

Gaura Purnima 2021



ISKCON Sri Radha Krishna Temple (Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada) Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road, Bangalore - 560 010. Tel: 080 2347 1956



PROGRAMME

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Apr 24, Sat	5:30 PM	Garuda Pata Pratishtha Vainateya Homa
Apr 25, Sun	8:00 AM 5:30 PM	Garuda Abhisheka Dhvaja Arohana Ashta Dik Palaka Avahana Ananta Shesha Vahana
Apr 26, Mon	5:30 PM	Ashva Vahana
	AND SANDER SANDER SANDERS SANDERS	
Apr 27, Tue	5:30 PM	Chandra Prabha Vahana
Apr 28, Wed	5:30 PM	Kalpa Vriksha Vahana
Apr 29, Thu	5:30 PM	Garuda Vahana
Apr 30, Fri	5:30 PM	Hanumad Vahana
May 1, Sat	10:30 AM 5:30 PM	Kalyanotsava Hamsa Vahana
May 2, Sun	5:45 AM 10:30 AM 5:30 PM	Surya Prabha Vahana Kalyanotsava Maha Pallaki
May 3, Mon	5:30 PM	Gaja Vahana
May 4, Tue	5:30 PM	Brahma Ratha
May 5, Wed	5:30 PM	Churna Abhisheka
May 6, Thu	5:30 PM	Pushpa Pallakki, Theppotsava
	8:00 PM	Dhvaja Avarohana

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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 Englishspeaking 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

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

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Krishna Voice, April 2021 3

The Eternal Struggle

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

Srila Prabhupada gave the following talk after watching a play about the appearance of Lord Narasimhadeva. The talk was given on May 5, 1974, in Bombay.

This is a very instructive history about the struggle between the atheist and the theist. The story of Prahlada Maharaja is eternally true. There is always a struggle between the atheist and the theist. If a person becomes God conscious, Krishna conscious, he will find he has many enemies, because the world is full of demons.

What to speak of the devotee of Krishna, even Krishna, when He personally came, had to kill so many demons. Even His maternal uncle, Kamsa, wanted to kill Him. As soon as any son was born to Krishna's mother, Devaki, Kamsa killed him. There had been a prediction that the eighth child of Kamsa's sister, Devaki, would kill Kamsa. So Kamsa killed all her children. At last Krishna came. But Kamsa could not kill Krishna. He was killed by Krishna.

Nobody can kill God. The demons, the godless society they simply want to kill God. But actually, God is never killed, but the demon is killed by God. That is the law of nature. This is the instruction from Prahlada Maharaja's life. As Krishna states in the *Bhagavad-gita, mrtyuh sarva-haras caham:* "I am also death, in the shape of taking away everything whatever you possess."

Hiranyakashipu was very clever, just as the materialists and scientists are very clever. Cleverly they are inventing so many things. What is the idea? The idea is "We shall live forever and enjoy sense gratification more and more." This is called atheistic advancement of civilization.

Hiranyakashipu was a typical materialist. *Hiranya* means "gold," and *kashipu* means "soft bed" or "cushion." Materialistic persons are very much fond of gold and sex. That is their business.

Prahlada Maharaja's name comes from *ahlada*, which means "transcendental bliss." The living entity's real identification is *prahlada*, blissfulness. But because of material association, we are in a miserable condition of life.

Hiranyakashipu wanted to become immortal, so he underwent such severe penances that the whole universe trembled. Lord Brahma had to come to pacify him "What do you want?"

Hiranyakashipu said, "I want to become immortal!"

Lord Brahma replied, "Although I have a very long duration of life, even I am not immortal, so I cannot grant you immortality."

The duration of life of Brahmaji is stated in the *Bhagavad-gita: sahasra-yuga-paryantam arhad yad brahmano viduh*. This means that Brahma's day is *sahasra-yuga*. *Sahasra-yuga* means one thousand times the duration of the four *yugas* Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali or one thousand times 4.3 million years. This comes to 4.3 billion years, which is twelve hours for Brahma. And he lives for a hundred years of such days.

So although Brahma lives for trillions of years, still he has to die. Wherever you go within this material world, either in Brahma-loka or in Patala-loka, you have to die. That is the problem. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-gita*, "The real problem is *janma-mrtyu-jara-vyadhi:* birth, death, old age, and disease."

Hiranyakashipu wanted to solve these problems in a materialistic way, but that is not possible. When Brahma said he could not make Hiranyakashipu immortal, Hiranyakashipu tried to secure immortality by trickery. He asked Brahma to grant that he not be killed in any of these ways: by any weapon; during the day or night; on land, in water, or in the sky; inside or outside; or by any man or beast.

So Hiranyakashipu thought he was immortal. But to protect Prahlada Maharaja, Lord Narasimhadeva killed Hiranyakashipu without violating the boons granted by Lord Brahma. Narasimhadeva was neither man nor beast but half man, half lion. Placing Hiranyakashipu on His lap, the Lord killed him with His fingernails, on the threshold of the demon's palace, at dusk.

Prahlada is the opposite of Hiranyakashipu. He is the Lord's devotee. In any condition, a devotee always remains a humble servant of Krishna. Therefore he has no danger. Even if he has danger, he will be saved. Krishna says

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in the *Bhagavad-gita, kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati:* "Arjuna, you can declare it all over the world that anyone who has taken shelter at My lotus feet who has become My devotee will never be vanquished." And Krishna says:

sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."

So these are the assurances. But the atheistic class of men like Hiranyakashipu cannot understand this. That is their defect. They always challenge God. The dissension between the father (Hiranyakashipu) and the son (Prahlada) was that the son was a believer in God, Krishna, and the father was not. So at the end the father saw God in the form of death. At that time he could not save himself.

That is the difference between theist and atheist. The atheist always challenges, "Where is God? Can you show me?"

"Well, you will see Him. Not now. Just at the maturation of your sinful activities when death comes you will see Him."

