



KRISHNA VOICE

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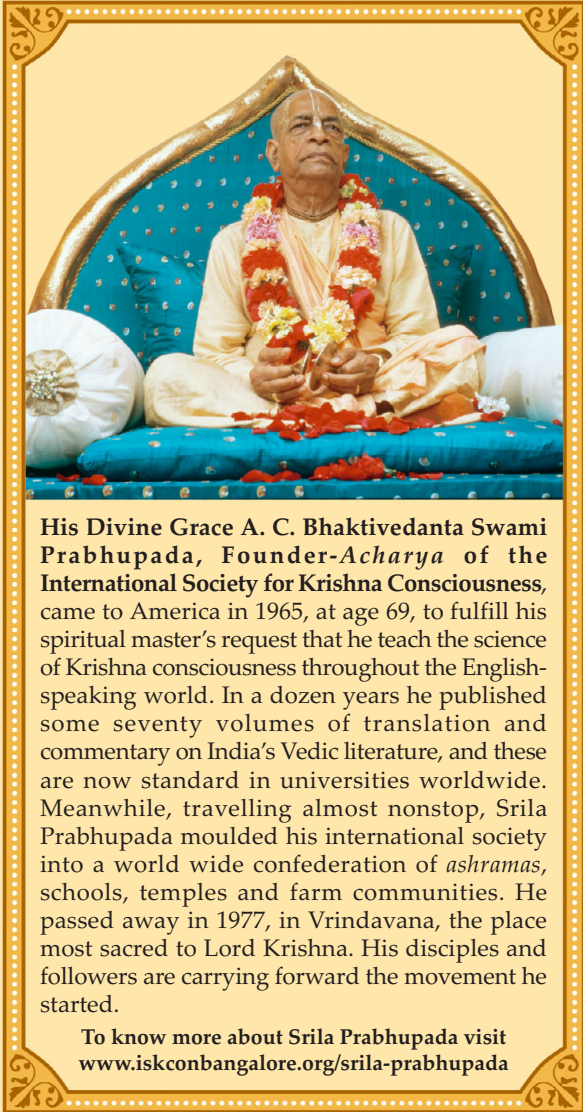
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KRISHNA VOICE



Vol 22, No.11

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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 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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CONTENTS

How to Receive Krishna's Message	4
Srila Prabhupada Speaks Out	9
Strong Ropes of Affection	12
Dying a Good Death	17
Chozhsimhapuram Thirukkadigai Kovil - Part 3	19

Pages-26

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For all information contact: Editor, Krishna Voice, SST, Hare Krishna Hill, Chord Road, Bangalore - 560 010 INDIA Phone: 91-80-2347 1956, 91-80-2357 8346 Fax: 91-80-2357 8625.

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How to Receive Krishna's Message

New York City—April 9, 1969

Lord Krishna Himself sets up the system by which His teachings find their way to us.

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

*sri-prahrada uvaca
kaumara acaret prajno
dharman bhagavatan iha
durlabham manusam janma
tad apy adhravam arthadam*

Prahlada Maharaja said: One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life—in other words, from the tender age of childhood—to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.

—*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 7.6.1

Today I shall explain the importance of Krishna consciousness as it was conceived by one of the greatest devotees in this disciplic succession. You know we are under disciplic succession. We do not manufacture anything by mental concoction. We do not approve that method. We receive knowledge from the authorities, and out of many such *acharyas*, or authorities, who have appeared and disappeared, Prahlada Maharaja is one.

We don't say "born" and "died," but "appear" and "disappear." This is the explanation: None of us, neither Krishna nor we living entities, are born or die; we appear and disappear. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Lord Krishna says on the battlefield, "My dear Arjuna, don't think that you or Me or all the kings and soldiers who have assembled on this battlefield did not exist in the past and will not exist in the future." That means they existed in the past and they're existing at present and they would exist also in the future. That means we are all eternal.

The body is changing, and the final change, when you transmigrate from one body to another, is called death. But actually, there is no death. *Na jayate na mriyate va kadacit* [Bg. 2.20]. In the *Bhagavad-gita* you'll find that the living entity is never born and never dies. *Na hanyate hanyamane sarire*. One may say, "I see that he is dying." But he is not dying; he is finishing this present body.

An example is given: *vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya* [Bg. 2.22]. Just as one changes his dress, when the present body is unworkable he changes to a new body. When the eyes cannot see, there is blindness. Similarly, when the hand cannot work, the leg cannot work, the tongue cannot work—because at the last stage these mechanical arrangements of this body will stop functioning—that is called death. Try to understand: If I cannot see, that does not mean I am dead. Similarly, when the senses of the body cannot function, that also does not mean that I am dead. This is to be understood with a little intelligence and a cool head.

Prahlada Maharaja, a great devotee, is in the line of disciplic succession. He's considered one of the great *acharyas*, authorities. Who is an *acharya*? An *acharya* is one who knows the intricacies of Vedic knowledge, behaves in terms of that knowledge, and teaches his disciple in terms of that knowledge. The word *acharya* means a person whose behaviour is to be followed—we don't just follow someone according to our taste—and that *acharya* comes in the standard disciplic succession.

Twelve Great Authorities

We are discussing the instructions of Prahlada Maharaja because he happens to be one of the stalwart *acharyas*. The names of such authorized *acharyas* are mentioned in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Who are they? *Svayambhuh naradahsambhuh...* [*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6.3.20]. *Svayambhuh* means Brahma. Brahma is born without any material father and mother. Therefore he is called *svayambhuh*, "self-manifested." He is the only living creature within this universe born without a father and mother. That means without a material father and mother. But he has his father. His father is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana. Brahma is born out of the lotus flower



grown from the abdomen of Narayana. Therefore he's called *svayambhuh*. Before him there was no existence of material creation.

Next is Narada. Narada is born from Brahma. Then Shambhu, who is also born of Brahma. Shambhu is Lord Shiva. He is also one of the *acharyas*.

Next are the Kumaras, who are also sons of Brahma. The word *kumara* means *brahmachari*, celibate. When they were born, Brahma wanted to create living entities to fill the universe, so he wanted many sons and grandsons.

Brahma requested his four Kumara sons, "My dear boys, get yourself married and increase the population."

But the Kumaras said, "My dear father, we are not going to marry. We are not going to be entangled in this material way of life. We shall remain as *brahmacharis* and cultivate Krishna consciousness."

