

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 29

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we were meditating on the instructions given by Gokarna to his father Atmadeva in shloka 80 of the 4th chapter of Uttarakhanda of Padma purana. So far we saw the below 2 instructions.

1. *Dharmaṁ bhajasva satataṁ*- Always remember Krishna.
2. *Tyaja loka-dharmān sevasva* - Give up useless labour.
3. Be eager to take association of sadhus.
4. Give up thirst for sense pleasures.

Now let us see further.

5. **Stop finding faults and appreciate good qualities in others:** This is a very important quality which we need to cautiously develop, if we are really concerned about progressing in bhakti. Our innate tendency is to find fault in others and we are so miserly in appreciating any good thing done. We take good things for granted, but cannot tolerate even a small mistake. But somehow when it comes to our ourselves, we conveniently relax this rule. We expect appreciation and credit even for insignificant tasks and conveniently forgive ourselves for our grave mistakes.

Our beloved spiritual master HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj says, "**You keep seeing good in others, then you become good. You keep seeing bad in others, then you also become bad**". This is 100% true statement and many times we have practically experienced how we become victims of the same fault, which we are pointing in others. Maharaj used to give the famous example of Ravana, not being able to take up the form of Rama, to trick Sita. Because as soon as he desires to take the form of Lord Rama, through mystic powers, he has to meditate on Lord Rama and as a result, Sita starts appearing like a mother to him as Lord Rama had this quality of considering other's wife as His mother.

His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada in his purport to Adi lila verse 8.62 in Caitanya Caritamrta says, "*Every human being has both good qualities and faults. Therefore it is said, saj-janaa gunam icchanti dosham icchanti paamaraah: everyone has a combination of faults and glories. **But a Vaishnava, a sober man, accepts only a man's glories and not his faults, for flies seek sores whereas honeybees seek honey.** Haridasa Pandita never found fault with a Vaishnava but considered only his good qualities.*" Faultfinding is just a waste of time and energy. By doing that neither are we going to progress in bhakti, nor are we helping the people around us. Whereas if we look into our own mistakes and correct ourselves, and genuinely appreciate even the minute qualities of others, then we will also be light at heart and will be able to encourage others also to take to devotional service.

So Gokarna advises his father not to meditate on the bad qualities of his son Dhundukari or any one else. But to just meditate and appreciate even minute good quality present in others. Krishna willing we shall continue to hear further instructions of Gokarna in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

The All Effulgent Narasimha

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

Today is the auspicious day of Narasimha Jayanti. One great quality Lord Narasimha exhibited in His lila is His unlimited effulgence. Hiranyakashipu who gained an effulgent body by his penance to Lord Brahma and who was so powerful looked like an insect in front of Lord Narasimha's effulgence as stated in the below sloka from the Bhagavata purana.

SB 7.8.24

*alakṣito 'gnau patitaḥ pataṅgamo
yathā nṛsimhaujasi so 'suras tadā
na tad vicitraṁ khalu sattva-dhāmani
sva-tejasā yo nu purāpibat tamaḥ*

Just as a small insect falls forcefully into a fire and the insignificant creature becomes invisible, when Hiranyakashipu attacked the Lord, who was full of effulgence, Hiranyakashipu became invisible. This is not at all astonishing, for the Lord is always situated in pure goodness. Formerly, during creation, He entered the dark universe and illuminated it by His spiritual effulgence.

There are two kinds of darkness one is the external darkness which is created by absence of light and this darkness disables us from seeing the objects in this world. The other is darkness in our heart which is caused by ignorance. The second kind of darkness is very dangerous because it perpetuates the cycle of birth and death. By the appearance of Lord Narasimha both kinds of darkness were destroyed. Lord Narasimha's effulgence lighted up the whole world and made everything bright. And it also destroyed the darkness in hearts of everyone, whose bhakti was disturbed by Hiranyakashipu.

Because of this quality, Lord Narasimha is glorified as 'jwalantam' in the Narasimha Purva Tapaniya Upanishad as follows.

*yasmād sva mahimnā sarvān lokān sarvān devān
sarvānātmanā sarvāni bhūtāni sva tejasā jvalati jvālayati
jvālyate jvālayate tasmād ucyate jwalantam iti*

Because of His own glory and His self prakāśa (svayam jyoti), He makes all worlds, devās, all jivās, all bhūtās shine and be brilliant. He makes the worlds and makes them multiply. He shines, and He makes everything shine. He is brilliance and makes everything brilliant. Hence He is called by the name 'jwalantam'.

Srila Prabhupada explains this point in the commentary as follows. "This material world is full of darkness and ignorance of spiritual life, but by bhakti-yoga this ignorance is dissipated. The Lord appeared because of the bhakti-yoga exhibited by Prahlada Maharaja, and as soon as the Lord appeared, the influence of Hiranyakashipu's passion and ignorance was vanquished as the Lord's quality of pure goodness, or the Brahman effulgence, became prominent. In that prominent effulgence, Hiranyakashipu became invisible, or his influence became insignificant."

Today is also the auspicious day when our beloved Gurudev, HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj took sannyasa to eradicate the darkness in the hearts of fallen and pseudo devotees like me. Even though we may not exhibit the bhakti yoga which was possible for Prahlada Maharaj, but by making sincere attempt to follow the instructions of our Guru

Maharaj, Lord Narasimha will be pleased and appear within our hearts eradicating the darkness born of ignorance. Srila Prabhupada concludes the commentary of the above Bhagavatam verse with a powerful statement, "*The important point is that as long as we are in the material modes of nature, we are always in darkness. This darkness cannot be dissipated without the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is invoked by the practice of bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga creates a transcendental situation with no tinges of material contamination.*"

Let us all pray to Bhagavan Narasimha on this special day to appear in our hearts and revive our love for Him destroying the darkness of ignorance, by blessing us with bhakti yoga.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Narahari Krishna das
Chennai.

Do not Neglect -Part 4

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "**Do not Neglect**" wherein we are discussing on the consequences of neglecting Krishna and His pure devotees, as detailed in the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed by the Sanat kumaras in 3rd Canto 16th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. In the previous offerings we saw that if we ignore Krishna or His pure devotees,

1. We offend others when we fail to see Krishna in them.
2. Suffering the reactions of the offence is inevitable, even if one is in Vaikuntha.

In this offering we shall see how Lord reciprocates when devotee repents for the mistakes.

3. **Lord's reciprocation:** The Lord protects the devotees even though they commit mistakes by chance. In the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya, we can see how wonderful is His protection.

a. **Taking responsibility:** Lord takes responsibility as a master and asks forgiveness from Sanat kumaras. Srimad Bhagavatam 3.16.4 Lord says to them

*tad vaḥ prasādayāmy adya brahma daivaṁ paraṁ hi me
tad dhīty ātma-kṛtaṁ manye yat sva-pumbhir asat-kṛtāḥ*

To Me, the brahmana is the highest and most beloved personality. The disrespect shown by My attendants has actually been displayed by Me because the doormen are My servitors. I take this to be an offense by Myself; therefore I seek your forgiveness for the incident that has arisen.