Prahlada Maharaja is one of our *gurus*. There are twelve *gurus* called *mahajanas*:

svayambhur naradah sambhuh kaumarah kapilo manuh prahlado janako bhismo balir vaiyasakhir vayam

"Lord Brahma, Bhagavan Narada, Lord Shiva, the four Kumaras, Lord Kapila [the son of Devahuti], Svayambhuva Manu, Prahlada Maharaja, Janaka Maharaja, Grandfather Bhishma, Bali Maharaja, Shukadeva Gosvami, and I [Yamaraja]."

If we want to make progress in spiritual life, we have to follow the *mahajanas*, the great personalities. They are mentioned in the scriptures.

Prahlada Maharaja is our *guru* in the disciplic succession. The *Mahabharata* (*Vana-parva* 313.117) states:

tarko 'pratisthah srutayo vibhinna nasav rsir yasya matam na bhinnam dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhayam mahajano yena gatah sa panthah

"Dry arguments are inconclusive. A great personality whose opinion does not differ from others is not considered a great sage. Simply by studying the *Vedas*, which are variegated, one cannot come to the right path by which religious principles are understood. The solid truth of religious principles is hidden in the heart of an unadulterated self-realized person. Consequently, as the scriptures confirm, one should accept whatever progressive path the *mahajanas* advocate."

We cannot chalk out the path of religion. It is very difficult to find out because there are many different scriptures and philosophers. Each philosopher has a different opinion. So how to get the real path of religion? You have to follow the footsteps of great personalities. And Prahlada Maharaja is one of them.

Prahlada Maharaja was born in a demon's family. His father was a demon. Prahlada Maharaja used to address his father as *asura-varya* "the best of the demons." Hiranyakashipu was patting his son, "My dear son, do like this, do like that. Tell me the best thing you have learned."

So Prahlada Maharaja said, *tat sadhu manye 'sura-varya dehinam*. He never said, "My dear father." He said, "My dear 'the best of the demons.' " *Tat sadhu manye*. "I think this is very nice." What is that? *Hitvatma-patam andha-kupam vanam gato yad dharim asrayeta:* "That this worldly life materialistic life is self-killing, just like a dark well. So one should give it up and go to the forest and take shelter of Krishna. That is the best way of life."

So his father became very angry. The atheist and the theist will never agree. The theist will never submit to the atheist. This is the principle. Prahlada Maharaja was put into so many troubles by his father, but he never forgot

chanting om bhagavate vasudevaya namah. He never forgot.

We should learn from this story that even in a dangerous position we should not forget Krishna. Krishna will save us. It is said in the *Bhagavad-gita* (6.22),

yam labdhva caparam labham manyate nadhikam tatah yasmin sthito na duhkhena gurunapi vicalyate

"Established thus [in Krishna consciousness], one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of the greatest difficulty."

Krishna consciousness is so nice that if one gets Krishna consciousness, any other benefit or gain is never considered. This is so nice. We are hankering after getting this, that, this, that, this, that so many things. But as soon as you get Krishna consciousness, you will be satisfied. Just like Prahlada Maharaja. He was offered all benedictions. Lord Narasimhadeva said, "My dear Prahlada, whatever you like, you can ask for." But Prahlada never asked for anything. And he was so kind. He is the example of a Vaishnava son in the family. Despite so much trouble given by his father, still he begged from Narasimhadeva, "My Lord, my father has committed so many offenses. Kindly give him liberation." He did not ask anything for himself.

So Narahari, Narasimhadeva, immediately said, "Why do you speak of your father? Your father's father, his father fourteen generations all will be liberated because a son like you is in this family." This is the benefit. If a son becomes a pure Vaishnava devotee, he can deliver fourteen generations.

What service can we give our family or nation materially? But if we become a devotee, we can give the best service to our nation, to our family, to humanity. That is the philosophy of Krishna consciousness.

Our Krishna consciousness movement is preaching this philosophy: "You take to Krishna consciousness, and your life will be perfect." And the method is very simple. There is no secrecy. This evening I was talking with a boy who has gotten a *mantra* and must keep it very secret. But we have no secret *mantra*. Our *mantra*, Hare Krishna, is open to everyone. Why should it be a secret? If by chanting the Hare Krishna *mantra* we can approach God, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, why should it remain secret? It should be distributed like anything so that everyone can go back to God. So there is no secrecy. We don't approve of any secret *mantra*. It must be very open. The *shastra* never says that a *mantra* can be secret.

In this age of Kali it is very difficult to come to the right conclusion by philosophy and other methods. "Kali" means the age of quarrel, misunderstanding, and disagreement. Therefore in the scripture it has been openly declared:

harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha

"In this age of Kali there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative for spiritual progress than the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord."

Meditation, sacrifice, elaborate worship in the temple in this age these things are impossible to perform, but even a child can chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. That is proved by our experience. Whenever there is chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, even the child can take part, even an old man can take part.

So this is the only method for God realization. There is no expenditure, but the gain is very, very great. That was the teaching of Prahlada Maharaja, and we are following his footsteps. Let us stick to his principle and become more and more advanced in Krishna consciousness.

Thank you very much.

