is the difference.

Mother: Yes. Oh, I don’t think he’s happier. [Laughter as she glances at her son, who is nodding in the affirmative.] You are? I didn’t think it was possible.

Srila Prabhupada (playfully): You are not happier.

Mother: I didn’t think it was possible.

Srila Prabhupada: Because your son has come here, you may not be happier. But he’s happier.

Mother: Oh, you’re saying this. I’m not saying this. I’m very disappointed that he is not continuing with his education. I’m not sorry that he’s happy. I’m happy for his happiness, wherever he is.

Srila Prabhupada: But what is the purpose of education?

Mother: You’re a cultured man. You’re educated.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Mother: Did you not learn? Who gave you the talent to translate your Vedic scriptures?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Mother: Who gave you the talent, Father?

Srila Prabhupada: No. I’m asking, What is the best part of education? So far as my schooling or college education is concerned, that is not being perused here.

Mother: Oh, but you’re cultured. You in your old age are getting tremendous comfort from being able to read and to understand what the world is doing—the goodness of your books—and you’re able to understand the spiritual way of life.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes.

Mother: If you couldn’t, if you hadn’t been educated, Father, well, how would you be able to have achieved all these things?

Srila Prabhupada: No, education is required.

Mother: Now, I am so happy that my son is happy, truthfully. But I am very distressed. [To devotees on hand:] And, little boys, don’t laugh, because this is serious. Um. I am very distressed that none of these boys continue their education. [In fact, Srila Prabhupada encouraged his academically inclined students to complete their university training. Ed. Note.] What is going to happen to them when they are like you, when they’re older, but they have no talents?

Srila Prabhupada: But your educational system—in the Western countries, you have got big universities. Why are the students becoming hippies?

Mother: Oh, well, there are always a certain amount becoming hippies, in America, anywhere. But we must develop the good ones that have talent. We must develop them. You have the power to give these boys...

Srila Prabhupada: I mean to say that in India for the most part there are no such big, big universities, such big facilities, but in your Western countries you have got nice universities, a nice teaching system. Why is the result hippies?

Mother: Oh, but we’re talking of you. You have got the power. People follow you because they believe in you. So you have the power to educate them. And you and your people are not hippies, are you?

Srila Prabhupada: My point is that this education simply for eating, sleeping, mating, and defending—this sort of education will not satisfy.

Mother: Well, you’re educated, you see.

Srila Prabhupada: No, I am educated.

Mother: Yes, but how many of these are?

Srila Prabhupada: But I am not educated only on this platform—eating, sleeping, sex life, and defense. I am educated on a different platform.
The Song Goes Ever On
A brief look at Uddhava and the Uddhava Gita
by Satyaraja Das

At a recent academic conference, I found myself engulfed in a discussion about the Bhagavad-gita, the battlefield dialogue between Krishna, or God, and his dedicated devotee Arjuna, the heroic warrior.

“The Gita gives us the most profound philosophy,” I said to one of the scholars. “It shows us how Krishna interacts with His loving devotees.”

A nearby eavesdropper, hearing only the barest details of my discussion, queried, “Oh, are you talking about Gita-govinda, where Krishna shows His love for Radha?”

“Well, no, I...”

Another scholar, standing only a few feet away, chimed in: “I think he was talking about the Anugita, a summary of the Bhagavad-gita found later in the Mahabharata.”

At an academic conference of scholars who specialize in India’s religious texts, my reference to “the Gita” turned out to be a careless one—India is full of Gitas, the Bhagavad-gita being one among many.

When I returned home, I decided to look at Srila Prabhupada’s books to see which Gitas he considered important. To my surprise, in the Third Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam (3.4.32, purport), Prabhupada says something interesting about the Uddhava Gita: “Undoubtedly, the Bhagavad-gita was spoken by the Lord on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra just to encourage Arjuna to fight, and yet to complete the transcendental knowledge of Bhagavad-gita, the Lord instructed Uddhava. The Lord wanted Uddhava to fulfill His mission and disseminate knowledge which He had not spoken even in Bhagavad-gita.”

It is not that Srila Prabhupada is here minimizing the importance of the Bhagavad-gita, which elsewhere he praises as the most profound philosophy known to man. But he is saying something about the unique importance of the Uddhava Gita.

Krishna’s Other Gita

The Uddhava Gita is found in the Eleventh Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, Chapters 7-29. It is one of many Gitas associated with the worship of Krishna. Though the Bhagavad-gita is arguably the most famous of these Gitas, the tradition offers us Gita-govinda, Gopi Gita, Venu Gita, Bhramara Gita, and several others. Gita means “song,” and within the context of sacred literature, it refers to particularly mellifluous and blessed songs of divine truth, uttered by great devotees or by the Lord Himself. The songs include both philosophical and devotional outpourings.

Uddhava Gita is among the most important of the genre, for it focuses on Krishna’s final instructions before leaving the earthly plane. More, these instructions are delivered to Uddhava, recognized by the tradition as a maha-bhagavata, or “greatest among the devotees,” and as mukhyam krishna-parigrahe, “foremost of those who are intimate with Krishna.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.4.24) He is also Krishna’s cousin, and practically His twin in appearance.

For these reasons and others, it is curious that the Uddhava Gita has never enjoyed the fame of its sister text, the Bhagavad-gita, with which it shares several verses in common. In certain ways, the Uddhava Gita goes further than the Bhagavad-gita, as Prabhupada tells us, illuminating the Bhagavad-gitas central teaching of devotion to Krishna and emphasizing the importance of seeing Krishna everywhere, in everyone, and at all times.

Who Is Uddhava?

The Srimad-Bhagavatam introduces Uddhava in the Third Canto. Uddhava meets the Pandavas’ uncle Vidura, who asks Uddhava about his conversation with Krishna (Uddhava Gita) and about Krishna’s associates and family members. The Bhagavatam (3.2.2) informs us at this point of Uddhava’s single-minded devotion—from the age of five he was absorbed in Krishna and nothing more. It also reveals the depth of Uddhava’s love for Krishna. On remembering Him, “Uddhava had all the transcendental bodily changes due to total ecstasy, and he was trying to wipe away tears of separation from his eyes.” (3.2.5) Clearly, Uddhava is no ordinary player, even in this most transcendental of plays.