In this word *prasādayāmy* meaning, "**I am seeking your forgiveness**", and *ātma-kṛtaṁ*, meaning, "**done by Me**", is really worth meditating. He is readily taking the offence on Himself. How wonderful is the Lord! Normally when we commit some mistake, our ego stops us from asking forgiveness. Even if we are at fault, we try to blame others or the circumstances. We try our best to project that we are victims of time and circumstances and that we are not at fault. And if someone subordinate to us commit mistakes, then we simply chastise or blame them for the mistake. But herein Krishna by His own example is teaching us how we should behave, when our dependents or sub-ordinates make mistakes. Lord very nicely says in Srimad Bhagavatam verse 3.16.5, "**A wrong act committed by a servant leads people in general to blame his master, just as a spot of white leprosy on any part of the body pollutes all of the skin.**"

As soon as we repent for mistakes, we can experience Krishna's loving reciprocation. In case of Jaya and Vijaya, He personally appeared before them. Lord's act of seeking forgiveness had a transcendental effect on Sanat kumaras as well. It made them introspect on their own actions and repent for that as well.

Krishna willing we shall continue further on this topic in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sajjana Priya Krishna das

Abu Dhabi.

Do not Neglect -Part 5

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "Do not Neglect" wherein we are discussing on the consequences of neglecting Krishna and His pure devotees, as detailed in the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed by the Sanat kumaras in 3rd Canto 16th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. In the previous offering we were meditating on the wonderful ways in which Lord reciprocates to His devotees, when they genuinely repent for their mistakes. Now let us see further.

b) Reassurance to servitors: Lord knew the repentant hearts of His door-keepers. Many a times, knowingly or unknowingly we commit mistakes. After some time, we realise and repent for it. That repentance should also lead to change in our behaviour, else we become morose. How to purify ourselves so that the impurities do not touch us again? In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 3.16.6 Lord very mercifully shares the best way of purification.

*yasyāmṛtāmala-yaśaḥ-śravaṇāvagāhaḥ
sadyaḥ punāti jagad āśvapacād vikuṅṭhaḥ
so 'haṁ bhavadbhya upalabdha-sutīrtha-kīrtiś
chindyām sva-bāhum api vaḥ pratikūla-vṛttim*

Anyone in the entire world, even down to the candala, who lives by cooking and eating the flesh of the dog, is immediately purified if he takes bath in hearing through the ear the glorification of My name, fame, etc. Now you have realized Me without doubt; therefore I will not hesitate to lop off My own arm if its conduct is found hostile to you.

Lord is reassuring his servitors Jaya and Vijaya, not to worry about the curse, and that they can be immediately purified by the process of hearing the glorification of His name and fame. In his wonderful purport to the above verse His Divine Grace mentions, "Anyone who takes to Krishna consciousness is understood to be fully purified. **He is at least engaged in the process of purification, and if he sticks to the principle of Krishna consciousness he will very soon be fully purified. The conclusion is that if one takes to Krishna consciousness with all seriousness, he is to be understood as already purified, and Krishna is ready to give him protection by all means.** The Lord assures herein that He is ready to give protection to His devotee even if there is need to cut off part of His own body."

Krishna willing we shall continue further on this topic in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sajjana Priya Krishna das

Abu Dhabi.

Do not Neglect -Part 6

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "**Do not Neglect**" wherein we are discussing on the consequences of neglecting Krishna and His pure devotees, as detailed in the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed by the Sanat kumaras in 3rd Canto 16th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. In the previous offering we were meditating on the wonderful ways in which Lord reciprocates to His devotees, when they genuinely repent for their mistakes.

- a. Lord takes responsibility for the offence committed by sub-ordinates.
- b. Lord reassures the servitors about the way to purify themselves.

Now let us see further.

c. **Lord's love for brahmanas:** In verses 8 through 11 of Canto 3 Chapter 16 of Srimad Bhagavatam, The Lord explains how He has high regards for the brahmanas and cows. Lord is pleased when the brahmanas are pleased. On the other hand He cannot tolerate the offence done against them. He affirms that anyone who commits any offence against them will surely reap the reactions for the same. In verse 3.16.10 He says,

*ye me tanūr dvija-varān duhatīr madīyā
bhūtāny alabdha-śaraṇāni ca bheda-buddhyā
drakṣyanty agha-kṣata-dṛśo hy ahi-manyavas tān
gṛdhrā ruṣā mama kuṣanty adhidaṇḍa-netuḥ*

The brahmanas, the cows and the defenseless creatures are My own body. Those whose faculty of judgment has been impaired by their own sin look upon these as distinct from Me. They are just like furious serpents, and they are angrily torn apart by the bills of the vulture-like messengers of Yamaraja, the superintendent of sinful persons.

Lord considers the cows and brahmanas as His own body and so when we offend a Vaishnava, it is like offending the Lord directly. It is our duty to protect the cows and brahmanas and the Lord is not pleased when we neglect them. In his wonderful purport to the above verse Srila Prabhupada says, "**Those who are helpless must be taken care of by their respective guardians, otherwise the guardians will be subjected to the punishment of Yamaraja**, who is appointed by the Lord to supervise the activities of sinful living creatures. The assistants, or messengers, of Yamaraja are likened here to vultures, and those who do not execute their respective duties in protecting their wards are compared to serpents. Vultures deal very seriously with serpents, and similarly the messengers will deal very seriously with neglectful guardians."

So we should not be neglectful in our dealings with cows and brahmanas. Krishna willing we shall continue further on this topic in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sajjana Priya Krishna das

Abu Dhabi.

Do not Neglect -Part 7

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "**Do not Neglect**" wherein we are discussing on the consequences of neglecting Krishna and His pure devotees, as detailed in the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed by the Sanat kumaras in 3rd Canto 16th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. In the previous offering we were meditating on the wonderful ways in which Lord reciprocates to His devotees, when they genuinely repent for their mistakes.

- a. Lord takes responsibility for the offence committed by sub-ordinates.
- b. Lord reassures the servitors about the way to purify themselves.
- c. Lord's love for brahmanas.

Now let us see further.

- d. **Way to react when offended/cursed by brahmanas:** In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 3.16.11 Lord says,

*ye brāhmaṇān mayi dhiyā kṣipato 'rcayantas
tuṣyad-dhṛdaḥ smita-sudhokṣita-padma-vaktrāḥ
vāṅyānurāga-kalayātmajavad grṇantaḥ
sambodhayanty aham ivāham upāhṛtas taiḥ*

On the other hand, they captivate My heart who are gladdened in heart and who, their lotus faces enlightened by nectarean smiles, respect the brahmanas, even though the brahmanas utter harsh words. They look upon the brahmanas as My own Self and pacify them by praising them in loving words, even as a son would appease an angry father or as I am pacifying you.

In his wonderful purport to the above verse His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada says, "*The sons of Kuvera, when cursed by the great sage Narada, did not seek revenge in the same harsh way, but submitted. Here also, when Jaya and Vijaya were cursed by the four Kumaras, they did not become harsh towards them; rather, they submitted. That should be the way of treating brahmanas and Vaishnavas. One may sometimes be faced with a grievous situation created by a brahmana, but instead of meeting him with a similar mood, one should try to pacify him with a smiling face and mild treatment.*"

Herein we see how although Lord was upset with Jaya-Vijaya for not receiving the Sanat kumaras properly, He also recognised their good quality of not involving in counter-cursing them. We had practically seen in our life, that when one devotee made a mistake, another devotee who was not at all fault, took the responsibility and accepted the mistake. I could realise, how nicely the devotee accepting the mistake, has assimilated Srimad Bhagavatam. Lord would have definitely been pleased with such souls who don't involve in cursing and counter-cursing, but simply offer respect to all Vaishnavas.