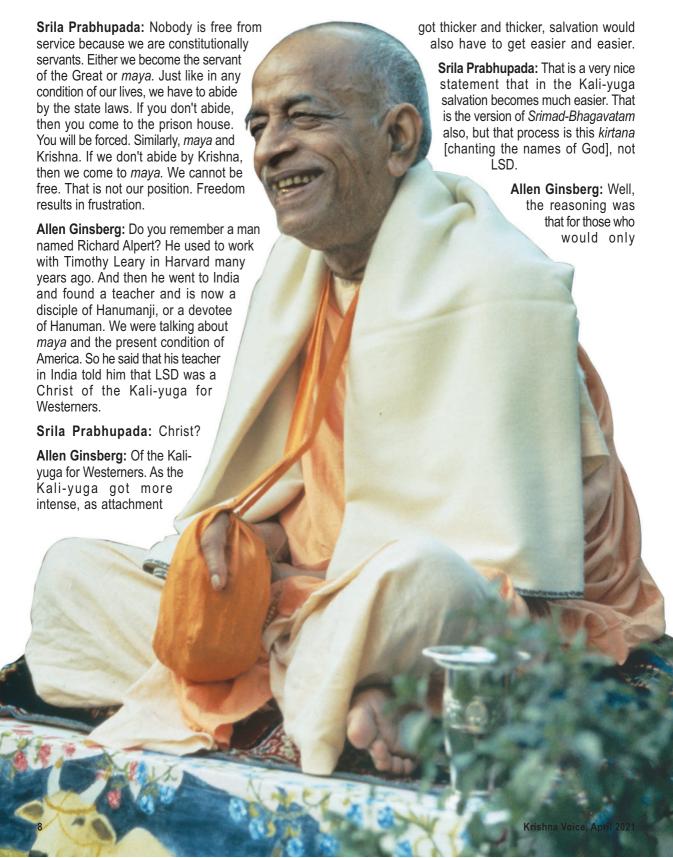
Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita*. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada-lectures



SRILA PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT

LSD and Liberation

The following conversation between Srila Prabhupada and the poet Allen Ginsberg took place in Columbus, Ohio, on May 11, 1969.









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accept salvation in a purely material form, in a chemical form finally, Krishna had the humour to emerge as a pill.

Srila Prabhupada: No, the thing is that with any material form, where is there salvation? It is illusion.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the subjective effect is to cut attachment during...

Srila Prabhupada: No. If you have got attachment for something material, then where is the cut-off of attachment? LSD is a material chemical.

Allen Ginsberg: Yeah.

Srila Prabhupada: So if you have to take shelter of LSD, then you are taking help from matter. So how are you free from matter?

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the subjective experience is, while in the state of intoxication of LSD you also realize that LSD is a material pill, and that it does not really matter.

Srila Prabhupada: So that is risky. That is risky.

Allen Ginsberg: Yeah. Now, so if LSD is a material attachment, which it is, I think, then is not sound, *shabda*, also a material attachment?

Srila Prabhupada: No, *shabda* is spiritual. Just like in the Bible it is said, "Let there be creation." This sound is spiritual sound. Creation was not there. The sound produced the creation. Therefore, sound is originally spiritual, and from sound, sky develops; from sky, air develops; from air, fire develops; from fire, water develops; from water, land develops.

Allen Ginsberg: Sound is the first element of creation?

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, yes.

Allen Ginsberg: What was the first sound traditionally?

Srila Prabhupada: The Vedic literature states, *om.* So at least we can understand from your Bible that God said, "Let there be creation." So there is this sound, and then there is creation. God and His sound are nondifferent, absolute. I say, "Mr. Ginsberg," and this sound and I are different. But God is nondifferent from His energy. *Shakti shaktimator abhedah. Shakti*, energy, and *shaktimat*, the energetic. They are nondifferent. Just like fire and heat, they are nondifferent, but heat is not fire. You cannot differentiate heat from fire, or fire from heat. But fire is not heat.

Allen Ginsberg: Well, the sound Krishna...

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, it is nondifferent from Krishna.

Allen Ginsberg: Under all circumstances.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes, under all circumstances. But it is a question of my appreciation, or my realization. That will depend on my purity. Otherwise, this Krishna sound and Krishna are nondifferent. Therefore if we vibrate the sound Krishna, then we are immediately in contact with Krishna. And because Krishna is wholly spiritual, then we become spiritualized. Just like if you touch electricity, immediately you're electrified. And the more you become electrified [by vibrating the sound Krishna], the more you become Krishna-ized. So when you are fully Krishna-ized, you are on the Krishna platform. *Tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so 'rjuna*. You don't come back to this material existence. You remain with Krishna.

Fasti	ng	Festivals
Apr 8 Eka	adashi Apr 1	4 Beginning of Salagrama & Tulasi Jala Dana
	ak fast Apr 2 adashi	21 Sri Rama Navami Fasting till sunset
	ak fast Apr 2	25 Their Lordships' 24th Brahmotsava celebrations begin (in ISKCON Bangalore) - Dhvaja Arohana
	May	4 Brahma Ratha
	May	6 Brahmotsava celebrations end (in ISKCON Bangalore) - Dhvaja Avarohana

Science: The Vedic View

Does God go Against the Laws of Nature?

by Sadaputa Dasa

Ernan McMullin, a physicist, philosopher, and Catholic priest in the Department of Philosophy at Notre Dame University, has given careful thought to the relation between religion and modern science. In the introduction to his book *Evolution and Creation*, he offers some advice he calls "valuable direction for the contemporary Christian":

When an apparent conflict arises between a strongly supported scientific theory and some item of Christian doctrine, the Christian ought to look very carefully to the credentials of the doctrine. It may well be that when he does so, the scientific understanding will enable the doctrine to be reformulated in a more adequate way.¹

McMullin applies this advice to the question of how the Christian doctrine of creation is to be reconciled with the neo-Darwinian theory of evolution. Many Christian creationists have argued that divine creation is a supernatural process that cannot be understood in terms of known physical principles. But McMullin presents an alternative scenario in which creation is seen as a process of evolution proceeding according to natural laws.

He bases this scenario on ideas expressed by the early church father Augustine. Augustine maintained that Genesis in the Bible refers to a process of instantaneous creation in which God implants "seed principles" in formless matter. These seed principles are not final created forms. Rather, they contain the potential to gradually manifest these forms.

McMullin grants that Augustine thought each created form would develop from its own seed principle. The idea that one type of organism would evolve from another was foreign to him. But McMullin points out that Augustine's idea can be readily adapted to modern evolutionary thinking. The seed principles can be thought of as the laws of nature God imposed on formless matter at the moment of creation (the Big Bang). Since God is omniscient and omnipotent, He can create laws that bring about the gradual manifestation of all created forms in the universe, including human beings.