Uddhava begins to answer Vidura’s questions by poetically telling him, “The sun of the world, Lord Krishna, has set, and our house [the Kuru dynasty] has now been swallowed by the great snake of time.” (3.2.7) He recounts Krishna’s pastimes in Vrindavana, many of which took place near the Yamuna River, where Vidura and Uddhava now sit. He then describes the many events that took place in Mathura and in Dwarka, in the latter part of Krishna’s manifest pastimes.

Though Vidura, at this point, wants Uddhava to be his
Krishna explains that the human intellect is capable of cultivating spiritual knowledge. Krishna stresses the importance of approaching a guru, but He also says that one can observe many truths by heeding the "spiritual master" known as nature. He enumerates for that one can observe many truths by heeding the cultivating spiritual knowledge. Krishna stresses the Krishna explains that the human intellect is capable of attachments and control the mind? so immediate, so alluring. How one can relinquish the soul, since the material world and its illusions are Uddhava asks Krishna how one can realize the truth of gita. But here He adds scriptural references and Bhagavad- and the self, the soul, just as He does in the Bhagavad-gita. But here He adds scriptural references and analogies to enhance His argument.

Uddhava asks Krishna how one can realize the truth of the soul, since the material world and its illusions are so immediate, so alluring. How one can relinquish attachments and control the mind? Krishna explains that the human intellect is capable of cultivating spiritual knowledge. Krishna stresses the importance of approaching a guru, but He also says that one can observe many truths by heeding the "spiritual master" known as nature. He enumerates for Uddhava twenty-four teachers of the true spiritual seeker, including the earth, the air, and the sky. From the air, for example, one can learn to come in touch with sense objects while remaining unaffected by them.

Krishna next explains the complexities of karma, giving vivid examples of just how entangling karma can be. He recommends only pure works, done on His behalf. Krishna then explains the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion, and ignorance—and how to become free from their influence. He points out the importance of keeping company with devotees, giving elaborate details on how to identify who is truly advanced in spiritual life, and who is not.

Krishna also conveys to Uddhava the art of meditation, explaining that meditation reaches its perfection when one learns how to meditate on Him. He then points out the importance of deity worship and delineates the specifics of formal worship of installed deities. This leads to an elaborate discussion of bhakti-yoga, the science of devoting oneself to God.

Krishna then outlines the yogic siddhis, or the mystic powers one may develop through yoga. He explains that such powers can be an asset but are more often a deficit, distracting practitioners from the path of devotion.

Uddhava asks Krishna to list His divine attributes, so that devotees will have substance for meditation and contemplation. Krishna is pleased by the request, praising Uddhava as expert in asking appropriate questions: "On the Battlefield of Kurukshetra," Krishna says, "Arjuna... asked Me the same question that you are now posing." After this reference to His conversation with Arjuna, Krishna explains how He can be seen in the world and, nearly echoing His own words in the Bhagavad-gitas Tenth Chapter, enumerates His opulences as the Absolute Truth: "I am the ultimate goal...I am the three-lettered omkara... I am the Gayatri mantra... I am the Himalayas," and so on. He adds several that are not in the Gita, such as "Among jewels, I am the ruby, and among flowers the lotus."

The next two chapters of the Uddhava Gita detail the ancient social and spiritual system known as Varnashrama Dharma. Krishna makes it clear, as He does in the Bhagavad-gita, that one fits into this system according to quality and work, not birth (as in the modern-day caste system). The original system is meant to help practitioners use their God-given talents and inclinations to gradually become God conscious.

Different Instructions for Different Students

As the Uddhava Gita comes to a close, Krishna again emphasizes the importance of bhakti-yoga, or devotion to Him, and makes two additional points: (1) He asks Uddhava to try to see the Supreme Soul, Krishna Himself,
A cement that keeps your home strong, safe and together for generations to come.
in all living beings and at all times. There is a spiritual oneness to all things, Krishna tells Uddhava, and yet He—God—remains a distinct and transcendent individual as well. This is the great mystery of spiritual life. (2) Krishna tells Uddhava to renounce the world and accept the life of a mendicant. Students of the Bhagavad-gita will notice that this instruction seems diametrically opposed to that given to Arjuna. In the Bhagavad-gita, Krishna tells Arjuna to unhesitatingly fight on behalf of the righteous. In other words, Krishna tells him to work in the world for a divine purpose, on God’s behalf, not to renounce all action and sit on his laurels like a would-be yogi.

Is Krishna contradicting Himself by telling Uddhava to become a renunciant, to shy away from worldly activities? Not in the slightest. Arjuna was a warrior, in the middle of a battle, and many were depending on him to do his duty. But Uddhava’s temperament was different. He was inclined to the mood of the gopis. [See the sidebar “Uddhava Sandesha.”] The teachings of Krishna consciousness, as delivered in both the Bhagavad-gita and the Uddhava Gita, take each person’s unique psychophysical make-up into account, celebrating the diversity of creation and the special way in which each of us is meant to serve God.

In the last verse of Uddhava Gita (11.29.49), Sukadeva Goswami, the narrator of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, feels intense love for the Lord and utters the following words:

I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original and greatest of all beings, Lord Sri Krishna. He is the author of the Vedas, and just to destroy His devotees’ fear of material existence, like a bee He has collected this nectarean essence of all knowledge and self-realization. Thus He has awarded to His many devotees this nectar from the ocean of bliss, and by His mercy they have drunk it.

The Uddhava Sandesha

In addition to his brief appearance in the Third Canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam and his elaborate role in the Eleventh (Uddhava Gita), Uddhava is also prominent in the Tenth Canto. There, Krishna sends Uddhava to Vrindavana to console His devotees, who are pining for Him. Uddhava’s message to the people of Vrindavana is known as Uddhava Sandesha (“Uddhava’s Message”).

Uddhava speaks first with Nanda and Yashoda, reminding them that Krishna is eternally present with them, and within them; He dwells in the hearts of all living beings. The next day, Uddhava delivers a similar message to the gopis. When the gopis see him for the first time, they are struck by his resemblance to Krishna, both in his physical features and in his apparel. This resemblance, of course, increases their sense of separation from their beloved. Before speaking to them, Uddhava listens to their outpouring of love: he hears them lament with aching hearts, bemoaning their intolerable position, their vacant world in Krishna’s absence. (10.47.4-21).