Krishna willing we shall continue further on this topic in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sajjana Priya Krishna das

Abu Dhabi.

Do not Neglect -Part 8

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in conclusion of the previous offering titled, "**Do not Neglect**" wherein we are discussing on the consequences of neglecting Krishna and His pure devotees, as detailed in the pastime of Jaya and Vijaya being cursed by the Sanat kumaras in 3rd Canto 16th Chapter of Srimad Bhagavatam. In the previous offering we were meditating on the wonderful ways in which Lord reciprocates to His devotees, when they genuinely repent for their mistakes.

- a. Lord takes responsibility for the offence committed by subordinates.
- b. Lord reassures the servitors about the way to purify themselves.
- c. Lord's love for brahmanas.
- d. Way to react when offended/cursed by brahmanas.

Now let us see further.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 3.16.12 Lord says,

*tan me sva-bhartur avasāyam alakṣamāṇau
yuṣmad-vyatikrama-gatiṁ pratipadya sadyaḥ
bhūyo mamāntikam itāṁ tad anugraho me
yat kalpatām acirato bhṛtaylor vivāsaḥ*

These servants of Mine have transgressed against you, not knowing the mind of their master. I shall therefore deem it a favor done to Me if you order that, although reaping the fruit of their transgression, they may return to My presence soon and the time of their exile from My abode may expire before long.

In this verse the last line is very important to ponder where the Lord is very anxious to get back His servitor in His service. He does not want Jaya and Vijaya to be separated from Him for a long time. Just like how parents are always eager to see their children back home, Lord being Supreme Father is always anxious and eager to have us back home. Srila Prabhupada in his wonderful purport to this verse. "*This incident, therefore, proves that those who have once entered a Vaikuntha planet can never fall down. The case of Jaya and Vijaya is not a fall down; it is just an accident. The Lord is always anxious to get such devotees back again to the Vaikuntha planets as soon as possible. The Lord is so kind to His devotees that He took all the responsibility for the doormen's offense and requested the sages to give them facilities to return to Vaikuntha as soon as possible.*"

Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita verse 9.29, "*samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ*" - "**I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all.**" In this pastime we see how Lord showed His love and care both for the Sanat kumaras as well as the door-keepers Jaya and Vijaya. And by His transcendental nature He could change the minds of all. Jaya and Vijaya repented for their mistake and Sanat kumaras also later regretted for cursing the door-keepers who were engaged in Lord's service. Such is the power of His Lord's transcendental dealings.

How wonderful is the Lord! Not realising His glories, we keep neglecting Lord and His devotees, instead of taking shelter of the infallible Lord. I therefore pray to all the Vaishnavas to forgive the offences which I have committed knowingly or unknowingly.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sajjana Priya Krishna das

Abu Dhabi.

Yad Bibheti Svayam Bhayam

Hare Krishna Matajis and Prabhujis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.1.14, the sages at Naimisaranya say,

*āpannaḥ sarṁsṛtiṁ ghorāṁ yan-nāma vivaśo gr̥ṇan
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta yad bibheti svayam bhayam*

Living beings who are entangled in the complicated meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Krishna, which is feared by fear personified.

In the purport Srila Prabhupada ji explains that,

- 1) Lord Krishna is all powerful, He is the cause of all causes and is the supreme controller of everything.
- 2) Everything is related to Him, and everything has its identity in Him.
- 3) The name of Krishna is feared even by fear personified.
- 4) Krishna is as powerful as Lord Krishna Himself. There is no difference at all.
- 5) Anyone, therefore, can take advantage of the holy names of Lord Sri Krishna even in the midst of the greatest dangers.

Whenever I am in great anxiety and am very worried or perplexed, chanting the Mahamantra makes me relaxed. Indeed the word mantra - is true to its meaning. '*mann*' means mind and '*tra*' means releases. So this Mahamantra, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, releases our mind from the anxieties and ultimately from the clutches of birth and death. Speaking on the verse in a lecture spoken in Singapore, our beloved spiritual master HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj ji has nicely made the following points.

- 1) By nature we are completely spiritual and even then, we don't know really how we are really helplessly entangled. Don't have any other way to get out of it. Our situation is very complicated, "Why we are punished in this way?" Saints and sages through out ages just try explain to that "*we are entangled into this complicated meshes*". (understanding and realizing this is important)
- 2) On top of it, He has forced upon us the behavior patterns of millions of combinations of three modes of material nature. Because of these combinations we are forced to accept the bodies. The body is to the extent that we are attracted to that particular mode, that is the body. Frankly speaking, in this life we are preparing to order our next body. This is how its hurdle.
- 3) *yad bhibheti svayam bhayam* - Fear personified is also afraid of Krishna and His names. who are we, so we are very scared to come to Him. But we are so unfortunate that we don't realise the value of Holy Name and chant our rounds mechanically, without any feeling. When we take the name of Lord our sleeping spiritual nature is awakened. When we helplessly chant His names, we get liberated.
- 4) Simplify our lifestyle - we should not complicate anything. Even clothes should be simple. Wear simple dhoti.
- 5) Have happy retirement - By not putting our time in devotional service and developing the taste for it when we are young, we are risking our retirement life. Many retirees have nothing much to do and they soon either spend the time worrying and lamenting or giving up their life as they have nothing to do.

6) Don't waste time: Study and realize the danger we are in. We don't have time, the time is slipping out. Years and years and years are going in deep sleep. Waking sleep is there and again dreaming sleep is there, again the deep sleep is there. There are so many things we are entangled into it. I don't know whether we get to realize these things. Unless you realize these verses, unless you very peacefully go through these things, we cannot have even a dint of idea that we are in a horrible situation.

I pray unto the lotus feet of the Gurudeva that I at least realize the gravity of the complicated material situation we are in and seriously take to attentive chanting.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Manohar Krishna das

Minneapolis.

Real Counsel - Part 1

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All Glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

Recently in the news we saw that a Third year Engineering student from IIT Mumbai committed suicide on account of mental pressure and stress. This is not an isolated case. The incidence of teenage suicide is on the rise. Inability to tackle emotional issues, love affairs, substance abuse, social behaviour linked trauma are all cited to be the reasons behind these suicides. Now the educational institutions have got counselors appointed to counsel the children, but the effectiveness of this is again questionable. The thing to be blamed is the lack of spiritual education as part of the syllabus and we are paying the heavy price of it.

As Srila Prabhupada very rightly says, the schools and colleges are slaughter houses and they are only producing royal edition of animals in the absence of spiritual education. This is a matter of serious concern for all of us. Children are pushed to succeed and those children, who somehow manage to see the so called material success and the euphoria attached to it, are never able to handle even a small reversal in their lives which pushes them to the end. This is because we are given the idea that we are the independent controllers of everything.

To have a correct understanding, we should try to study and reflect upon the exemplary verses in Srimad Bhagavatam spoken by Vrtrasura who was on the verge of defeat. During the fight between Indra and Vrtrasura, Indra using his thunderbolt, which was many times more powerful than the trident of vrtrasura, broke it into pieces and cut off one of Vrtrasura's arms. Nevertheless, Vrtrasura used his remaining arm to strike Indra with an iron mace, making the thunderbolt fall from Indra's hand. Indra, being very ashamed of this, did not pick up the thunderbolt from the ground, but Vrtrasura encouraged King Indra to pick it up and fight telling him that it was not the time to lament his fate. Then Vrtrasura in such a situation facing defeat speaks beautiful verses from 6.12 7- 17. These 11 verses are real gems which are worth studying and contemplating for all of us and pass on to the younger generation. This is the real counseling we can give to the children.