Oh, the father was very angry.

"Oh, you are refusing my order?"

From his anger Lord Shiva was born. Lord Shiva's name is also Rudra because he was crying (*rudra*) from the very beginning of his birth. He too is one of the authorities.

Kapila, another *acharya*, is the son of Devahuti, and He's considered an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Next is Manu, the father of the mankind. From *manuh*, the word "man" is derived.

Now Prahlada's name comes. Then Janaka, the great king whose daughter, Sita, was married to Lord Ramachandra. Therefore, Sita's name is also Janaki, "the daughter of Maharaja Janaka." He is also a great authority.

Then Bhisma. You have heard the name of Bhisma, the grandfather of Arjuna. He is also one of the authorities.

Then Maharaja Bali, a king. He was a grandson of Prahlada Maharaja. All these persons became authorities by their exemplary character for advancing in Krishna consciousness. Therefore they are considered authorities.

Next is *vaiyasakih*, which means "the son of Vyasadeva," or Sukadeva Gosvami. He's also an authority. And the verse ends with the word *vayam*, "we," meaning Yamaraja, the controller of sinful activities and the speaker of the verse. He is like the superintendent of police, appointed by Krishna. He is also one of the authorities. How can you deny the superintendent of police as an authority? As the superintendent of police is an authority in the state, so Yamaraja is an authority.

An Atheist's Sainly Son

Today we are speaking about the instructions of one of the authorities, Prahlada Maharaja. What is the history of Prahlada Maharaja? He was born in the family of a great atheist. His father was a great atheist, Hiranyakashipu. *Hiranya* means gold, and *kashipu* means enjoyment in soft bedding. He was concerned with two things: money and sense enjoyment. That was his business, and he wanted to train his boy in that way. But fortunately, the boy happened to be a great devotee by the instruction of Narada. He was born in the family of atheists—his father was a great atheist. But because he was blessed by a great devotee, Narada, he became a great devotee.

Now, Prahlada took the opportunity of spreading Krishna consciousness. Where? In his school. He was a five-year-old boy, and as soon as he would get the opportunity, he would spread Krishna consciousness to his classmates. That was his business.

And so, many times Prahlada Maharaja's father called in the teachers: "What education are you giving to my child? Why he is chanting Hare Krishna? [*Laughter.*] Why are you spoiling my boy?" [*Laughter.*]

You see? So don't think that I am spoiling these boys and girls by teaching them Hare Krishna.

So the teacher said, "My dear sir, I teach your son very nicely about politics, economics, and, as you want, to become a very clever man in the material world. But unfortunately I do not know wherefrom your son has learned this Hare Krishna. So please excuse me. I am trying to make your son forget this nonsense Hare Krishna, but I do not know how. By nature, he chants Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, and not only is he spoiling himself, but he's spoiling my whole school. [*Laughter.*] Because as soon as he chants Hare Krishna, all the boys join with him, and they clap and they dance. So this is going on."

The Gaudiya Vaishnava Succession

Now, this edition of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* here on the table is a great, grand edition. Each verse contains eight commentaries by great stalwart devotees. They represent different disciplic successions of devotees. There are

four authorized disciplic successions. As I have already mentioned, Brahma is one of the authorities. He has a disciplic succession: from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasadeva, from Vyasadeva to Madhvacharya, from Madhvacharya to—I am making a shortcut—Madhavendra Puri, from Madhavendra Puri to Ishvara Puri, from Ishvara Puri to Lord Chaitanya, from Lord Chaitanya to Svarupa Damodara, from Svarupa Damodara to the six Gosvamis, from the six Gosvamis to Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, the author of *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, and from him to Narottama Dasa Thakura, from Narottama Dasa Thakura to Vishvanatha Chakravarti, from Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura to Jagannatha Dasa Babaji, from Jagannatha Dasa Babaji to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, from Bhaktivinoda Thakura to Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, and from Gaurakishora Dasa Babaji to my spiritual master. And then we are descended.

In this way, the disciplic succession is coming. What is the significance of the disciplic succession? If you receive knowledge from the descendants of these authorities, then you get perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge is imparted by the supreme perfect, God, and it is received by Brahma. And the same knowledge is handed over to Narada. Narada hands it over to Vyasadeva, Vyasadeva hands it over to Madhvacharya, and so on. If a ripe fruit on the top of the tree falls down all of a sudden, it is destroyed. But if it is handed over from up to down, down, down, then it comes as it is, and you can enjoy the undamaged fruit. Similarly, when knowledge is handed down by disciplic succession, then you can enjoy the reality.

That is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita*. In the fourth chapter you'll find that Krishna says, *imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam* [Bg. 4.1]. "First of all, I spoke this yoga system to Vivasvan." Vivasvan is the name of the controlling deity in the sun planet. As we have got many presidents, each higher planet has a president. According to Vedic language, they are known as the moon-god or the sun-god or Varuna, and so on. You also can occupy such posts if you become qualified. Just as you can become the President, you can also occupy the predominating post in the sun planet, in the moon planet, and in all the other planets. That is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita* [7.23]: *devan deva-yajo yanti*. Anyone who aspires to be elevated to the planetary system inhabited by the demigods can go there.

So Krishna says, "First of all, I narrated this yoga system to Vivasvan." Vivasvan is the predominating deity of the sun. He was taught the *Bhagavad-gita*. And Krishna says, *vivasvan manave praha*: "And Vivasvan, this gentleman, spoke the truth about *Bhagavad-gita* to Manu." I have already mentioned the name of Manu. Manu means the father of mankind. That means that from the sun planet, the message of *Bhagavad-gita* was handed down to the chief man of this planet, the father of mankind, Manu. And Manu handed over this knowledge to his son named Ikshvaku.

Ikshvaku is a great king. He happens to be the original king in the family in which Lord Ramachandra appeared. It is called *surya-vamsa*, the descendants from the sun. There are two classes of *ksatriyas*, or rulers. One is coming from the sun planet, and the other is coming down from the moon planet. According to the *Mahabharata*, those of Indo-European stock also belong to the *ksatriya* family.

Krishna says in the next verse, *evam parampara-praptam imam rajarsayo viduh* [Bg. 4.2]. In this way, this knowledge was received by disciplic succession of *rajarsis*. *Rajarsi* means a monarch who is just like a sage. In the history given in the *Mahabharata* there were many kings who were like sages. In name they were monarchs, but they were always thinking of the welfare of the citizens. Maharaja Yudhisthira is an example.