These gradual evolutionary developments are simply the unfolding of Gods original plan, and they do not require any further "divine interventions" that would violate God's natural laws. Thus McMullin is able to formulate an idea of evolutionary creation that agrees fully with modern science and "complements Christian belief."²

Can McMullin's approach be applied to reconcile the *Bhagavad-gita* with modern science? Of course, the topic of evolution is touchy and controversial. So we may be wise at first to just consider the idea that nature runs by divinely created natural laws. Let us see if the *Bhagavad-gita* supports this idea.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (9.8) Krishna says, "The whole cosmic order is under Me. Under My will it is automatically manifested again and again, and under My will it is annihilated at the end." Here Krishna says that material nature (*prakriti*) is manifested automatically (*avasam*). Krishna also says (13.30), *prakrityaiva ca karmani kriyamanani sarvasah*. This means that material activities are in all respects carried out by material nature (*prakriti*). This also suggests that *prakriti* runs automatically, an idea given further support by the nearly identical statement (3.27) *prakrteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah*. Krishna also says (13.20) that the transformations of matter and of living beings are both products of material nature.

All in all, then, one might argue that the *Bhagavad-gita* agrees with the modern scientific conclusion that all material phenomena run according to the laws of nature. These phenomena are divinely directed in the sense that the laws of nature are created and sustained by God.

One might further suggest that God never engages in any kind of "divine intervention," for then He would break His own laws (and violate the conclusions of science). From McMullin's observations, one might gather that we'd be wise to understand the *Bhagavad-gita* in this way. After all, if we think that God sometimes breaks the laws of nature, when does He do that? Certainly He doesn't seem to do it during the scientific experiments that demonstrate the natural laws. If we think God breaks the laws of nature, He must do it when scientists aren't looking.

This means we are trying to fit God into the gaps in our scientific knowledge. McMullin warns, "Making God a 'God of the gaps' is a risky business. Gap-closing is the *business* of science. To rest belief in God on the presence of gaps in the explanatory chain is to pit religion *against* science."

If we invoke a "God of the gaps," then we are asking for embarrassment when science fills the gaps and shows that we are fools. To show the inevitable results of this kind of folly, McMullin cites a remark by Augustine:

If those not bound by the authority of the Scriptures find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him base foolish opinions on the Scriptures, how are they going to believe the Scriptures regarding the resurrection of the dead? [How can they believe the Scriptures] when they think that the pages of Scripture are full of falsehoods regarding facts which they themselves have learnt from experience and light of reason?⁴

We can rephrase this by asking, "How are people going to believe in the scriptures of Krishna consciousness if devotees tell them that these scriptures are full of statements contrary to modern science?" Augustine has raised a good point, and McMullin responds to it by calling him "the man of good sense."⁵

But there might be a problem here. What if your scriptures really do make statements contrary to modern science? How far can you go in scriptural reinterpretation and reformulation? To see what I mean, let's consider some further statements from the *Bhagavad-gita*.

First of all, is it valid to interpret *prakriti* as material nature in the sense that physical scientists understand this term? Krishna says, "Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego all together these eight constitute My separated material energies." (Bg. 7.4) Now modern science certainly accepts earth, water, fire, and air as forms of material energy, and ether might be so accepted if we were to identify it as Einstein's curved space-time continuum. But modern physics makes no reference to mind, intelligence, and false ego as separate material energies.

Careful study shows that the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* portray mind, intelligence, and false ego as material energies not made from earth, water, fire, air, and ether. According to these texts, the mind comes up with thoughts, which govern the behaviour of the body. This means the physical body is influenced by a type of energy, called mind (*manas*), unknown to modern science.

So even if the *Bhagavad-gita* is saying that material phenomena run automatically by the laws of nature, we must recognize that the *Gita's* laws of nature are quite different from modern physicists' laws. If the *Bhagavad-gita* is right, then thinking is not just a product of brain action. Rather, it involves the action of a kind of energy that science doesn't know about.

This could be true, because there is an enormous gap in our scientific understanding of the brain. Why should we suppose that if science ever fills this gap it will fill it with the kind of physical theory of brain action that many scientists now favour? Scientists generally believe that the brain controls the mind. But a theory may emerge in which the mind controls the brain.

Another point is that according to the *Bhagavad-gita*, God does intervene in the course of natural events. The transformations of matter by natural law are only partly automatic, like the workings of a computer interfacing with a human operator.

The *Bhagavad-gita* (13.23) defines the role of the Supersoul as follows: "In this body there is another, a transcendental enjoyer, who is the Lord, the supreme proprietor, who exists as the overseer and permitter, and who is known as the Supersoul." The words overseer (*upadrashta*) and permitter (*anumanta*) indicate that the Supersoul is in charge of the activities of each person. This means that the Supersoul's decisions determine the behaviour of the person's physical body.

It follows that the human body does *not* strictly follow the laws of physics. If it did, the Supersoul's role as controller would be a mockery, because His decisions would always have to accord with a system of differential equations.

Nor can we say that the Supersoul exerts control by directing the random events of quantum theory. Quantum mechanical randomness must always follow quantum statistics, and this means that it must appear noisy and chaotic, like the clicks made by a Geiger counter near a radioactive substance. Of course, the Supersoul can create random effects if He wants to. But to say that the Supersoul must always act in the chaotic fashion dictated by quantum statistics would be to contradict His position as overseer and permitter.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* (15.15) Krishna says, "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness." Here one might conceivably argue that Krishna simply set matter in motion at the

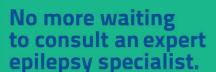
time of creation in such a way as to provide remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness for all the sentient beings who would later develop.

But this interpretation strains hard against Bhagavad-gita 10.10: "To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me." This indicates that Krishna gives personal attention to individuals.

Commenting on this verse, Srila Prabhupada writes that Krishna gives instructions from within so that one "may ultimately come to Him without difficulty." Of course, when a person receives these instructions, the result is that the person's behaviour changes.

In other words, Krishna specifically reciprocates with each person in an observable way that cannot be accounted for by any impersonal system of physical laws. This conclusion is also supported by Bhagavad-gita 10.11: "To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."