Overtaken by their unmotivated and uninterrupted devotion, Uddhava praises them as the best of all devotees. He conveys the Lord’s message: He is all-pervasive, and so the gopis are always united with Him in love. But these words ring hollow in the presence of the gopis’ passionate longing for the love of their lives. Still, Uddhava tells them that they must cultivate the ability to see Krishna spiritually, in their heart of hearts. It is for this reason that He remains separate from them—so that they might develop a deeper vision, understanding Him to be always united with them in a love whose intensity cannot be shaken by mere physical absence.

Though the gopis accept all that Uddhava says as philosophically accurate, they are still adamant that union is better than separation, and they ask whether Krishna still remembers them, His faithful Vrindavana companions. While their pain is somewhat assuaged by Uddhava’s presence, they are ultimately inconsolable in their unrequited love.

Uddhava is amazed by their unwavering devotion, and he again praises them as true models for all Krishna devotees. So moved is he that he prays to be reborn as a shrub, creeper, or herb in Vrindavana, so that he might catch the dust kicked up by their feet. (10.47.61-63)

Uddhava’s Gratitude

Sukadeva Gosvami said: Hearing the words spoken by Lord Krishna, and having thus been shown the entire path of yoga, Uddhava folded his hands to offer obeisances. But his throat choked up with love and his eyes overflowed with tears; so he could say nothing. Steadying his mind, which had become overwhelmed with love, Uddhava felt extremely grateful to Lord Krishna, the greatest hero of the Yadu dynasty. My dear King Parikshit, Uddhava bowed down to touch the Lord’s lotus feet with his head and then spoke with folded hands.

Sri Uddhava said: O unborn, primeval Lord, although I had fallen into the darkness of illusion, my ignorance has now been dispelled by Your merciful association. Indeed, how can cold, darkness, and fear exert their power over one who has approached the brilliant sun?

In return for my insignificant surrender, You have mercifully bestowed upon me, Your servant, the torchlight of transcendental knowledge. Therefore, what devotee of Yours who has any gratitude could ever give up Your lotus feet and take shelter of another master? —Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.29.35-38
Irresistible Beauty
The Pastime

The pastime of this mahakshetra is spread over four yugas. During Satya yuga, Nagapattinam was a thick forest called Sundararanyam. It is here that Adishesha performed severe penance to be the eternal resident of Vakuntha to serve the Lord.

In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Krishna states: “Of the nagas I am Anantha.”-BG. 10.29

Lord Narayana is never separated from His body—the serpent Adishesha, who accompanies Him even when He advents in His various avatars. When Narayana came to the earth as Rama, Adishesha accompanied Him, appearing as Lakshmana, and His service to the Lord was exemplary. Even when the Lord appeared in His original form of Balarama, there is an interesting pastime as to how Adishesha got this special mercy in the process of the creation of this universe that was the Supreme Lord Vishnu alone. To this end, Brahma asked Adishesha to proceed to Sundararanyam forests and perform severe penance to Lord Vishnu. Accordingly Adishesha came down to Sundararanyam and performed severe penance to Lord Vishnu. The Supreme Lord appeared before Adishesha and blessed Him, granting Him a boon. Adishesha expressed His desire to be the bed of Vishnu.

Most of the brothers of Adishesha were cruel to others; causing fear to others was their favourite sport. They often disturbed Garuda, the eagle carrier of Vishnu. This caused the perpetual enmity between the eagles and the snakes. Adishesha was very disturbed with the behaviour of His brothers and decided, in frustration, to perform severe penance. He meditated in different places like Gokarna, Badrinath, Pushkar and the Himalayalas, praying ardently to Lord Brahma. Brahma, satisfied with His penances, granted Shesha a boon. Seeing the determination and unshakable faith of Adishesha, Brahma then asked a favour of Shesha – to go beneath the unstable earth and stabilize it. Shesha agreed and went to the netherworld, and stabilized her with His hood. He is known to support Mother Earth even today, thus making Patala his perennial residence. Adishesha then asked for salvation. Brahma replied that the power of granting moksha or salvation is in the hands of the Supreme Lord Vishnu alone. To this end, Brahma asked Adishesha to proceed to Sundararanyam forests and perform severe penance to Vishnu. Accordingly Adishesha came down to Sundararanyam and performed severe penance to Lord Vishnu. The Supreme Lord appeared before Adishesha and blessed Him, granting Him a boon. Adishesha expressed His desire to be the bed of Vishnu.

The ever merciful Lord immediately agreed to this plea, and decided to lie on the coils of Adishesha. Thus Adishesha began His selfless service to the Lord at all times. Hence, this place has been named Thirunagai or Nagapattinam (naga means snake). The Lord who appeared in the Sundararanyam forest was known as Soundararaja Perumal.

From this time, Adishesha became a nityasuri or eternal resident of Vakuntha. He serves the Divine Couple Vishnu and Lakshmi at all places, at all times and in all forms, religiously. Adishesha possesses intuitive, telepathic form of understanding the Lord’s desires at all times and enables Himself suitably to be of service to the Lord. When the Lord stands, the mighty serpent Adishesha becomes the canopy above. When the Lord is seated, the serpent coils up into a regal throne with an umbrella-like hood. The numerous gems encrusted in His hoods shed a radiant glow that illuminates the chamber and gives radiance to the Supreme Lord who is self-illuminated. This very sight of the Lord is simply magnificent and so opulent that words run short to describe His beauty. When the Lord walks, Adishesha becomes a pair of sandals and gently covers the holy feet. When the Lord reclines, the serpent turns into a cool, plush, silky, soft, luxurious and fragrant bed. When the Lord reclines on Adishesha, the latter’s breathing is like the gentle rocking of a cradle, moving up and down when He exhales and inhales.

Adishesha enjoys the unique privilege of observing the transcendental infinite attributes and the auspicious glory of the Divine Couple Vishnu and Lakshmi, from close quarters. These experiences fill His heart and overflow in the form of words of praise, gushing constantly through His thousand mouths studded with manikya gems. Adishesha was perfectly aware that this boundless joy can surely not be sung with a single mouth. He is endowed with boundless knowledge, wisdom and strength. Rather the Supreme Lord bestowed Him with enough strength to bear His divine body. The mighty Adishesha’s intense devotion to the Lord makes Him anxious about the Lord’s safety and welfare. Adishesha is well aware that the Lord is the Supreme Personality of Godhead who protects the entire universe. Yet He is very eager about the safety of the Lord. When the Lord was carried by Vasudeva from the prison in Mathura to Gokula, as a baby, Adishesha promptly came and spread His hood to protect the Lord from the stormy torrential rainfall, even though Adishesha was perfectly aware that these rains would not affect the Lord in anyway. Adishesha is always eager to serve the Lord. He knows that bhakti is anukulyena or unconditioned, and that the Lord can be won and pleased only by such bhakti.