Firstly he speaks in SB 6.12.7:

*yuyutsatām kutracid ātatāyinām
jayaḥ sadaikatra na vai parātmanām
vinaikam utpatti-laya-sthitīśvaram
sarvajñam ādyam puruṣam sanātanam*

Vrtrasura continued: **O Indra, no one is guaranteed of being always victorious but the original enjoyer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan. He is the cause of creation, maintenance and annihilation, and He knows everything. Being dependent and being obliged to accept material bodies, belligerent subordinates are sometimes victorious and sometimes defeated.**

We will see further insights into this beautiful realization of Vrtrasura in the subsequent offering Krishna willing.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Real Counsel - Part 2

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in conclusion of the previous offering titled, "Real Counsel" wherein we were seeing how we can get real counsel from the pastime of Vrtrasura in Srimad Bhagavatam. While on the verge of losing the battle with Lord Indra, Vrtrasura says in Srimad Bhagavatam verse 6.12.7,

*yuyutsatām kutracid ātatāyinām
jayaḥ sadaikatra na vai parātmanām
vinaikam utpatti-laya-sthitīśvaram
sarvajñam ādyam puruṣam sanātanam*

Vrtrasura continued: **O Indra, no one is guaranteed of being always victorious but the original enjoyer, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan. He is the cause of creation, maintenance and annihilation, and He knows everything. Being dependent and being obliged to accept material bodies, belligerent subordinates are sometimes victorious and sometimes defeated.**

This is the fact of life that we are not guaranteed of our victory or success at all times. Srila Prabhupada makes it very very clear in his purport where he says "**Victory is always with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As for the subordinate living entities, they fight under the arrangement of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Victory or defeat is not actually theirs; it is an arrangement by the Lord through the agency of material nature.** Pride in victory, or moroseness in defeat, is useless. One should fully depend on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is responsible for the victory and defeat of all living entities. The Lord advises, *niyatam kuru karma tvam karma jyaayo hy akarmanah*: 'Perform your prescribed duty, for action is better than inaction.' The living entity is ordered to act according to his position. Victory or defeat depends on the Supreme Lord. *Karmany evaadhikaaras te maa phaleshu kadaacana*: "You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of actions." **One must act sincerely, according to his position. Victory or defeat depends on the Lord.**"

Then Vrtrasura proceeds to describe how much we are dependent on the Lord for each and everything and he concludes by saying that, "Since everything is dependent on the supreme will of the Personality of Godhead, one should be equipoised in fame and defamation, victory and defeat, life and death. In their effects, represented as happiness and distress, one should maintain oneself in equilibrium, without anxiety."

It is important to realize that this bhaashan is not given by the person who is winning, but one who was on the verge of defeat. He knew that he was going to be defeated by Indra, and he voluntarily accepted that, but since he was supposed to be Indra's enemy, he tried his best to kill Indra. Thus he performed his duty. One should perform his duty under all circumstances, even though one may know what the result will be. King Indra, the greatest of the demigods, was astonished to hear the instructions of Vrtrasura, who was supposed to be a demon. He was struck with wonder that a demon could speak so intelligently. Then Indra glorifies the discrimination and endurance in devotional service of Vrtrasura even though he was in a dangerous situation.

Thus we have so many things to learn from Vrtrasura. When we are only seeing success somehow or the other in our early lives or we are toppers in our schools and colleges, or when we are never used to taking "No!" for an answer being always provided by our doting parents, we fall into some kind of illusion and we expect to remain the toppers everywhere in life. But when the reality strikes, we are not able to face it. I am one of those egoistic, sensitive and doted person and I pray that I study these verses and realize them by the mercy of our spiritual master and understand my most subordinate position.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

The Material Nature - Part 4

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous topic "The Material Nature". In the previous offering we saw the below points,

- 1) The material world is an optional realm of existence for the living entities (*jivas*).
- 2) Purpose of creation of the material world.

We ended off asking how material nature can help us becoming detached from material desires. In order to fully understand this, we need to bring our view of material nature to a personal level. The Brahma-samhita nicely explains that material nature is in fact a personal devotee of Krishna by the name Durga or Maya, serving as a mistress of the prison house of this material world.

*sṛṣṭi-sthiti-pralaya-sādhana-śaktir ekā
chāyeva yasya bhuvanāni bibharti durgā
icchānurūpam api yasya ca ceṣṭate sā
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The external potency Maya who is of the nature of the shadow of the cit potency, is worshiped by all people as Durga, the creating, preserving and destroying agency of this mundane world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda in accordance with whose will Durga conducts herself. (BS 5.44)

As we discussed earlier the cit potency or *cit-śakti* is the spiritual potency of the Lord, full of knowledge, eternity and bliss. His material potency (*maya-śakti*), works as a shadow in that it serves to cover the spiritual potency for the eyes of the wayward jivas. In his purport to above verse His Divine Grace Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakur says, "*Durga is possessed of durga, which means a prison house. When jivas begotten of the marginal potency (tathasta śakti) forget the service of Krishna they are confined in the mundane prison house, the citadel of Durga. The wheel of karma is the instrument of punishment at this place. The work of purifying these penalized jivas is the duty devolved upon Durga.*"

Jivas are also called *tatastha-śakti* because they are standing on the borderline (*tata*) between the spiritual service of the Lord and material illusion. The word "*maya*" means "that which is not". Whatever we try to do here for our own direct or indirect enjoyment, we are actually doing in service to Maya, the illusion. Because we are in fact not the body or anything related to the body we are now trying to satisfy, we, the soul inside the body, simply get cheated from having the expected satisfaction!

Krishna willing we shall continue more on this topic in subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Amogha-drk Krishna das

Denmark.

Bhakta Paada Dhuli

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

There is a saying in Hindi - '*yathaa raaja tathaa prajaa*' meaning that the behaviour of the king reflects in the behaviour of the citizens. In Ramayan, we find that after Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, Hanumanji goes in search of Sita. When Hanumanji visited Lanka, he could find all the citizens of Lanka behaving in a demoniac manner and engaging themselves in all kinds of illicit sense gratificatory activities. Lord Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita verse 3.21, '*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ*' - **"Whatever action a great man performs, common men follow."** Prthu Maharaj who is incarnation of Supreme Lord very nicely instructs His subjects in Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 4 chapter 21 about the importance of devotional service and more importantly on serving the Vaishnavas and brahmanas who are dear to the Lord. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.21.43 Prthu Maharaj says,

*teṣāṃ ahaṁ pāda-saroja-reṇuṃ
āryā vaheyādhi-kirīṭam āyuh
yaṁ nityadā bibhrata āśu pāpaṁ
naśyaty amuṁ sarva-guṇā bhajanti*

Maharaja Prthu spoke, **I beg the blessings of all of you that I may perpetually carry on my crown the dust of the lotus feet of such brahmanas and Vaishnavas until the end of my life. He who can carry such dust on his head is very soon be relieved of all the reactions which arise from sinful life, and eventually he develops all good and desirable qualities.**