McMullin raises the question, "If Nature is complete in its own order, if there are **ADVERTISEMENT**





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no barriers to the reach of science, does not belief in a Creator drop away as superfluous?"6 Many intelligent people may feel inclined to reply that if Nature truly is complete in its own order, then belief in the Creator as described in Bhagavad-gita ought to drop away.

But why should we think that the order of nature, as envisioned by contemporary scientists, is complete? If science does succeed in filling the many gaps that exist in our current knowledge, a radically new and unexpected picture of reality may emerge. It may be the business of scientists to fill gaps, but scientists are certainly not obliged to fill them with the ideas current at one moment in history.

Just as nineteenth-century physicists had no idea of the quantum mechanical theory of the atom, so present-day scientists can have no idea of the science of mind that may develop in the future. And if science someday makes enormous progress and scientists begin to acquire the scientific knowledge of Brahma, they may then be able to see clearly how God intervenes creatively in the phenomena of nature.

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Don't be a Victim

By properly using your intelligence, you can escape from the forces of illusion and the dangers of repeated birth and death.

by His Holiness Pusta Krishna Svami

Each day thousands of human beings are born, and each day thousands die. In fact, this material world has been described as a vast ocean of birth and death. Anyone struggling to stay afloat in a vast ocean is sure to be defeated in due course of time, unless a ship comes along and gives him shelter, for no one can swim indefinitely in the middle of the ocean. Both animals and human beings are struggling in the great ocean of birth and death, and although their activities differ, in the end the human body and the animal body are equal: both are annihilated. We should know that from the moment we are born, death is certain. Therefore, the so-called struggle for existence is like the squirming of a man about to die by the guillotine.

What makes a human being lose sight of this fact? There is a conversation in the Vedic scriptures between two great souls—Maharaja Yudhisthira, a mighty king who lived 5,000 years ago, and Yamaraja, the lord of death. Both were learned transcendentalists, and they were discussing the condition of men in the material world. Yamaraja asked Maharaja Yudhisthira, "What is the most wonderful thing in this material world?" King Yudhisthira expertly answered, "The most wonderful thing is that a man sees everyone dying around himparents, friends, well-wishers, even animals—and still he is thinking that he will not die." This is called illusion, or maya ("that which is not"). Because a man thinks he is immune to death, he misuses and spoils his valuable human life.

Human life differs from other forms of life because a human being has a greatly developed intelligence. Generally, eating, sleeping, mating and defending make up the entire field of an animal's activities. Human beings also eat, sleep, mate and defend, but they have another, special function: to use their developed intelligence to understand the Absolute Truth. The *Vedanta-sutra*, a renowned philosophical work, informs us of the prime duty of human life: "athato brahma-jijnasa." Brahma-jijnasa means inquiry into Brahman, or the Absolute Truth. "Athato" means immediately, now that we have human intelligence with which to understand our actual position and the position of Brahman.

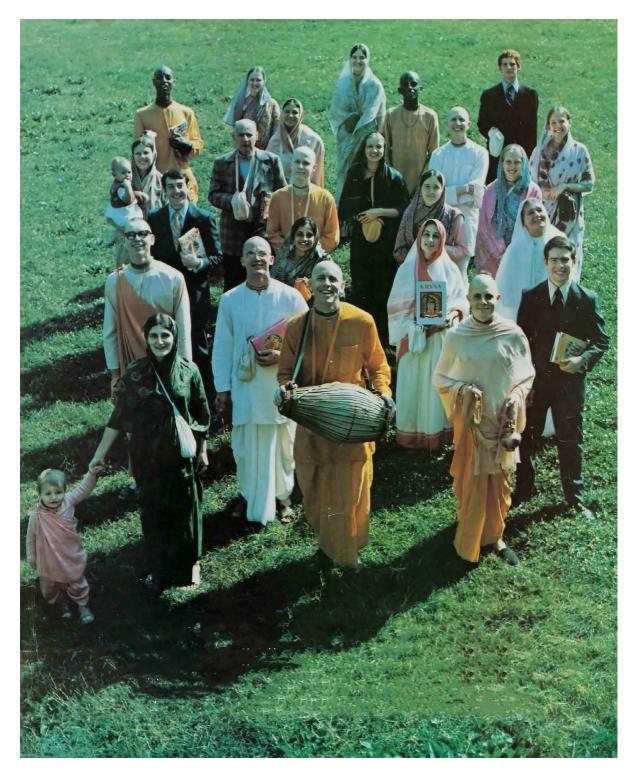
According to *Bhagavad-gita*, living beings differ from the material energy, just as a man differs from the clothes he wears. We are not the material body, nor does our existence depend upon the material body. We are each a pure spiritual soul, a part and parcel of Krishna, or

God. Because we have misused our tiny independence, we have come under the control of His external energy, called *maya*. Therefore when we die the quality of our desires forces us to accept another material body in one of the various species of life, including trees, animals, birds, insects, reptiles, humans and so on. These different bodies are awarded to us by God through the agency of His material energy because of our desire to enjoy materially in one way or another.

The human form of life is a special opportunity to understand transcendental science and become free from repeated birth and death. Actually, the soul does not change, and so we feel our unchanging identity throughout our life; constant changes are due only to our material bodies. The soul transmigrates through material nature in different varieties of bodies by virtue of his material desires. Although the eternal soul is by nature full of bliss and knowledge, these bodies give rise to the varieties of happiness and distress in this world.

Material nature, however strict, is just. If someone wants to enjoy eating, sleeping, mating and defending, nature will offer him a body suitable for that. But although eating, sleeping, mating and defending are present in human life, lower animals are more adept at such activities. Consider how easily animals fulfill their needs, compared to the complex arrangements of civilized man. Unfortunately, many people think there is nothing beyond this business of eating, sleeping, mating and defending. They do not like to accept the existence of the soul, for they fear the personal responsibility the soul would have to assume for all their abominable activities. Such so-called human beings are actually no better than polished animals, and they are taking the risk of actually becoming animals in their next birth.