When the Supreme Lord incarnated as Vamana, a dwarf brahmana, in Tretha yuga, Adishesha had a wonderful role in the pastime. Vamana came to Maharaja Bali and asked for three paces of land, which the king agreed to grant Him. Vamana then grew into the cosmic Thrivikrama, spanned the three worlds in two steps and took them far, thus making Patala his perennial residence.
away from Maharaja Bali. He then kept the third pace on the head of Bali Maharaja. Seeing this amazing sight, all the 33 million demigods began chanting the holy names of the Lord. The Gandharvas played 18 million types of musical instruments. This loud humming in chorus reached Vaikuntha, and, eventually, the ears of Adishesha. Adishesha, mistaking the resounding chant to be some threat to the Lord, hissed and spat poisonous fumes from His mouths. Such is the care and devotion of the nithya suri Adishesha. As such Adishesha is the greatest devotee of the Supreme Lord. This great devotee is ever present to serve the Lord in this temple of Thirunagai.

In Thretha yuga, there was another great devotee who was granted darshana by the Supreme Lord - the illustrious son of Maharaja Uttanapada whose name was Dhruva. His story is closely connected with this temple. One day while Uttanapada played with his favourite queen, Suruchi’s son, Dhruva, the older queen’s son, wanted to sit on his father’s lap too. But the cruel Suruchi reprimanded Dhruva and said, “My son is Uttama, the crown prince, and I am the favourite queen of the king. No one has the right to ascend the throne of the king to even sit on his lap, unless they are born of my womb.” Dhruva who was very much hurt by these harsh words, looked to his father who said nothing. Dhruva then ran to his own mother Suniti, trembling with disappointment. Suniti advised her son to worship the Lord with austerities and so the boy went to the forest.

Dhruva was determined to seek his rightful place and performed very severe austerities to achieve this. Noticing the young prince’s resolve, the divine sage Narada appeared before him and tried to discourage him. But Dhruva’s fierce determination knew no bounds, and the astonished sage guided him towards his goal by asking him to go to Thirunagai. Narada Muni instructed Dhruva to chant om namo bhagavate vasudevaya. Dhruva started his penance, and went without food and water for six months, his mind fixed on the transcendental name of the Lord. The Lord was very pleased to see the great resolve of the five year old so He appeared before him immediately. But he could not utter a single word to glorify the Lord. He was spell bound by the bewitching beauty of the Supreme Lord. The Lord touched the boy’s right cheek with His divine conch and the boy poured forth a beautiful poem in praise of the Lord in twelve powerful verses, which together are called Dhruva-stuti.

This pastime is said to have taken place in this divya desam, according to the Brahma Purana.

The Temple

The temple has contributions from the Pallavas, Nagars and Cholas during the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. The Thanjavur Naikars and the Maratha rulers were ardent patrons of the temple and contributed significantly to expanding the temple. During the rule of the Nayaks, Nagapattinam was a busy port and a Dutch territory. The lamp which was lit in the main gopuram was said to be so bright that it acted as a light house for the ships sailing in this region. Kundo Pandithar, an officer in the Nayak kingdom in 1737 is believed to have constructed...
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The temple faces the east and at the entrance there is a four pillared open hall. The temple has a magnificently carved 90 ft. (27 m) tall rajagopuram (temple tower) and is enclosed by rectangular walls. There is a smaller temple tower on the western side. General Jagul Nayakar, the lieutenant of the Nayak king during the 1650s was a staunch devotee of Soundararaja Perumal. He is believed to have built the temple tower, halls and the compound wall around the temple. The images of Him and His wife Lakshmi Ammal are installed in one of the halls built by them. The walls of the temple are surrounded by large streets called mada vedhi or the streets where only the servants of the Lord are allowed to reside. It is on this street that the temple chariot passes during festivals. The southern street accommodates the station of the temple chariot and Sarapushkarani, the temple tank.

The consort of the Lord here is called Soundaravalli Thayar, or the eternal mother of matchless beauty. There is a four-pillared mantapa with Deepalakshmis in front of the Soundaravalli shrine, which has beautiful stone carvings of gods and goddess. Garuda is seen in a sitting posture in this temple in his usual position near the flag mast. Garuda usually is seen in a standing position but in this temple there is an exception.

There is a very unusual and beautiful Narasimha temple inside the main temple complex. The Narasimha Deity is seen with eight hands - one blessing Prahlada, another in abhaya mudra (blessing pose) and the others killing the demon Hiranyakashipu. Many lilas from the Mahabharata and Ramayana are depicted here. The hall has the figurines of the architects who designed it. The Nayaka mantapa is built like a chariot with wheels.

There are inscriptions from various ruling empires on the contributions made to the maintenance of the temple. The mantapa at the entrance to the temple has two eight foot sculptures of the guardian deities Sumba and Nikumba.

In the main sanctorum beneath the sundara vimana, we find the matchlessly attractive Soundararaja Perumal with His consorts Sridevi and Bhoodevi. The festival Deity, Nagai Azhagiyar (the beauty of Nagai town) is of remarkable beauty. The Lord can be seen in three different poses here - standing, lying and sitting posture and He is said to have given darshana in each of these three postures to Naga Raja. Here Neelamegha Perumal is in standing posture whereas Govindaraja Perumal is in sitting posture and Ranganatha Perumal is in sleeping posture.