It is significant to remember here that when how Lord Krishna received His friend Sudhama, when Sudama went to meet Lord Krishna at Dwarka. Lord personally went to the door-steps, invited him, did *pāda pūja* and sprinkled the water on Himself as well as on Srimati Rukminidevi. Lord has personally shown us how His devotees should be served and honoured. Now here we have to understand a very important point. Carrying the dust of lotus feet of Vaishnavas should not be done for an external show alone. Srila Prabhupada very nicely explains in the purport to the above Bhagavatam verse what is the significance of dust of lotus feet of Vaishnavas and what it means to carry it on one's head. *"Unless one takes the dust of the lotus feet of a pure Vaishnava on one's head, one cannot understand what the Supreme Personality of Godhead is, and unless one knows the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one's life remains imperfect. A great soul who has fully surrendered to the Supreme Lord after understanding Him fully and after repeatedly undergoing austerities and penances for many, many lives is very rare. The crown of a king is simply a big load if the king or head of the state does not actually bear the dust of the lotus feet of brahmanas and Vaishnavas. In other words, if a liberal king like Prthu Maharaja does not follow the instructions of brahmanas and Vaishnavas or does not follow the brahminical culture, he is simply a burden on the state, for he cannot benefit the citizens."*

It is also worthy to remember the beautiful lines of Srila Prabhupada in his purport to verse 1.9.12 of Srimad Bhagavatam. *"So long a person is fully in co-operation with the wishes of the Lord guided by the bonafide Brahmins and Vaishnavas strictly followed in terms of religious principles, one has no cause for despondency, however, trying may be the circumstances of life."* So carrying the dust of Vaishnavas means to submissively surrender unto them, serve them and follow their instructions and by doing so, our lives will become blissful.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Shyamsundar das

Vrindavan.

Overcoming Illusory Energy

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

In Krishna consciousness very often we say each other that, "You are in Maya". But we forget that Maya is Lord's divine energy. We are all conditioned souls, tightly bound by the ropes of illusion. So how can we blame others saying that they are in maya? The following story helps us to get a glimpse of what Maya is. Just like how Krishna taught us Bhagavad Gita through Arjuna, Krishna is teaching us the potency of maya through His dear devotee Narada.

Once Naradji asked Lord Narayana what is Maya and how it works? Lord Narayana decided to make Naradji understand what Maya is. So Lord made Narada feel very thirsty. Narada Muni then told the Lord that he will first quench his thirst, so that he can listen to Narayana with more attentively. Lord Narayana agreed with a smile. Narada Muni then went to a nearby river to quench his thirst and took some water with both his hands near to his mouth. Suddenly he heard a tribal person shouting, "Please wait, don't drink that dirty water. I have pure, distilled, cool water in my house. Please come to my house and accept my most humble seva."

Narada is pleased to get pure, distilled, cool water and therefore, went to the tribal person's house. On reaching home the tribal person felt that it is not appropriate to just give water. So he asked Narada Muni to wait for some more time, so that he could get some fruits from the forest. Narada Muni was happy with the hospitality and accepted the water and the fruits. While leaving the house he saw the beautiful daughter of the tribal person and wanted to marry her. The tribal person felt very much excited to hear that and immediately agreed for his proposal. Narada muni married her, begets a son and then becomes very busy in household activities with his family members. Narada Muni has no time to breathe. He even forgot about remembering Lord Narayana, who is waiting in the garden for him to join the discussion.

One day, Narada Muni heard a big sound in river. On inquiring, he came to know that his son had fallen in the river. After sometime, he again heard a big sound. On inquiring, he came to know that his wife had also jumped into river to save her son and she too is drowning. Then immediately, he came out of his hut and in an attempt to rescue his wife, jumped into the river. When Narada is about to drown, then Narada remembered Lord Narayana and started shouting, "Narayana, Narayana, Narayana".

On hearing this, Lord Sri Hari pats on the shoulder of Narada Muni (who is holding water in his both hands) and asked what happened? Then Narada realized that whatever he experienced now is just a dream and that it is not real. Lord Narayana asked Narada Muni, "Now did you understand what is Maya?" In Srimad Bhagavat Gita verse 7.14 Lord Krishna states,

*daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te*

This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.

Since we all are bound by Maya one must seek the mercy of Lord Krishna through His bona fide representative the spiritual master who can release the conditioned soul. Srila Prabhupada very nicely says in the purport to the above verse, "A man bound by the hands and feet cannot free himself, he must be helped by a person who is unbound. Because the bound cannot help the bound, the rescuer must be liberated. **Therefore, only Lord Krishna, or His bona fide representative the spiritual master, can release the conditioned soul. Without such superior help, one cannot be freed from the bondage of material nature.**" Srimad Bhagavatam verse 11.3.33 also states that devotees can easily cross over Maya.

*iti bhāgavatān dharmān śikṣan bhaktyā tad-utthayā
nārāyaṇa-paro māyām añjas tarati dustarām*

Thus learning the science of devotional service and practically engaging in the devotional service of the Lord, the devotee comes to the stage of love of Godhead. And by complete devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, the devotee easily crosses over the illusory energy, maya, which is extremely difficult to cross.

I pray at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev to bestow Their mercy upon us so that we can understand the above fact and perform devotional service with determination and remain steady in Krishna consciousness.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Tushta Krishna das & Suniti devi dasi
Sharjah.

Carving the Benefits on Stone

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

There was a king who had ten wild dogs. He used them to torture and eat all the ministers who made mistakes. One of the ministers, once gave an opinion which was wrong and which the King didn't like at all. So he ordered that the minister be thrown to the dogs. The minister said, "I served you 10 years and you do this to me? Please give me 10 days before you throw me in with those dogs." The king agreed. In those 10 days, the minister went to the guard who was guarding the dogs and told him he wants to serve the dogs for the next 10 days. The guard was baffled, but he agreed. So the minister started feeding the dogs, cleaning them, washing them, providing all sorts of comforts for them. So when the ten days were over, the king ordered that the minister be thrown into the dogs for his punishment. But when he was thrown in, everyone was amazed at what they saw. They saw the dogs licking the feet of the minister. The King was baffled at what he saw and he said, "What happened to the dogs??? !!!" The minister then said, "I served the dogs for 10 days and they didn't forget my service. Yet I served you for 10 years and you forgot all at the first mistake!" So the king realized his mistake and ordered the minister to go free.

This is our tendency in the material world that we completely wipe out from our hearts the history that is filled with good because of a small incident that we didn't like. But when we look at the Supreme Personality Of Godhead, we see from Srimad Ramayana, the following beautiful verse describing the quality of Lord Rama.

*kathancid upakāreṇa kṛtenaikena tuṣyati
na smaratyapakārāṇāṁ śatamapyātmavattayā*

Lord Ram is eternally pleased by even a single small favour done at some point of time, whereas He forgets in a jiffy all the bad turns done to Him however grave and numerous they are.

That is why Srila Prabhupada very wonderfully glorifies the Lord in his purport to Srimad Bhagavatam 3.2.23, "*The Lord accepts the least qualification of the living entity and awards him the highest reward. That is the standard of His character. Therefore, who but the Lord can be the ultimate shelter?*" So it is very important that we remember the following words spoken by HG Devakinandan Prabhujī quoting our beloved Gurudev HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj, in one of his lectures in Abu Dhabi.