Great sages have compared human life to a great sum of wealth. One should know how to spend this human life properly, without squandering or hoarding its energy. According to the *Garga Upanishad* a man who quits his human body like a cat or dog, without having sufficiently inquired into the Absolute Truth, is considered to be a *krpana*, or a most miserly man. The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, therefore, are simply trying to educate people about the great boon of human life. If one is sincere, he can use this human life to achieve the greatest benefit—the revival of his eternally blissful pure consciousness—



and escape from the round of birth and death in this miserable material world.

The consciousness of the living being is originally pure, just as water is originally pure when it falls from the clouds. However, when the water hits the earth, the result is mud. So, our original pure consciousness has become muddled by contact with material nature. However, as pure water can be extracted from mud by distillation, so our original pure consciousness can be

revived by the chanting of

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare

We cordially invite all who are interested to pursue these topics of discussion at one of the many ISKCON centers throughout the world, and to chant the holy names of God for self-purification. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama. Hare Hare.

Krishna Voice, April 2021 15

The Time of Death

by Damodara Dasa Adhikari

I offer my most respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, my spiritual master and the spiritual master of the universe, from whose lotus lips has sprung the eternal message of the *Vedas* in the purest line of disciplic succession from Sri Krishna, the Absolute Truth, through Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja. He is spreading the teachings of Krishna consciousness around the planet for the benefit of all living entities, and just by his kindness so many of his faithful disciples are being delivered from the clutches of impending death. Please allow me to address myself to this subject. The death of the body is an inevitable fact for each one of us, so let us find out what the Vedic literature says about this.

The final purport of the *Vedas* is stated by the Supreme Lord Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita:* "Just surrender unto Me." (Bg. 18.66) But surrender is made difficult by our attachment to the gross and subtle bodily coverings of the soul. We must control the various senses and gradually extract ourselves from the predicament of material life. In *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord states: "O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by constant practice and detachment." (Bg. 6.35) For the *yogi* this practice is most severely tested at the time of death. The Supreme Personality of Godhead says, "Anyone who quits his body, at the end of life, remembering Me, attains immediately to My nature; and there is no doubt of this." (Bg. 8.5)

For example, the Vedic literature cites the case of Ajamila. Ajamila, who had been born into a good *brahmana* family, fell into bad association after having seen a man and a woman embracing on a public road. His lust drew him into worse and worse circumstances, and finally, sick and wretched, he found himself dying and went to the house of the prostitute he was currently favouring. She threw him out mercilessly, seeing his abject state. He had no one present to help him, and so his thoughts turned to his son, and as he fell down to die, he called out his son's name, Narayana. Now, it so happens that Narayana is a name of God, indicating Krishna's four-armed form. So just by the potency of the sound vibration of the name of God, uttered even in this indirect manner by the dying Ajamila, he was not taken away by the constables of the lord of death, Yamaraja, who were waiting for him, but instead was transported to the realm of Vaikuntha, the abode of Lord Narayana. On the other hand, Bharata Maharaja, although advanced in spiritual understanding, thought of a stag at the time of his sudden death, and he became a stag in his next birth (although an extraordinary stag who could remember his previous life's activities).

Everyone, from the smallest germ, known as indra-gopa, up to Lord Indra, the King of heaven, is subject to the stringent laws of material nature. We are attempting to win over these laws, but in fact we are simply becoming more and more entangled in illusion's complexities. Even Lord Indra himself was once subject to the influence of the deluding potency. Indra once became captivated by the superior facilities for sense gratification available on his heavenly planet, and therefore when his spiritual master, Brihaspati, the guru of the demigods, scolded him, Indra acted offensively toward him. Brihaspati then decided to teach his student a lesson. He cursed him to take birth on a lower planet as a pig. Sloshing around in mud and stool, Lord Indra as a pig felt that he was enjoying life very much. He thought to himself, "I am very fortunate. Here I have my nice sow for sex life, so many nice piglets, and the farmer serves me daily with a nice big bucket of stools to eat. How lucky I am!" Meanwhile the upper planets fell into confusion in Lord Indra's absence, and Lord Brahma flew down to Indra's farmyard on his swan to bring the King of heaven back to his post. But Indra would not leave: "I am very happy here, thank you." So, with controlled intelligence, Lord Brahma took his sword end killed the sow and piglets. "No! No! What are you doing?" cried Indra. "My beautiful wife and children! You have mercilessly killed them!" Brahma then reminded Lord Indra that his death was going to come next anyway; at that very moment the farmer was sharpening his knife for the kill. The king of heaven was shocked into awareness, and he gladly returned to his duty as administrative head of the demigods.

The death of the body is approaching for all of us. But Lord Krishna begins *Bhagavad-gita* by teaching that we are not the material body, but pure spirit soul. After confirming the eternal character of the individual soul (Bg. 2.12), the Lord says: "As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth and then to old age, similarly the soul also passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change." (Bg. 2.13)

Later in the *Gita*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead elaborates on this: "From the highest planet in the material world, down to the lowest, all are places of misery where repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains



to My abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again." (Bg. 8.16)

Why should we go to Krishna's abode? We should go there because that is our natural home. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gita*, this material world is a foreign place for us, for the soul is made of the same spiritual energy as Krishna is, and he belongs in the spiritual sky. Therefore, in order to enter into the abode of Sri Krishna, we must be delivered from the womb of material nature. We have been impregnated into this womb by Krishna because we desire to lord it over dead matter. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gita*: "The total material substance, called Brahma, is the source of birth, and in that Brahma do I create pregnancy. Thus come the possibilities for the births of all living beings. It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father." (Bg. 14.3-4) After the living entities, or *jivas*, are injected into *maya*, they lie dormant for some time. Since the living entities come into material existence due to envy of Krishna, it can be said that they are in a state of spiritual death. Spiritual death means to forget that one is spirit. The conditioned living entities come into the material world due to a desire to identify with the deluding energy. Therefore they lie dormant in this state of spiritual death. Then, after some time, "those *jivas* who had lain dormant during the cataclysm are awakened." (*Brahma-samhita* 5.20)

But it must be admitted that this awakening is itself illusory, since we are still within the womb; we have not actually been born yet. Nor are we awake. Shukadeva Gosvami says in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, "The conditioned souls hover in a dream of heavenly illusory pleasures, but actually they do not relish any tangible happiness in this way." (Bhag. 2.2.2)

What is needed is known as *dvija*, or second birth. This second birth occurs when we are initiated by a bona fide spiritual master. He can deliver us from illusion just by his causeless mercy. After this kind of birth, there is no death any more-just eternal, blissful life in Krishna consciousness.