The temple is a mahakshetra or a big temple and the worship mode is very elaborate and summons special blend of Tamil songs sung by Alwars and the Sanskrit Vedas. The temple rituals are performed six times a day: the first offering to the Deity is made at 7 a.m., the Lord accepts naivedya at 8:00 a.m., the elaborate noon worship with the chanting of the songs of the Alwars, evening worship begins at 6:00 p.m., another worship
to the Lord is performed at 7:00 p.m. and the final worship for the day is at 10:00 p.m, after which the Lord retires to His chambers. Each ritual has three steps: decorating the Deity with fresh flower garlands, offering various delicacies prepared in the Deity kitchen and maha-arati, for both Soundararaja and Soundaravalli. Many varieties of musical instruments are played, religious instructions in the Vedas (sacred texts) are recited by priests, and worshippers prostrate themselves in front of the temple flag mast. There are weekly, monthly and fortnightly rituals performed in the temple. During the Tamil month of Chittirai, which marks the beginning of the New Year, the solar calendar is read in the temple premises and the festival Deity is taken in procession around the mada street of the temple. Similar processions are followed during the Makam star of Chittirai and Makam months. The five-day festival of Nammalwar during the Tamil month of Aani is celebrated to commemorate his birth anniversary. The ten-day annual festival of Soundaravalli Thayar is celebrated during the same month when the flag is hoisted and the festival Deity of Thayar is taken in different chariots on the streets around the temple. This is a very rare event as only few temples enjoy independent flag mast for the consort of the Lord and an independent festival thereof. This is a rare temple where the consort of the Lord enjoys as much privileges as the Supreme Lord.

Thirumangai Alwar

Thirumangai Alwar was so lured by the charm of Lord Soundararajan that he imagined himself a woman (nayaki) to better admire the beauty of the Lord. Thirumangai Alwar in his Periya Thirumozhvi verses on Thirunagai temple compares the beauty of Soundararaja Perumal with the Lords of several other divyadesams. He compares the Lord with Lord Aaravamudhan of Thiru Kudanthai, with Lord Sathya Moorthy of Thirumaiyam, with the Lord at Maliruncholai, Uraiyyur (refer KV March 2013), Koodal (Madurai) and Thiruneermalai divya desams. He becomes ecstatic at the beauty of the Lord.

As soon as the Alwar entered the temple and saw Him, as a parakala nayaki (female form) he sings:

‘Oh! My friend! When I look at His powerful arms, He resembles Indra
When I see His excellent form, He looks like a monarch. When I think of His greatness He is like a deva. In short, I don’t know who He really is’. Oh! Friend! Didn’t He see you? I too enjoyed His looking at me. But I am afraid what my mother would feel about it.

This splendid beauty of Sundararaja has captured my heart! I eternally will live in Thirunagai enjoying the beauty of the Lord! 😊

(The author is an advocate and is the disciple of Tondanur Nambi and hails from the Srivaishnava sampradaya. He resides in Bangalore)

Photo Courtesy: Santhanakrishnan, Srirangam

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Krishna Voice, January 2015 23
When Lord Chaitanya resided in Jagannatha Puri, His many devotees from West Bengal would usually visit Him during the four months of the rainy season (July-October). One of the big events that occurred during their stay was the Rathayatra, or chariot festival, which they jubilantly took part in. This festival, still held annually, consists primarily of numerous people pulling by ropes three huge, gorgeously decorated chariots. On the chariots ride the temple deities—Lord Jagannatha (Krishna), Lord Balarama (Krishna's brother), and Goddess Subhadra Devi (Their sister). As They are pulled several miles through the streets, They shower Their blessings on all who see Them or march with Them. During this colourful parade, many of the participants not only follow along or pull the carts, but also dance, sing, and play musical instruments, celebrating and glorifying the Lord's coveted return to His childhood village, Vrindavana.

During the festival, Lord Chaitanya would generally divide His devotees into seven groups, eight main persons in a group; one would dance, one would lead the chanting, six would respond to the chant. In each party, two men would beat drums, and when all fourteen drummers played together, the sound was thunderous. As the procession moved, Lord Chaitanya would wander through all the groups, chanting the Lord's name, “Hari! Hari!”

One year He exhibited a miracle—He appeared simultaneously in each of the seven groups. The devotees in each group thought that the Lord had appeared exclusively in their group. Onlookers saw only a single form of the Lord. But a few of His most spiritually advanced companions were able to see this mystic display of seven forms.

Once, after the chariots had stopped moving for a while and it was again time to pull them, the people were unable to budge Lord Jagannatha's chariot. Massive wrestlers were asked to pull it, and although they tried with all their might, they also failed. Next, powerful elephants were harnessed to the chariot, and even though they strained with great effort, they too were unsuccessful. It seemed Lord Jagannatha was refusing to allow His car to be moved.

When Lord Chaitanya, who had been resting in another area, heard about the problem, He went there with His devotees to solve it. First, He set the elephants free, and then He placed the ropes in His associates' hands. Next, He went to the rear of the car and pushed it with His head. The chariot finally moved, making a rattling sound. The people were struck with wonder, for they did not know that He who was moving the car was the same person who had stopped it. In this way, the Lord playfully enjoyed a game, or pastime, with Himself.

Lord Chaitanya Cures Cholera

One day Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, a great scholar, devotee and close associate of Lord Chaitanya, invited the Lord to his home for lunch. Out of great love and devotion, he prepared and served the Lord a large quantity and variety of scrumptious food. As Lord Chaitanya relished it, Sarvabhauma's son-in-law, Amogha, a great blasphemer and faultfinder, criticized the Lord for overeating. The Lord did not regard the offense seriously, but Sarvabhauma expressed intense anger against Amogha. Shortly after, Amogha fell sick with deadly cholera. When Sarvabhauma heard about this, he said, “When one offends the Lord, karma immediately takes effect.”

As soon as Lord Chaitanya heard that Amogha was dying, He rushed to his bedside. Placing His hand on Amogha's chest, He said, “A brahmana's heart is by nature very clean; thus it is the right place for Lord Krishna to sit. Why have you allowed envy to also sit here? You have dirtied a pure place, but by your association with Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, all your dirt is now gone. When a person's heart is cleansed of all dirt, he can chant Hare Krishna. So get up, Amogha, and chant it. If you do so, Krishna will surely give you His mercy.”

Amogha at once stood up and began chanting Krishna's name. He became uplifted with ecstatic love and danced emotionally. Seeing this, Lord Chaitanya laughed. Amogha threw himself before the Lord's feet and humbly said, “O merciful Lord, please excuse my offense.” The Lord replied, “Amogha, always chant the Hare Krishna mantra and do not commit new offenses.” Thus, Amogha was cured of both his physical and spiritual disease by Lord Chaitanya's grace. Thereafter he became a pure devotee of the Lord, often dancing in ecstasy and always chanting Krishna's holy name.
Animals Chant and Dance

When Lord Chaitanya, with two assistants, was travelling from Jagannatha Puri to Vrindavana, He went through the dangerous Jharikhanda forest. He chose this scarcely used route because He wanted to be free of large crowds of people following Him.