"Maharaj said, "*Vaishnava means, every time we approach a devotee, we approach the devotee with a clean slate. How are you going to write something if there is no clean slate?*" It is a fact. We need the clean slate. Otherwise it is very difficult to write anything. So this point we should not forget. On Maharaj's Vyasa pooja in Rajkot on 13th December 2008, Maharaj gave us this message, "***Learn to write the hurts in the sand. Learn to carve our benefits on the stone. Sand will be swept away easily. So let our hurt be put in the sand, so that we forget those who hurt us, forgive those who hurt us, very quickly. But anything that is helping us in Krishna consciousness that one we must carve it into the stone and those who live this way can never be touched by envy. This is the royal road to come out of envy.***" If we are touched by envy, that means we don't know how to forgive and forget.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

The Evil We Do, Remains With Us

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

A woman baked chapati (roti) for members of her family and an extra one for a hungry passerby. She kept the extra roti on the window sill, for whosoever would take it away. Everyday a hunchback came and took away the roti. Instead of expressing gratitude, he muttered the following words, as he went his way. "**The evil you do remains with you. The good you do comes back to you.**"

This went on day after day. Everyday, the hunchback came, picked up the roti and uttered the above words. The woman felt irritated. "Everyday this hunchback utters this jingle. What does he mean?" One day, exasperated, she decided to do away with him. "I shall get rid of this hunchback." She said and what did she do? She added poison to the roti she prepared for him. And she was about to keep it on the window sill, and at that time, her hands trembled. "What is this I am doing?!!" She immediately threw the roti into the fire, prepared another one, and kept it on the window sill. As usual, the hunchback came, picked up the roti and uttered the same jingle. Then the hunchback proceeded on his way, blissfully unaware of the war raging in the mind of the woman. Everyday, as the woman placed the roti on the window sill, she offered a prayer for her son who had gone to a distant place to seek his fortune. For many months, she had no news of him and she was praying for his safe return.

That evening there was a knock on the door. As she opened it, she was surprised to find her son standing in the doorway. He had grown thin and lean. His garments were all torn and he was starved and weak. As he saw his mother, he said, "Mom, it's a miracle I am here. While I was but a mile away, I was so famished that I collapsed. I would have died, but just then an old hunchback passed by. I begged of him morsel of food and he was kind enough to give me a one full roti. As he gave it to me, he said "This is what I eat everyday. Today I shall give it to you for your need is greater than mine!" As the mother heard those words, her face turned pale. She leaned against the door for support. She remembered the poisoned roti that she had made that morning. Had she not burnt it in fire, it would have been eaten by her own son, and he would have lost his life. It was then she realized the significance of the words, 'The evil you do remains with you. The good you do comes back to you.'

This beautiful story remind us of the advise which Mother Suniti gave to Dhruva Maharaj when he was offended by his step mother. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.17 she says,

*māmaṅgalaṁ tāta pareṣu maṁsthā
bhūṅkte jano yat para-duḥkhas tat*

My dear son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pain upon others, suffers himself from that pain.

On this verse, our beloved Gurudev HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj says, "*Here Suniti gives the eternal truth which is applicable to anybody and everybody in any situation of life, all space and time. There is no exception for it. Last line is beautiful line. "bhūṅkte jano yat para-duḥkhas tat" - Those who inflict miseries on others, they suffer. As soon as we start retaliating, then we start suffering and they stop suffering. If you don't want to suffer, then keep quiet. This is Bhagavatam. Unless Bhagavatam is understood in this life and it is "real"ised, till that time, your life is wasted. This is the meaning. Till you come to Krishna, your life is completely wasted. This is Krishna.*"

Thank you very much,
Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Vaijayantimala devi dasi
Abu Dhabi.

The Material Nature - Part 5

Dear Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

This is in continuation of the previous topic "The Material Nature". In the previous offering we saw the below points:

- 1) The material world is an optional realm of existence for the living entities (jivas).
- 2) Purpose of creation of the material world.

We were trying to understand how material nature can help us becoming detached from material desires. We saw that material nature is in fact a personal devotee of Krishna by the name Durga or Maya, serving as a mistress of the prison house of this material world. We get entangled with Maya when we try to do things for our own pleasure. We fail to understand that when we start serving Krishna and try to please Him, then we will automatically be pleased. Srila Prabhupada very nicely explains in Chapter 12 of "Teachings of Lord Kapila" as to how in Goloka all living entities be it gopas or gopis or cows or trees, all serve Krishna. *"This is also our business, but somehow or other we do not like to serve Krishna; therefore we have been put into the service of maya, in the three modes of material nature. Our constitutional position is to render service to Krishna as His part and parcel, and as soon as we refuse to render Him service, maya is immediately there to capture us and say, "Serve me." It is not our nature to become master. Even if we become master, we will not be happy, because that is artificial. For instance, if the hand thinks, "Oh, now I have some nice sweets. Now I can eat," the hand will ultimately be frustrated. It is the duty and nature of the hand to place the food in the mouth. In this way the hand is nourished; otherwise everything is spoiled. Similarly, we are part and parcel of Krishna, and our business is to satisfy Krishna."*

Activities for our own enjoyment ultimately serves, (as many of us have already experienced), to frustrate us so much that, (if we are intelligent) we introspect about how to get out of it, thus opening doors for the Lord to come and help us. In purport to verse 1.7.5 of Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Prabhupada gives nice example of how sometimes, king goes personally to the prison house and advises the in-mates there to give up their bad ways. And when they surrender to the king's instructions, they are released. In a similar manner, Lord also descends to material world, to relieve suffering souls, who surrender unto Him. *"This surrendering process is the remedial measure for getting relief from the bewildering ways of the illusory energy...This means that the conditioned souls are being reclaimed by the Lord both ways, namely by the process of punishment by the external energy of the Lord, and by Himself as the spiritual master within and without."*

So in other words, material nature or maya serves to:

- 1) Provide us unlimited varieties of so-called enjoyment that in reality is not satisfying us at all, serves to
- 2) Make us fed up to such a degree that we end up wanting to renounce the lot, thus
- 3) Opening up our interest to hear from the preachers of the Lord, who by their grace serves to
- 4) Awaken our lost eternal attraction for the loving service of Krishna, the most attractive entity in existence.

In his purport to Brahma samhita verse 5.44, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswathi Thakura says, *"When, luckily, the forgetfulness of Govinda on the part of imprisoned jivas is remarked by them by coming in contact with self-realized souls and their natural aptitude for the loving service of Krishna is aroused, Durga herself then becomes the agency of their deliverance by the will of Govinda. So it behooves everybody to obtain the guileless grace of Durga, the mistress of this prison house, by propitiating her with the selfless service of Krishna."*

In effect all paraphernalia which we use in this material world, when it is engaged in service of Krishna, Durga devi is pleased and that is the best method of worshipping her.

Krishna willing, we will pursue our studies of His material nature in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Amogha-drk Krishna das

Denmark.

Warm Pricks or Freezing Solitude

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

It was the coldest winter ever. Many animals died because of the cold. The porcupines, realizing the situation, decided to group together to keep warm. This way they covered and protected themselves, but the quills of each one wounded their closest companions. After a while, they decided to distance themselves from the other and they began to die, alone and frozen. So they had to make a choice. Either accept the quills of their companions or disappear from the Earth. Wisely, they decided to go back to being together. They learned to live with the little wounds caused by the close relationship with their companions in order to receive the warmth and heat that came from others. This way they were able to survive.