The great saints and spiritual masters can give us advice on the proper method of passing out of this present body. One illustrative account is found in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* First Canto, Thirteenth Chapter. The gist of the narrative is as follows.

In the course of losing the Battle of Kurukshetra, King Dhritarashtra's one hundred sons, led by Duryodhana, had all been killed and so the aged father was living in the palace of the victor, King Yudhisthira. Yudhisthira was very kind to his former enemy, and, according to the Vedic custom, he allowed him all the privileges of a member of his family, regularly paying his respects to the elderly king every morning. Dhritarashtra, who had been blind throughout his life, was thus living in Yudhisthira's palace in peace and friendliness, along with his wife Gandhari.

This placid domestic scene was not to continue for long, however. Dhritarashtra's brother Vidura, who had left Duryodhana's palace just before the great battle, now at last returned from a long pilgrimage to holy cities and temples. He had sat at the feet of his spiritual master, Maitreya Muni, and thereby received the gracious gift of absolute knowledge. Vidura was not an ordinary human being. Actually he was a demigod, Yamaraja, the lord of death, who had taken birth on this planet as the result of being cursed by the sage Mandavya Muni. So Vidura was particularly qualified to ascertain the flaws in his aged brother's present way of life.

Vidura's arrival at the court of Yudhisthira was filled with gaiety. For the members of the royal family, it was like regaining consciousness after a long period. They had been distressed by Vidura's absence, and now they all offered their most respectful obeisances to the great saint and embraced him heartily, crying affectionately due to their long separation. King Yudhisthira arranged for a nice place for Vidura to sit, and a festive reception was offered, with sumptuous foodstuffs for the brother of Dhritarashtra. After taking sufficient rest, Vidura was given a comfortable seat, and, after paying his respects, King Yudhisthira asked him about Lord Krishna and the Lord's immediate relatives, the Yadus.

Now, it so happened that the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna had brought His earthly pastimes to a close, and He and His relatives had departed for the spiritual sky. But Vidura did not disclose this unbearable news to the assembled devotees. They were to find out soon enough just by the laws of nature, and Vidura did not want to hasten their inevitable distress. Instead he turned to Dhritarashtra and addressed his remarks to him directly:

"My dear King, please get out of here immediately. Do not delay. Just see how fear has overtaken you. This frightful situation cannot be remedied by any person in this material world. My lord, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as eternal time that has approached us all. Whoever is under the influence of supreme eternal time must surrender his most dear life, and what to speak of other things, such as wealth, honour, children, land, home, etc.

"Your father, brother, well-wishers and sons are all dead and passed away. You yourself have expended the major portion of your life. Your body is now overtaken by invalidity, and you are living in the home of another. You have

been blind from your very birth, and recently you have become hard of hearing. Your memory is shortened, and your intelligence is disturbed. Your teeth are loose, your liver is defective, and you are coughing up mucus.

"Alas, how powerful are the hopes of a living being to continue his life. Verily, you are living just like a household dog and are eating the remnants of food given by Bhima. There is no need to live a degraded life and subsist on the charity of those whom you tried to kill by arson and poisoning. You also insulted one of their wives and usurped their kingdom and wealth. Despite your unwillingness to die and your desire to live even at the cost of honour and prestige, your miserly body will certainly dwindle and deteriorate like an old garment.

"He is called undisturbed who goes to an unknown, remote place, and freed from all obligations, quits his material body when it has become useless. He is certainly a first-class man who awakens and understands, either by himself or from others, the falsity and misery of this material world and thus leaves home and depends fully on the Supreme Personality of Godhead residing within his heart.

"Please, therefore, leave for the North immediately, without letting your relatives know, for soon that time will approach which will diminish the good qualities of men." (Bhag. 1.13.18-28)

Because Vidura spoke the truth from the platform of direct realization, Dhritarashtra followed his brother's advice, and he and his wife both left at once for the Himalayas and took up *yoga* practice under Vidura's guidance in order to purify their consciousness so that they could be liberated from the attachments of material life. After perfecting their austerities, they voluntarily accepted death in the fire of mystic *yoga*. The *yoga* which they performed, however, was not sufficient for attaining the highest knowledge. Mere liberation is not sought after by pure devotees of Krishna. It is not such a great achievement. Even the most demonic of all living entities, Hiranyakashipu, was also liberated at his death, simply because he was *killed* by the Personality of Godhead in His form as Narasimhadeva. Such is the grace of Krishna that He awards salvation even to the lowest of the low, if, through their atheistic activities, they are so corrupt as to necessitate their being annihilated by God Himself.

Mere impersonal salvation is not considered worthwhile because it is temporary. Thus it is on the same level as religion, economic development and sense gratification. Only pure devotional service of God can render the living entity completely free from birth, death, disease and old age. Shukadeva Gosvami says in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, "For those who are wandering in the material universe, there is no more auspicious means of deliverance than what is aimed at in the direct devotional service of Lord Krishna." (Bhag. 2.2.33) His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada writes in his purport to this verse, "Srila Sridhara Svami and all other *acharyas*, like Jiva Gosvami, etc., agree that *bhakti-yoga* is not only easy, simple, natural and free from trouble, but that it is the only source of happiness for the human being."