As the Lord trekked, He continuously chanted the name Krishna and felt intense ecstasy. Batches of wild boars, tigers, elephants, and rhinoceroses came towards Him. Needless to say, His assistants became terrified. But the Lord sauntered in the animals' direction, and they just stood aside to allow Him and His men to pass.

One day a tiger was lying on the path, and the blissful Lord touched the tiger with His feet and exclaimed, "Chant the holy name Krishna!"

Amusingly, the tiger stood up and began to dance and roar, "Krishna! Krishna!"

Another day, while the Lord was bathing in a river, a herd of maddened elephants arrived there to drink water. The Lord splashed some water on them and said, "Chant 'Krishna!'"

The elephants then ecstatically danced and trumpeted, "Krishna! Krishna!" Even the birds, trees, and creepers became jubilant on hearing the name Krishna.

One day, when the Lord chanted very loudly, some deer, hearing His sweet voice, followed Him. Then about seven tigers joined the deer. When the Lord said to them, "Chant 'Krishna, Krishna!'" the tigers and deer chanted, "Krishna!" and danced. Soon the tigers and deer embraced and kissed one another. When Lord Chaitanya saw all this fun, He smiled. Finally, He left them and continued His journey, His assistants marveling over those incredible sights.

The Lord Merges into His Deity Form

When God leaves this world, His departure is never referred to as death, chiefly because God never dies—He simply returns to His eternal abode in the spiritual world, where He continues His ecstatic activities with His devotees. Thus, the word "disappear" is used instead of "dies," just as when the Lord enters this world, the word "appears" is used instead of "is born."

Lord Chaitanya's disappearance from this world—of which there are at least two different accounts—was as mystical as His appearance. One account says that one day in 1534 He entered the Tota-Gopinatha temple in Jagannatha Puri. While sankirtana was going on, in the height of His ecstasy He merged Himself into the Gopinatha Deity, a form of Lord Krishna. And to this day, a golden streak is visible on the Deity's thigh.

Another account says that He entered the Jagannatha temple and merged Himself into the Jagannatha Deity. Such is the account given by one of Lord Chaitanya's Oriyan disciples, who claimed to have been an eyewitness to His disappearance. He said that the Lord chanted the name of Radharani, Lord Krishna's most intimate consort and greatest devotee, and, like a flash of lightening, entered the holy body of Lord Jagannatha.

Some of Lord Chaitanya's devotees believe that both versions of His disappearance are true. Since, as mentioned above, He had the power to appear in seven sankirtana parties simultaneously, then why could He not disappear into two Deities simultaneously? Once we accept the principle that the Lord is omnipotent, then what miracle is He not capable of manifesting? But even more important than the way Lord Chaitanya disappeared is the valuable benediction He so mercifully left us. This can be summed up in several poetic lines written by Lord Chaitanya's glorious devotee Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1838-1914):

Lord Gauranga [Chaitanya] is calling, "Wake up, sleeping souls! How long will you sleep in the lap of the witch called maya?

"You have forgotten the way of devotional service and are lost in the world of birth and death. "I have descended just to save you; other than Myself, you have no friend in this world. "I have brought the medicine that will wipe out the disease of illusion from which you are suffering. Take this mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "I fall at the Lord's feet, having accepted the maha-mantra."
The Vedic scriptures describe how Krishna, the Supreme Lord, enjoys eternal pastimes with His devotees, both in the spiritual world and in this world when He periodically descends. Because Krishna wants the deepest loving exchanges, in the intimacy of love for Him some of His purest devotees forget that He is God and relate to Him as superiors. During the Vedic month of Kartika (October-November), we especially honour an episode from Krishna’s life that exemplifies this principle. In one of His most endearing pastimes, He is chased and then bound by His mother, Yashoda, for stealing butter and yogurt. The information in this article (adapted by Tattvavit Dasa from a lecture) comes from Srimad-Bhagavatam, Canto Ten, Chapter 9, and from commentaries by Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura, and other Vaishnava acharyas.

When Mother Yashoda started getting many complaints from the gopis (cowherd women) about Krishna stealing their butter and breaking their butter pots, she wondered why her son was stealing from the houses of others. Yashoda thought, “Maybe Krishna doesn’t like the butter in my house. Maybe the yogurt that we start with is not good, or the butter is not coming out perfectly. Why else would Krishna go to other houses for what is readily available at home? Today, I’ll make the butter myself.” Yashoda did not realize that Krishna went to other homes because of the love the other gopis had for Him. So Mother Yashoda churned the yogurt herself, although, being a queen, it was inappropriate work for her. Still, Yashoda churned, and she gave her maidservants other household duties. The maidservants actually made tasty butter, but she took it upon herself to make the butter—to stop Krishna from stealing and to keep Him happy at home.

While churning the yogurt, Yashoda sang the glories of Krishna’s childhood pastimes. She sang about whatever Krishna had done. From this we can learn a lesson: If we cannot find much time to sing the glories of the Lord, then at least we can sing and chant while doing physical work.

As Yashoda pulled the churning ropes, her gold bangles shook and made a melodious sound: jhan jhan jhan jhan. They were joined by the sounds of her earrings, ankles bells, and gold belt. The sound of her ornaments resembled the sound of expert cymbal players. As she churned, the rod in the yogurt pot went gharad gharad gharad gharad, sounding just like a drum. Thus mother Yashoda had full musical accompaniment as she sang Krishna’s glories.

In the transcendental world, even the ornaments and household utensils are conscious, so they sounded out of joy, to congratulate Yashoda as she performed this service. Our hands do not become beautiful simply by being adorned with gold jewelry; they are beautiful only if we engage them in the service of the Supreme. Yashoda’s earrings thought that they were fortunate to be on ears engaged in hearing the glories of Krishna. Being a devotee does not mean sitting back; it means working and sweating for Krishna. Bhakti is defined as engaging the senses in the service of the giver of all our senses. Krishna has given us these senses, and their best engagement is His service.

Mother Yashoda was fully prepared to perform this service, with no sign of laziness. It was very early in the morning. The sun had not yet risen when Yashoda began working hard.