So the best group is not the one that brings together perfect people, but when each individual learns to live with the imperfections of others and can admire the other person's good qualities. It is better to be surrounded by warm pricks than to be frozen in solitude!!!!

How the Supreme Lord is very much pleased by our cooperative behaviour, tolerating the other living entities is very beautifully expressed in Srimad Bhagavatam when the Lord praises the united services of the Pracetas in SB 4.30.8

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
varaṁ vṛṇīdhvaṁ bhadraṁ vo yūyaṁ me nṛpa-nandanāḥ
sauhārdenāpṛthag-dharmās tuṣṭo 'haṁ sauhṛdena vaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear sons of the King, I am very much pleased by the friendly relationships among you. All of you are engaged in one occupation—devotional service. I am so pleased with your mutual friendship that I wish you all good fortune. Now you may ask a benediction of Me.

Srila Prabhupada in his unparalleled purport gives very valuable instructions for all of us in his purport, "*Disunity between individual souls is so strong within this material world that even in a society of Krishna consciousness, members sometimes appear disunited due to their having different opinions and leaning toward material things. Actually, in Krishna consciousness there cannot be two opinions. There is only one goal: to serve Krishna to one's best ability. If there is some disagreement over service, such disagreement is to be taken as spiritual. Those who are actually engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be disunited in any circumstance. This makes the Supreme Personality of Godhead very happy and willing to award all kinds of benediction to His devotees, as indicated in this verse.*"

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

No One is Indispensable

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

Once an aggressive go-getter passionate type businessman went to the doctor for some physical discomfort and the advice the doctor gave, involved spending a lot of time. So the businessman told the doctor what an enormous amount of work he had to do and that he had to get it done right away or else things will fall apart. He said with great nervousness, "I take my briefcase home every night and it is packed with work." The doctor asked him, "Why do you take work home with you at night?" The businessman fumed, "Because I have to get it done." The doctor asked, "Can't someone else do it or help you with it?". "No!", the man snapped "I am the only one who can do it. It must be done just right, and I alone can do it as it must be done, and it has to be done quickly. Everything depends upon me." "If I write a prescription, will you follow it?" asked the doctor.

This, believe it or not, was the prescription. His patient was to take off a half-day a week, and spend that half-day in cemetery (crematorium). In astonishment, the patient demanded, "Why should I spend a half-day in cemetery?" "Because" answered the Doctor, "I want you to wander around and look at the gravestones of men who are there permanently. I want you to meditate on the fact that when you get there permanently, the world will go on just the same and as important as you are, others will be able to do the work you are now doing."

The position of the above businessman is all our position and to get rid of this mentality, our beloved Gurudev HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj gives us the example of how dog walking between the legs of a bullocks which are pulling the cart, falsely feel proud as if they are pulling the cart. Maharaj says, "At the best we are those dogs, as we are not pulling the cart at all. Everything is being done for us by Krishna. Everything, you consider your own body. You don't have any control over your body... From the day we are born, our heart is non-stop working. And it is working in a rhythm. And if there is something wrong, in that rhythm means our health is not good. Either we have high pressure or low pressure or we have heart attacks or so many things. Since we are born, till our death, who does it? We don't have control over our heart even. We don't have control how the blood is supplied all over our body. And all this is being continuously done by Lord for us. We don't have to do anything, but just take beads in our hands. If you don't have beads you have marks on your fingers. Start chanting "*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare*" In order to get rid of our unnecessary anxieties and worries Maharaj quotes the following traditional verse:

*yat bhāvi tat bhavati eva yat abhāvyam na tat bhavet
iti niścita buddhīnām cintā na bādhate kvacit*

What has to happen, will definitely happen. What is not supposed to happen, that will never happen. For one who has fixed his intelligence in this eternal truth, anxiety will never disturb him.

So there is a nice poem, we can remember:

*Sometime, When you're feeling important
Sometime, When your ego's in bloom
Sometime, When you take it for granted
That you're the best qualified in the room
Sometime, When you feel that your going
would leave an unfillable hole
Just follow these simple instructions*

*And see how it humbles your soul
Take a bucket and fill it with water
Put your hand in it up to the wrist
Pull it out and the hole that's remaining
Is the measure of how you'll be missed.
The moral in this quaint example
Is do just the best that you can
Be proud of your'self but remember
No one is indispensable.*

But Vaishnava acharyas like Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva have been indispensable for millions of souls in this earth, because they had accepted the fact that no one is indispensable, and made Guru and Krishna as indispensable object of loving service in their lives. So let us always try to remember our helpless dependence on our Lord and chant His Holy names with love and affection.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 30

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we were meditating on the instructions given by Gokarna to his father Atmadeva in shloka 80 of the 4th chapter of Uttarakhanda of Padma purana.

*dharmam bhajasva satatam tyaja loka-dharmam
sevasva sadhu-puruṣāñ jahi kāma-tṛṣṇām
anyasya doṣa-guṇa-cintanam āśu muktvā
sevā-kathā-rasam aho nitarām piba tvam*

Always practise the virtue of remembering the Lord. Abandon all the temporary duties connected to the worldly affairs, which are unimportant. Be eager to take association of saintly persons. Give up all thirst for the pleasure of senses. Stop meditating on others' defects. Instead meditate only on their good qualities and appreciate them. You should enjoy the bliss of serving the Lord and hear His stories with devotion.

So far we saw the below five instructions.

1. *Dharmam bhajasva satatam* - Always remember Krishna.
2. *Tyaja loka-dharmam sevasva* - Give up useless labour
3. Be eager to take association of sadhus.
4. Give up thirst for sense pleasures.
5. Stop finding faults and appreciate good qualities in others.

Now let us see further.

6. **Enjoy devotional service and always hear Lord's glories:** This was the final instruction given by Gokarna to his father Atmadeva. In Bhagavad Gita also Krishna says in verse 9.2, *susukham kartum avyayam* "**Devotional service is joyfully performed**". Since Krishna is all blissful, when we engage in His service whole-heartedly, we also become blissful. But sometimes when we are doing service, we start feeling it as a burden. When does service becomes a burden? Srila Prabhupada beautifully clarifies this point in one of his classes on Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.8.19 in Mayapur on September 29 1974.

His Divine Grace says, "**śravaṇam kīrtanam, this is our main business. śravaṇam. If you don't hear, what you will do? You will do simply sense gratification. That's all. So this is difficulty, that we are not very much interested in hearing. And that is the main business. Our bhakti begins: Śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ [SB 7.5.23]. We have to hear and we have to speak. But if we are not interested in hearing and speak, then it will be simply formula. That's all. And gradually it will be stopped. Unless there is life of śravaṇam kīrtanam, these big, big buildings, temples, will become burden. So if we are, if we want to create burden for future, then we may give up this hearing and chanting and sleep very nicely. It will be burden. Galagraha. Not sri-vigraha, but galagraha. Galagraha. Sri-vigraha means worshipable Deity. So if we give up this śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ, then it will be thought that "Our Guru Maharaja has given a burden in the neck, galagraha." This is the danger. So we must be very much alert in śravaṇam kīrtanam. Otherwise all this labor will be futile. This building will be only the nest, nest for the doves and the pigeons. That is the danger.**"

So that is why Gokarna is concluding by saying, "*kathā rasa maho nitarām pibatvam*" - "**Always drinking the nectar of Lord's glories by śravaṇam and kīrtanam**". Atmadeva was fully enlightened by the wonderful instructions of his son Gokarna. So although he was 60 years old, he left for the forest and spent his time as per the instructions of his son, performed sincere devotional service, regularly studied 10th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam and at the end of his life, reached the lotus feet of Sri Hari.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 31

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we saw how Atmadeva followed the instructions of his son Gokarna, performed devotional service and attained the lotus feet of Lord. Now we shall continue further.