Then Krishna says, *sa kaleneha... yogo nastah parantapa* [Bg. 4.2]: "Now this parampara system, or disciplic succession, has been broken by the influence of time." Just imagine. It was coming down from the sun planet, so there is every possibility of that occurring. Suppose I hand over some knowledge to you and you hand over to some other person, in succession. There is the possibility that there may be some deviation from the exact knowledge I delivered at the beginning. That is called the breakage of the *parampara* system. Krishna says, "That *parampara* system, by the force of time, is now broken; therefore I again begin that *parampara* system with you, Arjuna."

Therefore if we understand the *Bhagavad-gita* as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get real knowledge. That is the way to understand *parampara*. Although we are not present before Krishna, if the message of Krishna is received through the *parampara* system as it was understood by Arjuna, then we get the message from Krishna directly. This is the system. But if I interpret in my own way, then the *parampara* system is broken.

I gave an account of our *parampara* system from Lord Chaitanya. We do not manufacture any knowledge by our fertile brain. We accept knowledge as it is coming down from the supreme authority. That is perfect knowledge. For example, we receive knowledge from our parents: "This is called a lamp, this is called a table, this is called a book." If you protest, "Why shall I call it a book? I may call it something else" you can do that, but that is a deviation from the knowledge.

The *parampara* system is considered the perfect system of knowledge. I may be imperfect or my disciple may be imperfect, but if we stick to the knowledge coming down from the *parampara* system, then we are perfect.

This is such a simple, nice thing. The parent teaches the child, “This is called a watch or a timepiece.” If he accepts it, he hasn’t got to make any research—“Why is it called a timepiece?” It is a very easy system. “My father has told me this is a timepiece. I accept it as a timepiece,” and everyone will understand that this is a timepiece. But if I manufacture some name out of my fertile brain—“This is this” oh, people will call me crazy. “What are you saying?” So the *parampara* system is very nice.

Take the phrase “Man is mortal.” You have learned from your parents or teachers that man is mortal. Now, if you want to research whether or not man is mortal, it will take a long, long time. But if you accept it from the authorities—“Man is mortal” your knowledge is perfect.

The *parampara* system of knowledge is given in the Vedas. This system of knowledge is followed by the great *acharyas*, and Prahlada Maharaja is one of the great *acharyas*.

Prahlada’s Advice

Try to accept what Prahlada Maharaja is advising to his classmates. What is he advising? *Kaumara acaret prajno dharman bhagavatan iha* [Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.6.1]: “My dear friends, Krishna consciousness should be practiced from childhood.” Why childhood? Because if one is intelligent he can understand, “There is no certainty whether this is my childhood or my old age.”

Generally we think that we die when we are old. But who can say that I’m not old enough to die in the next moment? If I have to gain something supernatural which will give me the ultimate benefit of my life, then why shall I wait for old age? Immediately let me begin. If Krishna consciousness is a very nice thing, and if it will give me the highest benediction of life, then if I am intelligent I must begin it immediately, without any delay. But generally people think that childhood or youth should be enjoyed.

In one verse, Shankaracharya laments that boys, youths, and old man are very happy in their materialistic way of life. A spiritualist like Shankaracharya, or Lord Jesus Christ, is unhappy, “Oh, what foolish things are they doing.” That is the thankless task of persons who are spiritually enlightened. They can see plainly how others are spoiling their valuable life simply for sense gratification.

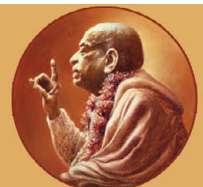
Prahlada Maharaja is teaching the same thing. He says that one should practice *dharman bhagavatan* from the beginning of life. Dharma means occupational duty. “Religion” is not a perfect translation of the Sanskrit word *dharma*. Religion is a kind of faith. That we can change. But dharma means your occupational duty, which you cannot change. You have to execute it. What is our dharma? What is our compulsory duty? I have several times analyzed this fact. Our compulsory duty is to serve. Every one of us is serving, and all the boys and girls present here can know it. Nobody can deny that he or she is serving. Everyone is serving. That is our compulsory duty. I may change myself to become a Mohammedan or a Christian or a Hindu, but my real occupational duty is to render service to others. That cannot be changed. That is the real enunciation of “religion.”

Therefore in the Vedic system it is called *sanatana-dharma*, the eternal occupational duty you cannot cease. Prahlada Maharaja is advising, *dharman bhagavatan*. *Bhagavata* means “pertaining to Bhagavan.” And Bhagavan means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Bhagavata* is the adjective form of the noun Bhagavan. The real form of the word is *bhagavat*. *Vat* means possessing, and *bhaga* means opulences. One who possess all the opulences is called *bhagavat*. And from *bhagavat* this word has come: *bhagavata*.

So *Bhagavata* means pertaining to God and His devotees. This book is called *Bhagavata* because it deals only with the subject of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nothing more. And you’ll find described in this book the dealings between Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and His devotees. There are two kinds of *bhagavatam*: the devotee *bhagavatam* and the book *Bhagavatam*. Prahlada Maharaja advises that from childhood, if one is very intelligent, then his duty is *dharman bhagavatan*—he should engage himself in the execution of the occupational duties in relationship with devotees and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thank you very much. 🙏