Commenting on the kind of *yoga* practiced by Dhritarashtra, His Divine Grace writes: "In olden days such practice was very common for the transcendentalist for the mode of life and character in those days were favourable. But in modern days, when the influence of the age of Kali is so disturbing, practically everyone is untrained in this art of bodily exercise. Concentration of the mind is more easily attained in these days by the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The results are more effective than those derived from the inner exercise of the life air." (Bhag. 2.2.19, purport)

So here is a hint for all of us not to be dissuaded from attempting for spiritual emancipation. The human form of life is given to us as a chance to surpass the hurdle of birth and death. How, then, can we transcend the material nature at the time of death? Let us take the example of King Parikshit.

King Parikshit had offended a sage, Samika Muni, and the son of that holy man had subsequently cursed the King to be killed in seven days by the bite of a snake-bird. Having been informed of this by the Muni, the King was in the unique position of knowing exactly when he would die, and therefore he immediately prepared for death. He accepted the news of his death as "well and good for its being the cause of his indifference toward worldly attachments." (Bhag. 1.19.4) He left his palace and sat down tightly on the bank of the most holy Yamuna River, observed fasting, and simply depended on Lord Krishna. As he sat there, the most auspicious saints and mystics arrived on the scene; they could foretell what was going to happen. The demigods, seeing the great assemblage, scattered flowers over the earth. Then at last, Shukadeva Gosvami arrived, and he took the most exalted seat as the chief guest of Parikshit. He is described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* as "surrounded by saintly sages, demigods, and kings, just as the moon is surrounded by stars, heavenly bodies, and planets in the sky. He was gorgeously represented in that manner, and factually he was also respected by all of them." (Bhag. 1.19.31)

The King then put a question to Shukadeva Gosvami: "You are the spiritual master of great saints and devotees. I therefore beg to inquire from you the way of perfection for all persons, and especially for one who is just about

to die." (Bhag. 1.19.37)

Shukadeva answered: "The highest perfection of human life, achieved either by complete knowledge of matter and spirit, by practice of mystic powers, or by perfect discharge of occupational duty, is to remember the Personality of Godhead at the end of life." (Bhag. 2.1.6) "Those who drink through aural reception, fully filled with the nectarean message of Lord Krishna, the beloved of the devotees, purify the polluted aim of life known as material enjoyment and thus go back to Godhead, to the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead." (Bhag. 2.2.37) In the remainder of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Shukadeva Gosvami tells the King about Sri Krishna, His energies, His opulences and His activities; and just by hearing this transcendental sound vibration, the King was transferred to the spiritual sky at his death.

Here is the conclusion of the *Vedas*. The first principle of spiritual life is hearing, and Shukadeva Gosvami assures that this is the most important factor at death. The hearing must be submissive. One should not hear in a challenging spirit. In *Bhagavad-gita*, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna: "Because you are never envious of Me, O Arjuna, I shall give you this most secret wisdom, knowing which you will be relieved from the miseries of material existence." (Bg. 9.1) Elsewhere the Lord says, "That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend; therefore, you can understand the transcendental mystery of this science." (Bg. 4.3)

Our attitude towards Krishna and the spiritual master must not be envious, but favourable and devotional. Lord Chaitanya prays, "In such a humble state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." (*Shiksashtakam* 3) In the *Gita* the Lord tells us how to act in relationship with the spiritual master: "inquire from him submissively and render service unto him." (Bg. 4.34)

So, with this in mind, let us hear something of that supreme destination, the goal of the *bhakti-yogis*, described nicely by Srila Prabhupada in *Bhagavad-gita*:

"The supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is described in the *Brahma-samhita* as the *chintamani dhama*. That abode of Lord Krishna, known as Goloka Vrindavana, is full of palaces made of touchstone. There the trees are called desire trees, and the cows are called *surabhi*, and the Lord is served by hundreds and thousands of goddesses of fortune. He is Govinda, the primal Lord and the cause of all causes. There the Lord plays His flute; His eyes are like lotus petals, and the colour of His body is like a beautiful cloud. On His head is a peacock feather. So attractive is He that He excels thousands of Cupids." (Bg. 8.21, purport)

The real meaning of eternal deathlessness is to perform devotional service for the eternal Supreme Lord, and therefore pure devotees do not even desire to attain to the Lord's eternal abode, Krishnaloka, as just described. Lord Chaitanya prays, "O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor have I any desire to enjoy beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. What I want only is that I may have Your causeless devotional service in my life birth after birth." (*Shiksashtakam* 4) Similarly the great *acharya* of modern times Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, offering a poem on the death of a great devotee, says:

He reasons ill who says that Vaishnavas die When thou art living still in sound.

The Vaishnavas die to live and living try
To spread the holy life around.

Devotional service to Krishna is eternal and cannot die. So the devotees pray, "Whether I attain to Vaikuntha, the spiritual sky, or whether You wish to send me to hell, whatever You desire is all right. I simply pray to always remember You." Therefore when the Lord grants devotional service, it means that deathlessness is assured. When a devotee takes up Krishna consciousness seriously he becomes very dear to Krishna, and although the devotee may not desire it, his going back to Krishnaloka is assured.

We urge our readers to consider these topics seriously and with all reason and cool logic. Srila Prabhupada has said that actually our desire to live eternally is indirect evidence that we are actually eternal by nature. These propositions on how one can go beyond death by performance of devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead are not mere word jugglery. Death is not the most wonderful thing; it is life that is most wonderful, and Krishna consciousness is real life. Death can be conquered. Krishna promises that this freedom from death can most assuredly be attained by His devotees. By becoming purified through hearing of the Lord from the spiritual master and by chanting the holy name of God, the devotees learn to take everything as the mercy of God, and thus they become eager to serve Him. That change from material consciousness to God consciousness makes one eligible to enter the kingdom of God for eternal blissful life.

Sri Rama Navami Wed, 21st April 2021



apadamapahartaram dataram sarvasampadam lokabhiramam sriramam bhuyo-bhuyo namamyaham

I bow again and again to Lord Shri Rama, Who removes all types of adversity and agony of the living beings; Who bestows all types of benedictions; and by the vision of Whom, the world feel very pleased.



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