She was thinking, “Before Krishna wakes up, let me extract butter from the yogurt, so that I can feed Him when He gets up.” She became so engrossed that her forehead perspired, which made her look even more beautiful.

In this way, as she churned the yogurt, her tongue recited the glorious pastimes of Krishna, her ears heard them, her mind meditated on how she would make the butter to feed Krishna, and her hands and body produced the butter. This is the state of a perfect devotee: mind, body, and intelligence fully engaged in devotional service for Krishna.

Krishna Wakes Up

Hearing Yashoda’s melodious singing and the rhythmic sounds of the churning, Krishna woke up earlier than usual. When He woke, He wanted to drink her breast milk.

He looked for His mother and wondered, “Why is she not with Me in bed today? She’s not worried about Me at all. Why has she left Me?”

Children are good at getting attention, and when they don’t get it, they become mischievous. Krishna started

Strong Ropes of Affection

The all-powerful Supreme Lord shows that He can be conquered by the power of His devotees’ pure love.

by Radha Govinda Goswami
false crying and walked to the room where His mother was singing. He got close to her and looked at her intently, but Yashoda did not notice Him. There is a lesson here for us. When will Krishna come to us? He will come when we are so absorbed in devotional service that we will not notice if He comes. Krishna will not come to us if we are just sitting around waiting.

Krishna caught hold of the churning rod to get His mother's attention, and He held it firmly with both hands, as if applying brakes on a moving bicycle. He was telling His mother: "Stop! I need attention. Feed me now."

Vaishnava commentators have given another reason why Krishna stopped the churning: After fully "churning" the scriptures, one gets Krishna, because He is the conclusion of everything. But Yashoda already had Krishna, so what was the need for her to keep churning?

Yashoda looked at Krishna and waited to see what He would do next. Krishna grabbed her arm with both hands, put one foot on the rim of the yogurt pot, pulled Himself into her lap, and started drinking her milk. Yashoda proudly and pleasurably fed her son.

Krishna also became proud, thinking, "How smart I am. I stopped Mother from her work and claimed My right."

Thinking this, He smiled cheekily. As He drank the milk, a competition between Yashoda's milk and Krishna began. Krishna would not become satisfied, and Mother Yashoda's milk would not stop flowing because of her intense affection. She kept feeding Him for quite some time.

Then something happened to distract Yashoda's attention. Some milk she had placed on the nearby stove was boiling over. Yashoda put Krishna down and ran to save the milk. This milk was from the special Padmagandha cows, especially for Krishna.

This transcendental milk was thinking, "Why am I tolerating this heat if Krishna is going to become fully satisfied by drinking mother Yashoda's breast milk; it is better for me to commit suicide by jumping into the fire."

Thinking this, the milk boiled over. Mother Yashoda took the milk off the fire, but in the mean time, what happened to Krishna?

**Angry Krishna**

Little Krishna became angry.

"How dare she put Me down while I'm still drinking, just to save a little milk! I'm still hungry."

He who is the purest of pure, untainted by any of the modes of material nature, became angry. His lips swelled and became red as He bit them with His teeth.

"Who does she think she is? I'll show her. She'll be sorry. I'll break something in the house."

He looked around and saw a small stone used for grinding spices. With this stone He hit the churning pot in a strategic spot—at the bottom—so that there would be no sound to alarm Yashoda. Yogurt was everywhere. Krishna started for another room. As He went out, He walked all over the spilled yogurt—chub, chub, chub—but quietly, so that His mother would not hear Him. In the form of Vamanadeva, Krishna had covered the whole universe with just three of His steps, and now He was walking through the yogurt. Krishna did not think, "Perhaps I should go around the yogurt." He just walked through it, leaving pretty footprints showing exactly where He has going.

Krishna went to another room and turned over a wooden grinding mortar. He climbed on it and then took a pot of butter from the rafters. He fed the butter to monkeys who appeared there. The monkeys ate with great pleasure.

After rescuing the milk from the stove, Yashoda returned and saw the broken pot. If Krishna had stayed there, then she might have thought that the pot had broken accidentally, but because Krishna was not there, she knew He was guilty and had run away to hide.

Yashoda was not angry about the broken pot.

She smiled and thought, "How clever my Krishna is! He broke this pot in such a way that I didn't hear a sound."

But she decided that she had to punish Him to teach Him a lesson. So she followed His footprints. Hiding behind a wall, she looked around a corner at Him.

**Krishna Fears His Mother**

Krishna was looking all around, expecting to get caught at any minute. His eyes were fearful. He knew that Yashoda would come after Him to punish Him. She approached very slowly from behind, sneaking up on Him. But Krishna saw her coming. Seeing the look on her face and the stick in her hand, He quickly got down from the grinding mortar and fled.

He thought, "If I'm quick, she won't catch Me, and I'll be spared a beating."

Yashoda didn't let Him run away. She was determined to catch Him. She chased Him with the stick in her hand.

Sukadeva Gosvami says, "Even yogis whose minds have become purified by austerities cannot catch Krishna through meditation, but on this day Mother Yashoda was running after that same Krishna with a stick in her hand."

At first Krishna ran from room to room. Then He left the house and ran into the streets of Gokula.

Mother Yashoda thought, "Today He is not going to get away from me. Where can He go? I'll catch Him."
She followed Him everywhere. All the Vrajavasis (local residents) looked in amazement at the scene.

"What has happened today? Normally there is so much affection between Krishna and Yashoda."

Yashoda was not used to running and became covered with perspiration. Finally, she caught Krishna by His right hand. With His left hand He wiped tears from His eyes.

Yashoda addressed Krishna: "Are the monkeys Your relatives? Is that why You feed them so freely? You broke the yogurt pot. Till this day I didn't believe the other gopis, but now I've caught You red-handed. Today I'll punish You. I'll beat You."

Waving the stick at Him, Yashoda made Krishna shake in fear. He wiped away tears, and the black ointment on His eyes smeared all over His face, making Him look more beautiful.

Krishna said, "Ma, please let me go. I promise never to do this again."

Mother Yashoda saw Krishna's fear and threw her stick away. Krishna sighed with relief.

He thought, "At least she won't beat Me with a stick. Maybe she'll give Me a little slap in the face and then let Me go."