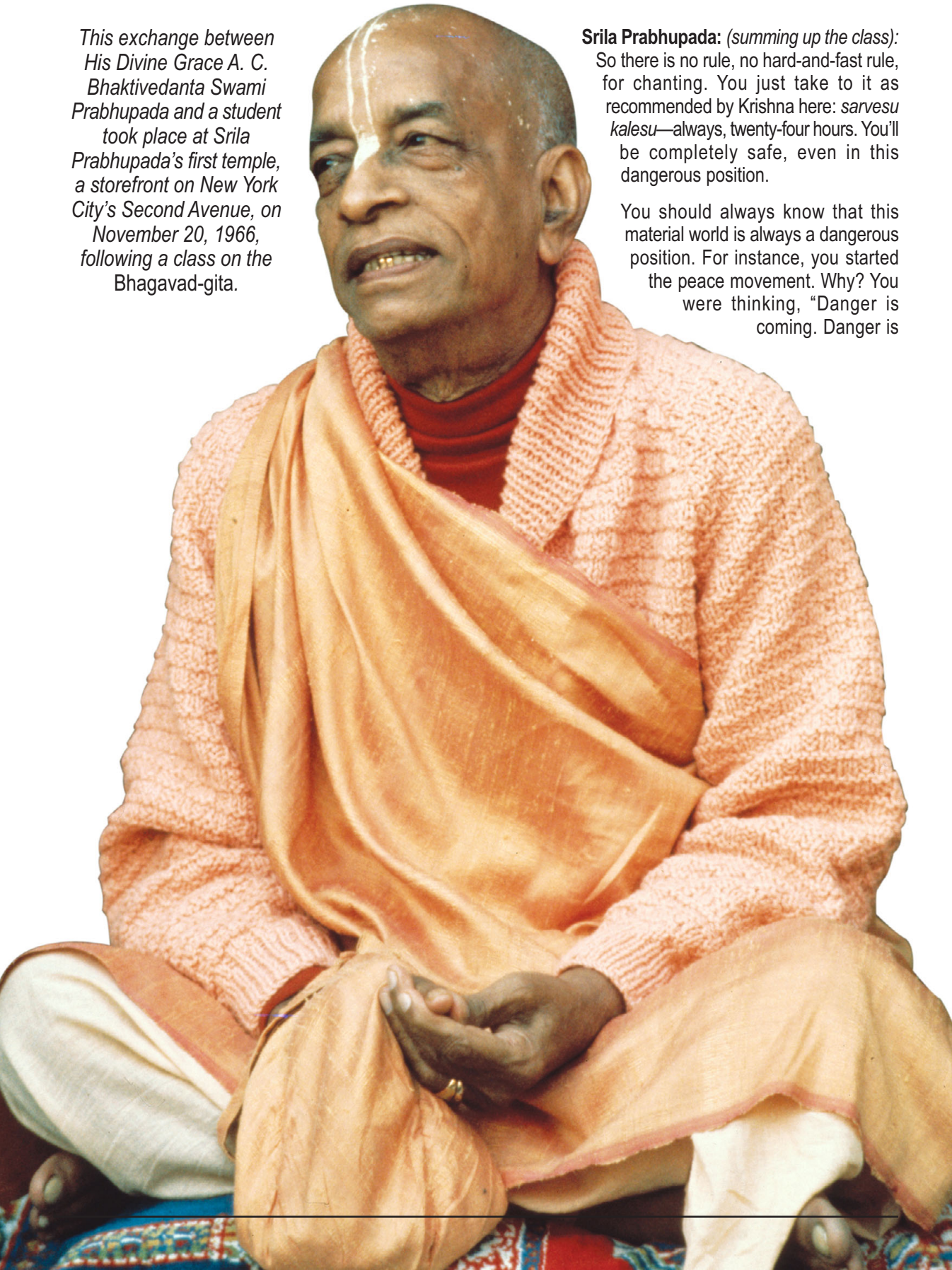
Srila Prabhupada, the founder-*acharya* of ISKCON, has delivered more than 1500 lectures on Vedic scriptures like *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrita*. The audio recording of his lectures are available in ISKCON centers. You can also hear some of these lectures in www.iskconbangalore.org/srila-prabhupada-lectures



SRILA PRABHUPADA SPEAKS OUT

“You Do Not Know What Is Happiness”

This exchange between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and a student took place at Srila Prabhupada's first temple, a storefront on New York City's Second Avenue, on November 20, 1966, following a class on the Bhagavad-gita.



Srila Prabhupada: *(summing up the class):*

So there is no rule, no hard-and-fast rule, for chanting. You just take to it as recommended by Krishna here: *sarvesu kalesu*—always, twenty-four hours. You'll be completely safe, even in this dangerous position.

You should always know that this material world is always a dangerous position. For instance, you started the peace movement. Why? You were thinking, “Danger is coming. Danger is

coming.” Yes, at any moment, there may be danger of war declaration, and all these innocent youths may be called to fight. So however much you may think, “We are an independent nation,” and this and that, you should always remember that this material world is full of danger. It is a dangerous spot.

Therefore, those who are Krishna conscious, who are devotees of Krishna—for them, this dangerous place is not suitable. *Padam padam yad vipadam na tesam. Padam padam:* in every step there is danger. This place is not suitable for the devotees of the Lord. *Padam padam yad vipadam na tesam.* They are not meant for remaining in this miserable, dangerous place. Yes.

So we have got this nice body—this human form of life, with an advanced consciousness. Just merge it into Krishna consciousness and be happy. This is the sum and substance of this movement. Take advantage of it and be happy. Thank you very much.

Student: What is the function of the chanting?

Srila Prabhupada: Chanting—the chanting process is just to cleanse your mind. You have got so many misunderstandings about yourself, about this world, about God, and about the interrelationship between these things. We have got so many misgivings. We are in the position of complete ignorance. This chanting will help you to cleanse your mind. Then you’ll understand that this chanting Hare Krishna is not different from Krishna.

Yes. So in the beginning we have to chant. We may be in whatever position we are; that doesn’t matter. If we begin chanting, then the first benefit will be *ceto-darpana-marjanam*: the mind will be clear of all dirty things. *Ceto-darpana-marjanam.*

And then the next stage will be *bhava-maha-davagni-nirvapanam*. The next stage will be that the sufferings, the miseries of this material world, will subside. So we’ll have to make progress, stage after stage. But at any stage you can adopt this means—at any stage. There is no necessity of some preliminary qualification, that “You have to come to this stage and then chant.” From any stage you can chant. Yes.

Student: Well, secondly, I don’t quite understand what the material world is.

Srila Prabhupada: The material world is full of suffering and miseries. Don’t you understand it? Are you happy?

Student: Sometimes I’m happy and sometimes I’m not.

Srila Prabhupada: No. You are not happy. That “sometimes” is your imagination. Just like a diseased man says, “Oh, yes, I am well.” What is that “well”? He’s going to die—and he’s well?

Student: I don’t claim any ultimate happiness.

Srila Prabhupada: No. You do not know what is happiness.

Student: Admittedly, the feeling is greater or lesser.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. You do not know what is happiness.

Student 2: Well, of course, that sorrow or that suffering might add the spice. You might want some suffering to go in between the happiness.

Srila Prabhupada: No. The thing is that there are different kinds of miseries. That we should understand. But due to our ignorance, we don’t care about it—just like a man who has been suffering for a very long time. He has forgotten what is happiness. He has forgotten what is real happiness.

Similarly, even though you may not care about it, the sufferings are there already. Now, take, for example: You are now a young man. Now, would you like to become an old man?

Student: I will become an old man in the process of...

Srila Prabhupada: Now, you will become an old man. You’ll be forced to become an old man. But you don’t like to become an old man.

Student: I’m not going to be forced to become old man.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. Yes. Forced. You’ll be forced.

Student: I don’t see why.

Srila Prabhupada: Even if you don't like to become an old man, you'll be forced to become an old man.

Student: It's one of the conditions of—

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. That condition is miserable.

Student: I find it not miserable.

Srila Prabhupada: [Chuckles.] No. You don't find it miserable because you are a young man. But ask any old man how he's suffering. You see. A diseased man—do you want to be diseased?

Student: I wouldn't search it out.

Srila Prabhupada: No, no. Just answer me. Do you like to be diseased?

Student: What is disease?

Srila Prabhupada: Oh? You have never suffered from disease?

Student: I've had the mumps and the measles and whooping cough... [laughter]... which is what everyone has, and you get over it.

Srila Prabhupada: "Everyone has." Everyone is now suffering from this winter season, but that does not mean that this is not suffering. So we have to admit that we are always in suffering.

Student: If I've never known happiness, I feel sure I've never known suffering either.

Srila Prabhupada: That is due to your ignorance. We are in suffering. We don't want to die. The death is there. We don't want to be diseased. The disease is there. We don't want to become old. The old age is there. So many things we don't want, but they are forced upon us. And any sane man will admit that these are sufferings. But if you are accustomed to these sufferings, you say, "It is all right." That is a different thing. But naturally, any sane man, he won't like to be diseased. He won't like to be old. He won't like to die. You see. Why this peace movement? Because if there is war, there will be death. So people are afraid. They're making agitation: "There should be no war." So do you think that death is a very pleasurable thing?

Student: I have never experienced it.

Srila Prabhupada: You have experienced. But you have forgotten. Several times you have died—you have experienced—but you have forgotten. Forgetfulness. Forgetfulness is no excuse. Suppose a child has forgotten some suffering. That does not mean that he did not suffer.

Student: No, I agree. I agree.

Srila Prabhupada: Yes. So suffering's there. You have to take the verdict of realized souls, of authorities. For instance, in the *Bhagavad-gita* it is said, *duhkhalayam asasvatam*: "This place is full of miseries." So one has to realize it. Unless we understand that this place is miserable, there is no question how to get out of it. Similarly, a person who does not develop a sense of the miserable condition of this world—he is not fully developed. Just like the animals. Animals—they do not understand what is misery. They do not understand. They are satisfied. 🙏

Fasting		Festivals	
Nov 1	Ekadashi	Nov 5	Govardhana Puja
Nov 2	break fast		Go Puja
Nov 15	Ekadashi	Nov 8	Srila Prabhupada - Disappearance
Nov 16	break fast		Fasting till noon
Nov 30	Ekadashi	Nov 14	Srila Gaura Kishora Dasa Babaji - Disappearance
Dec 1	break fast		Fasting till noon
		Nov 19	Chaturmasya ends
			Karthika month ends
			Deepotsava ends (in ISKCON Bangalore)
		Nov 27	Srila Prabhupada Diksha Diwasa

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

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 Goswami, 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 falsely 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 pleurably 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 *avatara*, 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 *Bhagavad-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.”

This is Krishna’s eternal nature. ☪

Dying a Good Death

Spiritual Care for the Terminally Ill

A Krishna conscious nurse helps the dying with their material and spiritual needs.

by Sangita Devi Dasi

I am a Registered Nurse who specializes in hospice care for the terminally ill. The medical professionals I work with fully understand that their patients will never recover so they must relieve their patient's pain and make them as comfortable as possible. Because of this, they embrace the tenets of the hospice philosophy, which includes the understanding that every terminally ill person deserves to be treated with respect; that each patient must be allowed to decide the care he or she will accept or refuse; that every terminally ill person has the right to be cared for by sensitive, knowledgeable people who will attempt to understand their needs and will gain satisfaction in helping them face death; and that all patients should be allowed to die with dignity in the environment they choose.

Because facing one's imminent death or that of a loved one requires a tremendous amount of inner strength, spiritual support by the hospice staff is offered to those who wish to accept it. No matter what religion patients and family members adhere to, a hospice professional or trained volunteer will encourage them to seek shelter of their beliefs and traditions.

Most hospice patients I have cared for have expressed the importance of a strong spiritual faith. When someone is told that he or she has six months or less to live, spiritual issues have a way of surfacing and moving to the forefront. Many people I have cared for felt a sense of urgency to become more religious or spiritually enlightened before death. For each one, this meant something different, but I encouraged each of them to become more introspective and to pray to the "Supreme Powerful Lord" at a crucial time in their lives when they were realizing just how powerless they really were.

Encouraging my patients to speak about their spiritual beliefs has helped many of them to recognize inner strengths they never realized they had, and to confront their fears and spiritual pain, which can be intensely private. Often, a person does not wish to speak about such personal things. A patient may even vacillate between feeling spiritually strong one day and emotionally weak and vulnerable the next. But when my patients have trusted me enough to confide in me about their fear of dying and their spiritual uncertainties, I have appreciated their honesty, and our relationship has deepened.

Spiritual Encouragement

My being a devotee of Lord Krishna has often opened the door to conversations with my patients about reincarnation, the laws of karma, and the spiritual world. Yet I have never been adamant that they believe in something different from what has given them solace throughout their lives. I have simply encouraged them to use what precious time they have left to come closer to the Lord, the same Lord who resides within the heart of each of us. In this way, we developed a mutual respect for each other's values and faith.

Many times I have been asked to kneel at their bedside and pray with them—and for them. Occasionally, family members have asked me to join them as they read aloud from their family Bible. An elderly Jewish couple invited me to come to their home when their Rabbi would be present so we could all hold hands and pray together.

In each situation, I have explained to the families that just as expectant parents prepare for a good birth in anticipation of the arrival of their baby, there is such a thing as "dying a good death." One who is pain free physically, emotionally, and mentally, and is rightly situated spiritually, will have an auspicious, most glorious passing away.