Among all of Krishna's pastimes as an avatar, this was the first time that He stood as the guilty party, awaiting His sentence and punishment. Krishna's fate was totally in the hands of Mother Yashoda. This is the parental mood of Vraja, Krishna's eternal abode.

**Krishna Gets Tied Up**

Yashoda decided to tie Him up. She reasoned that He was angry and if He were to run away to the bank of the Yamuna River or elsewhere, He might hurt Himself. "Let me tie Him up for a little while," she thought. "I can churn some more, and in a little while I can appease Him."

So she started to bind Him. How did she tie Him? Without knowledge of His position as the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead. Mother Yashoda simply thought of Krishna as her son, so she wanted to tie Him up. But the Personality of Godhead has no beginning, no end, no inside, no outside. He is all-pervading. How can someone with this nature be tied? It is impossible.

Krishna is not under the influence of time. For Him, there is no difference between past, present, and future. He is in His transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from the distinctions between cause and effect, though He is the cause and effect of everything. That person, beyond the perception of the senses, had appeared as a humanlike child, and Mother Yashoda, considering Him her ordinary son, began binding Him to the wooden mortar with a rope.

At first she used the string from her hair. When that was too short, she sent for ropes from her house. Amazingly, whenever she tried to tie Krishna's waist, the ropes were always two fingers short, even when joined together. All of Krishna's energies had united and come to His defense: "We won't let Krishna be tied." Yashoda became perplexed, unable to understand this. But still she was determined.

Krishna was testing Yashoda's determination—will she give up or keep trying? Because her effort was incomplete, Krishna's mercy was also incomplete. Krishna says in the *Bhagavat-gita* (4.11), ye yatha mam prapadyante: "As one surrenders unto Me, I reward him accordingly." Krishna waits for us to give our all before giving us His mercy.

After using all the ropes from her house, Yashoda sent for more rope from the other gopis' houses. Meanwhile the gopis who had gathered asked Yashoda to let Krishna go.

"He is not destined to be tied," they said. "Why are you being so stubborn?"

But Yashoda refused to give up. The gopis and Yashoda were laughing, because she could not understand what was happening.

When Krishna grew up and later went to Duryodhana's court as a messenger, Duryodhana wanted to tie up Krishna and jail Him, so that He would not be able to assist the Pandavas in the great battle about to take place. Duryodhana ordered his guards to bind Krishna. But at that time Krishna showed His immense universal form, as if to say, "Okay, tie me up. Do you have a rope long enough? Where will you start?" Seeing this amazing form, the guards were dumbfounded and fainted. So Duryodhana was unable to bind Krishna, but Mother Yashoda was determined to succeed. Why? Because she believed Him to be her son.

In the end, seeing His mother's relentless determination and total exhaustion, Krishna showed her His mercy and agreed to be tied. Krishna had to accept defeat.

Can Krishna really be tied up in this way?

Sukadeva Gosvami says, "Yes, Krishna can be bound by His devotee, out of His mercy. Krishna's mercy prevailed and subdued all of His other energies."

In this way Krishna demonstrates that He is obliged to His devotees.

"The whole universe, including Brahma and Shiva are under My control, but I can be controlled by My devotee."

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Honorable President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, on Sunday, 16th November, 2014, arrived in Vrindavan, to grace the occasion of "Ananta Shesha Sthapanu Puja" at Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir, the world’s tallest skyscraper temple (700 Feet) for Lord Sri Krishna, being built in Vrindavan, Mathura. Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir is conceptualized by the devotees of ISKCON Bangalore, the same organization which conceptualized and runs Akshaya Patra mid-day meal program around India.

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In our normal condition we are under the protection of the spiritual potency but when one is placed in the material potency, immediately there is fear.

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Parama Karuna - Part 02

My dear Advaita, the glories of Krishna Sankirtana should spread everywhere. In every town and village, the holy names should be heard. No one should escape. That is my mission. Read More

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Temple Reviews from Google+

Anantharaman Kailash

Being not so religious, I was hesitant to go to the second most visited place in Bangalore as I had no great affinity towards any faith or the will to waste a Sunday night at a temple. But, a shocking experience awaited me. Apart from the beautiful construction and the aesthetically pleasing view, it is a place which by itself speaks scientific and logical spirituality that is acceptable and palatable. Their music transferred me to a whole new realm. The beauty of the Deities is unmatchable. The place should get an award for cleanliness! If you want to see the varieties of flavors available in Indian cuisine, you must definitely visit their Higher Taste restaurant. Also, the different traditional snacks at the HDF counter (especially the samosas) are mouthwatering and delicious. This place reconnects you with your inner self. It is a great place for seeking the answers to many questions about life. The best experience in a temple so far! I definitely recommend that you visit this place around 7:45 pm on a Sunday night and have fun by joining the gala dancing crowd. It is no more a shock that ISKCON is the second most visited place in Bangalore!

Shalesh Sharma

I am a life member of ISKCON and I frequently visit ISKCON temples worldwide. ISKCON Bangalore is one of the best kept and managed temples I have visited. The food and service at the Higher Taste restaurant is excellent.

To write a review visit: [plus.google.com/+iskconbangalore](http://plus.google.com/+iskconbangalore)

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VEDIC THOUGHTS

Srimad-Bhagavatam is the topmost theological science, and therefore it can react on the laymen as medicinal doses. Because it contains the transcendental activities of the Lord, there is no difference between the Lord and the literature. The literature is the factual literary incarnation of the Lord.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Srimad-Bhagavatam 15.3, Purport

The Supreme Lord, who incarnates out of His causeless mercy, regularly manifests His various pastimes in order to award supreme eternal benefit to the averse living entities of this world. All of His pastimes are performed with a desire to deliver the living entities.

Srila B haktisiddhanta Sarasvati T hakura, Sri Chaitanya-bhagavata, Adi-khanda B.107

For receiving the mercy of Krishna, I surrender unto His energy [Radha] and for receiving the mercy of His energy I surrender unto Krishna. By worshiping Them, a practitioner becomes freed from all sinful reactions and, being fully satisfied, he goes to the eternal abode of the Lord.

Chandogya Upanishad 8.8

Akshaya Patra News

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With our naked eye we perceive the sun globe simply as some glaring substance, but when we see through authorized books of science we can understand how much greater the sun globe is than this earth. Seeing things through the naked eye is not actually seeing. Seeing things through the authorized books is the correct way to see.

- Srila Prabhupada

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