One Atheist

Out of hundreds of patients I have cared for, only one admitted to being an atheist. This man refused visits from the hospice Pastor and proclaimed that there was "nothing after death."

"You're born, you live, and you die," he stated. "That's all there is to it."

Unfortunately, in spite of the attempts made by the hospice staff to comfort him, he lived out his final days angry, lonely, and depressed.

Sadly, this patient exemplified how living one's life bereft of spirituality will cause one increased pain and suffering. Similarly, facing one's death without a spiritual belief system will increase one's fear and deny one the hope of an eternal, joyous afterlife with the Lord.



Regarding this, Krishna states in the *Bhagavad-gita* (8.6), “Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, that state he will attain without fail.” In his purport, Srila Prabhupada writes,

The process of changing one’s nature at the critical moment of death is here explained.... How can one die in the proper state of mind? ... One’s thoughts during the course of one’s life accumulate to influence one’s thoughts at the moment of death, so this life creates one’s next life.... If one is transcendently absorbed in Krishna’s service, then his next body will be transcendental (spiritual), not material. Therefore, the chanting of Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare is the best process for successfully changing one’s state of being at the end of one’s life.

The chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra is the recommended means for self-realization in this present age, as taught by Lord Krishna Himself in His form as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This mantra is the essence of all Vedic wisdom and is the most sublime means of understanding your true self and your relationship with God. Chanting this mantra throughout one’s life will help one remember the Lord at the time of death, assuring one’s promotion to the spiritual world, the personal abode of the Lord.

Like the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, the hospice philosophy teaches that death is inevitable, that spiritual questions challenge those facing imminent death, and that spiritual support for the dying is laudable. Once again we turn to the *Bhagavad-gita* (2.27) for guidance. Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna, “One who has taken his birth is sure to die, and after death one is sure to take birth again.” Who among us will not be in need of spiritual support and care at the end of our life? 🌻

Thy word, Brahmarishi!

Chozhsimhapuram Thirukkadigai Kovil - Part 3

by Sampatkumara Ramanuja Dasan (Adv. Ashwin.S)

Thirukkadigai or Sholingapuram is located in Sholinghur, a village in Vellore district of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, and houses the amazing temple of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sriman Narayana.

The story continues from Part 2

Although Indradeva arrived after a long time, Maharaja Koushika did not even look at the food. To his surprise, Indradeva found that the mantras of the sage had even kept the food hot for him. He also grudgingly realised that the sage had powers greater than his, and that he could not stop him any further. Indradeva went to Swargaloka a disappointed man, as Maharaja Koushika felt an enormous power flow through him; he felt like he was finally controlling his inner self.

However, it was at this time that another problem came up. Maharaja Koushika had a very good friend – Raja Thrishanku, of the Ishvaku dynasty (the same dynasty as Lord Rama). Their friendship went back to the days when Koushika ruled a huge kingdom. After he had been defeated by Maharshi Vashista when he wanted Nandini, the divine cow, Koushika had given up his throne and gone away in a fit of anger. Unfortunately, at that time, a great famine struck Koushika's kingdom. Many of the citizens would have died if Raja Thrishanku had not looked after Maharaja Koushika's family and his kingdom. He made sure everyone had enough food to eat. Maharaja Koushika never forgot Raja Thrishanku's gesture and wanted to repay him by some means.

Raja Thrishanku was extremely good-looking and handsome. However, as he was learning from his teachers about the facts of life and death, he learnt that after death, every person had to shed his body, and his soul would alone go to heaven. This worried Thrishanku. "I will not be able to go to Swargaloka in my handsome body? That cannot be good! There has to be a way by which I can go to higher planets in this body. I will ask my teacher whether that would be possible."



The holy town of Ghatikachalam where Vishwamitra did tapasya

The very next day, Raja Thrishanku went to see Maharshi Vashista, his teacher. "Oh sage!" he bowed to Maharshi Vashista, "I have a request of you!" Maharshi Vashista nodded his head and asked Raja Thrishanku to continue. Raja Thrishanku hesitatingly continued, "Oh *brahmarishi*, you are the greatest of all rishis! Please help me! Is it possible to go to higher planets with the body that I have right now?" he asked. Maharshi Vashista shook his head, "No son! That is not possible. Your soul is who you are, not your body. Your body keeps changing with every birth, whereas your soul belongs to the Supreme Lord. The soul is eternal, and not your body. Do not have any attachments with physical things like your body or other material comforts."

Raja Thrishanku was, understandably, not satisfied, "Please, oh Sage! I'm sure that with your powers, it can be done!"

Maharshi Vashista lost his patience, "Enough! I have heard enough of your foolishness! When I say it cannot be done, it means it cannot be done, and that is that!" Maharshi Vashista scolded. Raja Thrishanku knew that no amount of convincing could change the sage's statement.

Raja Thrishanku left Maharshi Vashista's hermitage in sadness.

As he walked on, Raja Thrishanku came to another *ashrama*, where Maharshi Vashista's hundred sons lived. Thrishanku entered the *ashrama* and talked to the sage's sons, "I would like to know whether you would be interested in performing a *yaga* for me by which I could go to Swargaloka in this very body."

Raja Thrishanku should have known better. He should have known that Maharshi Vashista's sons would not go against their father. The request of Raja Thrishanku angered them. "You have come here to ask for our help after our father refused to help you! How could you even think we would help you? If we entertain you, we would be insulting our father."

Another son shouted at Thrishanku, "You dare come to us! For this, I curse you! You are very proud of your body, are you not? You will not have a good-looking body henceforth!" Raja Thrishanku opened his mouth to stop the curse, but the son continued, "You will look ugly and deformed, and nobody will even want to look at you!" The

curse was released. Vashista trembled. He felt his body change. He watched the sons of Raja Thrishanku jeer at him, looking at his face. Raja Thrishanku saw his own men look at him and turn their faces away. He hid his face and ran to the river nearby. Trembling and shivering, he looked inside the water and what he saw appalled him. In the reflection was a hideous looking man! The curse of Maharshi Vashista's son had deprived him of the one thing he was really proud about. Raja Thrishanku wailed in frustration as he thumped his hands on the rocks, but no amount of wailing could bring back what he had lost.

Raja Thrishanku felt totally alone and lost. Stumbling and fumbling, he walked in the dense forests. He totally abhorred looking at all people and avoided everyone, at all cost! As he walked on and on, he reached the *ashrama* of Maharaja Koushika.

As Maharaja Koushika was about to begin his morning prayers, he saw a hideous man come and look at him. Although he recognised Thrishanku, Maharaja Koushika never saw any of the ugliness. The only thing he did see, was the kind-hearted man who



Vishwamitra Maharshi

had looked after his family and kingdom when he had left them. Maharaja Koushika ran forward and embraced Raja Thrishanku. Thrishanku felt a little uneasy as he had not been among people for a long time. However, Maharaja Koushika's affection opened him up. Koushika made sure that Thrishanku ate well and rested well. Only after this did he ask why Raja Thrishanku had come there.

Raja Thrishanku spoke in broken words, "You know how handsome I was." Maharaja Koushika nodded his head and remained silent. "Maharshi Vashista and his sons took all that away from me. And why?" he said angrily, "Because I wanted to go to heaven in this very body!" Raja Thrishanku spoke with blood shot eyes, "I think it can be done, but those people refused to even listen to me! Vashista's sons even cursed me and took away my good looks." Thrishanku was almost reduced to tears as he spoke in trembling tones.

Maharaja Koushika thought about what the king told him and spoke quietly, "I can make sure that I send you to heaven in your own form, Raja Thrishanku." Thrishanku looked at Koushika with hope. However Koushika held up his hand, "Listen to me. I can also change you back to your previous good looking form, but if I do that, I would lose quite a lot of my penance energy. I doubt whether I would be able to send you to Swargaloka with the remaining energy. What do you want me to do?" Maharaja Koushika asked Raja Thrishanku.

Raja Thrishanku remembered the jeering faces of Sage Vashista's sons. He knew how they would feel when he went up to Swargaloka in his own form. He looked at Maharaja Koushika. "Send me to Swargaloka in the same form that I am in right now." Maharaja Koushika patted his friend. "Don't worry, my friend! I will make all arrangements for your *yaga*. Take rest and take good care of yourself." Saying this, Maharaja Koushika walked away.

Maharaja Koushika was motivated to perform the *yaga* for another reason, besides his dear friend's desire, which he did not reveal to Raja Thrishanku. Maharshi Vashista had told Thrishanku that nobody could be sent to Swargaloka in their current body. To do something that even the great Maharshi Vashista could not do, would be a crowning achievement for Koushika, who gleefully set about making preparations for the *yaga*.

Koushika invited sages from all over the country to attend the *yaga*. All of them attended the *yaga*, fearing the sage's curse. Predictably, the only exceptions were Maharshi Vashista and his hundred sons. While Vashista had politely refused to attend the *yaga*, his sons sent back an insulting message to Maharaja Koushika, telling him that they would not attend. When Koushika received their reply, he lost control of himself and cursed the sons of Maharshi Vashista; however that is another story.

Maharaja Koushika began the *yaga* with great pomp and show. He chanted the mantras and used his powers and made sure Raja Thrishanku rose up to Swargaloka in his own form. Thrishanku and everyone else were amazed to find that he was actually rising to Swargaloka in his own form! Raja Thrishanku was about to enter Swargaloka in his form, when Indradeva, the Lord of the Swargaloka, came and saw an impossible thing. A man was coming inside his kingdom in his own form! Indradeva was shocked at such a thing that had never ever happened! With utter amazement, the lord of Swargaloka looked at Raja Thrishanku. He looked down at the earth and saw Maharaja Koushika's *yaga* and understood that Raja Thrishanku was being sent up by Koushika's powers of penance. Indradeva already knew that it was impossible to fight Maharaja Koushika and defeat him, but he could, however, deal with Raja Thrishanku. Once Raja Thrishanku came to Swargaloka, he was in Indradeva's realm. Indradeva caught hold of Raja Thrishanku's neck and angrily told him, "You silly man! You think you can break the law of nature! No man can ever come up to the Swargaloka in their own form. Why should I make any exception of you? Take your hideous form and get out of here." Indradeva threw Raja Thrishanku down with all the force he had. Raja Thrishanku was unable to protect himself and fell down, plunging straight back to earth. "Maharaja Koushika! Help me!" he screamed, as he kept falling, face down.

Maharaja Koushika sensed that something had gone wrong. With only a few minutes to protect Raja Thrishanku, Koushika uttered a mantra by which he stopped the falling of Raja Thrishanku.

Maharaja Koushika yelled at Indradeva angrily, "Indradeva, you are foolish and arrogant! You think you can match wits with me and win! Never! You are arrogant, as you are the ruler of Swargaloka and think that you can do anything. But I have the power of *tapasya*! Now watch what I can do..."

Holding Raja Thrishanku suspended midair, Maharaja Koushika, using the remaining powers of his meditation, created his own world, like a Swargaloka, where Raja Thrishanku could go and reside.

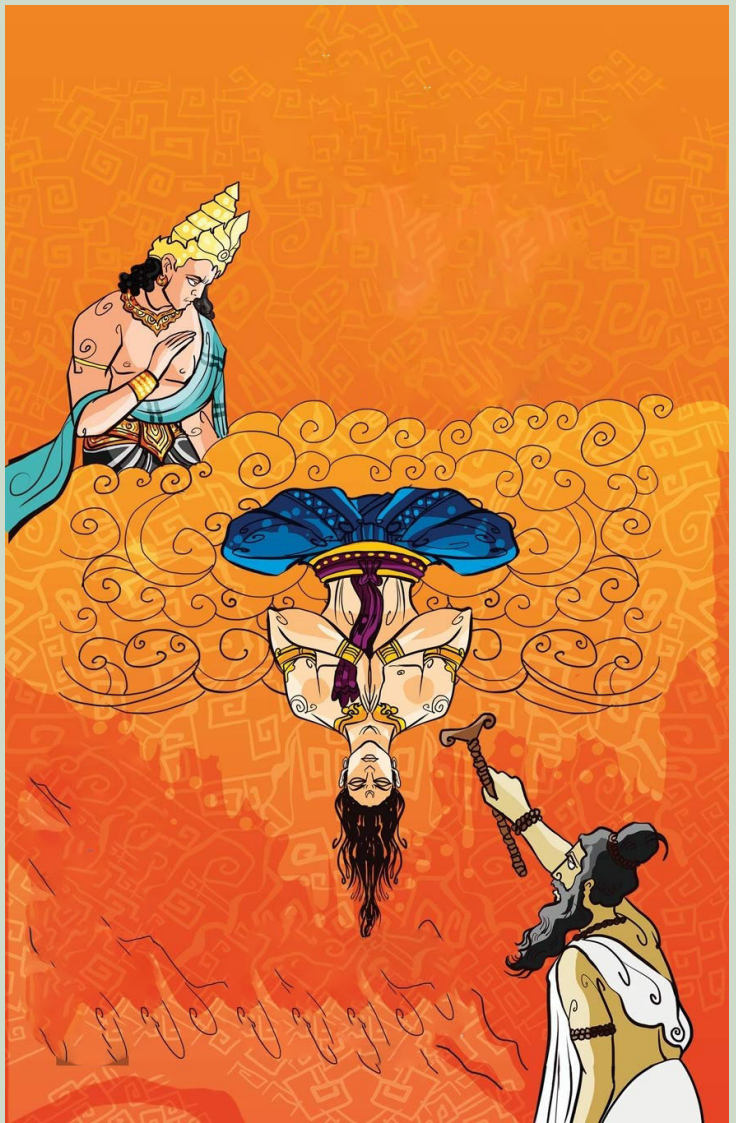
Now Indradeva was scared. Maharaja Koushika had surpassed him! Koushika was now actually displaying the powers of Brahma, the creator, which were much greater than Indradeva's own power. Maharaja Koushika actually created a parallel universe, with another Indradeva. Indradeva shivered and wondered what to do. Along with Lord Brahma, he went to meet Koushika, "Maharaja Koushika! Your powers are great! You have shown the control you have over the Brahman, but you are changing the laws of nature...That should not be done." But Maharaja Koushika

was past caring. He continued creating another heaven for Raja Thrishanku to live in. Brahma and Indradeva desperately talked with Maharaja Koushika asking him to drop the idea and keep the balance of nature.

Finally, after a lot of requesting, Maharaja Koushika accepted. But he told Indradeva and Brahma, “The world I have created for Raja Thrishanku will remain for him and he can stay there only - that will be his heaven. The only concession I can give Indradeva, is that Raja Thrishanku will rule only his own heaven and will not be able to rule outside of it, neither on Earth nor anywhere else.”

A disgruntled Indradeva said, “The only way to make sure that he rules only within his sphere, is to keep him upside down in the same form in which he was suspended by you.”

Maharaja Koushika realised that it was the only way to keep the balance of nature, and reluctantly agreed to the condition. Thus Koushika was able to create an alternate universe for his friend Raja Thrishanku. However, after Maharaja Koushika had created the alternate universe for Raja Thrishanku, he found that he had again depleted all his powers. But he had no regrets this time. He set about continuing his meditation and penance once again. Thus he regained much of his powers and Lord Brahma bestowed him with the title of ‘Rajarishi.’



The depiction of Thrishanku swarga episode

But this did not satisfy Maharaja Koushika. He again started his meditation and this time Lord Brahma came and conferred him the title of ‘Maharishi.’ However, Maharaja Koushika was still not satisfied. He performed some more meditation and penance and then went to the *ashrama* of Maharshi Vashista.

Maharshi Vashista looked at Maharaja Koushika and said, “Maharaja Koushika! I do not think you are great because of your powers. You are nothing more than a scoundrel who wanted to steal my Nandini!”

Maharaja Koushika felt a change come over him when he heard these words. He did not even react, did not get angry. He was thinking about his silly little battle for Nandini. It all seemed so irrelevant now. He laughed out loud; Maharaja Koushika at last felt completely in control of himself.

Maharshi Vashista now looked at Maharaja Koushika with respect, “Now you are totally in control of yourself, Maharaja Koushika! You are a *brahmarishi*, someone I would be proud to call my friend!”

Maharaja Koushika smiled. He knew that he and Maharshi Vashista had now become the best of friends. It was at this time that Lord Brahma appeared there. “Maharaja Koushika, you have been a good friend and you have helped all the people who have come to you. For this, henceforth you will be known as ‘Vishwamitra’ – the friend of the universe. You are Brahmarishi Vishwamitra.”

Brahmarishi Vishwamitra smiled as he felt waves of peace pass through him.

It was in this divine place of Sholingur that Maharaja Koushika was bestowed with *brahmarishi* title and was named as Vishwamitra. 🌸

(To be continued)

Dasara 2021



Sri Sri Krishna Balarama in Rama Lakshmana *alankara* (above) and *homa* (below)



Peaceful Kirtan March held at ISKCON-Bangalore

Oct 23, 2021: In the past few weeks, the Hindu community has come under attack in Bangladesh. Temples of ISKCON and other organisations were vandalised, Deities were smashed, Puja *pandals* of Durga Devi were burnt. The fanatic mob also killed many people during their attacks, including Prantha Chandra Das and Jatan Chandra Saha of ISKCON in Noakhali. Many houses and business establishments of Hindus were systematically targeted and burnt down. Such attacks on the Hindus and other minority groups in Bangladesh have been going on for decades. This needs to stop.



These targeted attacks on peaceful, law-abiding communities have shaken the collective consciousness of humanity. As a means to demand protection for these vulnerable people, the ISKCON movement has organised peaceful protests across the globe. The Global Kirtan March is a worldwide peaceful demonstration of pain and grief of the global Hindu community, which stands in solidarity with the Hindus of Bangladesh. This protest is not against any religious community or the state of Bangladesh. It is for demanding the safety of all the minorities of the country.

ISKCON Bangalore had also organised a peaceful *kirtan* march on the Hare Krishna Hill to express solidarity with the persecuted minorities of Bangladesh. The missionaries of the temple, ISKCON congregation members and other conscientious citizens participated in the event.

Sri Madhu Pandit Dasa, President, ISKCON Bangalore, said: We express our pain and anguish on the unprovoked attacks on the ISKCON devotees, Hindus, and other minorities in Bangladesh. We unitedly stand in support and solidarity with them and pray for their safety and well-being. We urge the Government of Bangladesh to immediately ensure the protection of the affected minorities and take steps to prevent such incidents in the future. We also request the Government of India to work with our neighbouring countries and protect the rights of minorities in the region.





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