After the death of the father Atmadeva, his son Dhundukari began to trouble and torture his mother Dhundhuli to give him money. He threatened to thrash her with burning stick, if she failed to reveal where the wealth is. Out of fear for her son, Dhunduli committed suicide by jumping into a well. Dhundukari started staying in his house with prostitutes and began to do lot of crimes in order to satisfy those women with wealth and ornaments. **What we sow, so we reap**. Now the prostitutes began to think that since Dhundukari has involved in so many crimes, he will soon be caught by the king and then there is a possibility that they will also be jailed along with him. So they decided to loot away all his wealth and murder him. So when he was asleep, they tied him with ropes and then tightly tied the ropes around his neck. But when he did not die, they put burning charcoal fire in his mouth and as a result Dhundukari had a horrible death. Later the prostitutes simply told the neighbours that Dhundukari has gone to a far off place to earn money and would return only after a year. Collecting all the wealth, they then absconded from that place.

As we saw in the recent offering by HG Vaijantimala Mataji, "**The evil we do, remains with us.**" In Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, it is said,

*yatha dhenu sahasreṣu vatso gacchati mātaram
tathā yac ca kṛtam karma kartāram anugacchati*

Amongst thousands of cows, the calf finds its own mother cow. Similarly the results of our past karma (deeds) when fully ripened, will find us without fail.

All along his Dhundukari lead a very impious life. He had been cheating others, looting people and taking pleasure in killing innocent souls. Now the same women whom he had trusted all the while killed him in a very cruel manner. His life after death was also painful. Due his past sinful life, he became a ghost. He ran in all 10 directions and was affected by cold and heat, hunger and thirst. Not finding a place to rest and unable to bear his suffering he kept crying.

Krishna willing, we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 32

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we saw how wicked brother Dhundukari faced a terrible end and became a ghost. Now we shall continue further.

When Gokarna came to know about the death of his brother Dhundukari through villagers, out of compassion, he went to Gaya and performed final rites and ceremonies for the unfortunate and helpless soul. He also did shraddha for Dhundukari at various holy rivers. After visiting all holy places, he returned to his home. At night when Gokarna was sleeping, Dhundukari appeared before him in various ferocious forms like ram, elephant, fire, buffalo, Indra and sometimes like human-being.

Gokarna could realise that it should be some bad spirit. Since Gokarna was pure devotee, he was fearless and he inquired the ghost as to who he was and why he had attained this situation. When Dhundukari heard this, he began to cry loudly due to his inability to speak. Gokarna sprinkled the holy waters which he collected from various tirthas in the direction of the sound and as a result, some of sins were destroyed and Dhundukari began to speak. He revealed to him that he was none other than his brother Dhundukari. He confessed to him about all the sins he had performed in his previous life and how as a result of those sins, he is suffering now in this ghost form. He prayed to his dear brother Gokarna to somehow or the other help him get out of this terrible condition. Gokarna was surprised as to how even after doing shraddha at Gaya, Dhundukari was not relieved of his painful situation. He pacified Dhundukari that he would check out with the elders and the sages in the village and try to find a way out. None of the yogis in the village knew how to release Dhundukari from ghostly form. So they suggested Gokarna to check with Sun god. By his mystic powers, Gokarna was able talk to Sun God. We find Sun God's reply in verse 41 of 5th chapter of Uttarakhanda of Padmapurana as follows:

*śrīmad-bhāgavatān muktiḥ saptāhe vācanaṁ kuru
iti sūrya-vacaḥ sarvair dharmarūpaṁ tu viśrutam*

The Sun God declared that by hearing Srimad Bhagavatam for seven days as per scriptural rules, Dhundukari will be released from his ghostly form.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 33

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we saw how the Sun god informed Gokarna that hearing Srimad Bhagavatam is the only way for liberating Dhundukari from the ghostly form. Now we shall continue further.

Upon hearing the words of Sun God, Gokarna became determined to pursue the study of Srimad Bhagavatam with great diligence. Since all the people in the village had also heard the message of Sun-God, all kinds of people began to gather there in great numbers to participate in the Bhagavata saptah which was to be conducted by Gokarna. People who were blind, crippled, aged and dull-witted all gathered there with hope to purify themselves. The ghost Dhundukari also came there. Since he was unable to remain at one place in the air, he entered into bamboo stick which was having seven knots. He entered into the hollow base of the bamboo, to hear Srimad Bhagavatam.

Gokarna began to expound Srimad Bhagavatam from the first canto onwards. At the end of the first day, the first knot in the bamboo stick broke with a crackling sound. On the second day the second knot broke open. Like wise the 7 joints of the bamboo were burst in 7 days and when Dhundukari completed hearing all the 12 skandhas of Srimad Bhagavatam he shed his ghostly form and attained a divine form. He was adorned with tulasi beads in his neck. He was in yellow silk clothes, wearing a diadem on his head and a pair of alligator shaped ear-rings and his complexion was like that of rain bearing clouds. He profusely thanked his brother Gokarna by offering obeisances to him and for mercifully helping to get out of the clutches of ghostly body. Then he begins to glorify the study of Srimad Bhagavatam. In shloka 55 of 5th chapter of Uttarakhanda of Padmapurana Dhundukari says,

*ārdraṁ śuṣkaṁ laghu sthūlaṁ vāñ-manaḥ-karmabhiḥ kṛtam
śravaṇaṁ vidahet pāpaṁ pāvakaḥ samidho yathā*

Irrespective of whether the article is moist or dry, small or big, fire consumes it. Similarly seven day hearing of Srimad Bhagavatam eradicates all kinds of sins, (be it recent or long standing, minor or major and whether perpetrated in thought word or deed).

Here we find the wonderful transformation of Dhundukari, from ghost to divine form and also how being purified in heart, he is now able to appreciate the mercy of devotees, glorify Srimad Bhagavatam and all merciful Lord Krishna. Such is the potency of hearing of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam as spoken by Dhundukari in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 34

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we saw how after hearing Srimad Bhagavatam Dhundukari was released from his ghostly form and began to glorify Srimad Bhagavatam. Now we shall continue further. Fully realising the value of Srimad Bhagavatam, Dhundukari says in shloka 56 of fifth chapter of Uttarakhanda of Padmapurana as follows:

*asmin vai bhārate varṣe sūribhir veda-saṁsadi
akathā-śraviṇām puṁsām niṣphalaṁ janma kīrtitam*

Wise men have declared in the assembly of devatas that for those who are born in this land of Bharata, who have failed to hear the stories of Srimad Bhagavatam, those who don't hear Srimad Bhagavatam, their lives are sheer waste and fruitless.

Suta Goswami also says in verse 1.3.40 of Srimad Bhagavatam that,

*idaṁ bhāgavataṁ nāma purāṇaṁ brahma-sammitam
uttama-śloka-caritaṁ cakāra bhagavān ṛṣiḥ
niḥśreyasāya lokasya dhanyaṁ svasty-ayanaṁ mahat*

This Srimad-Bhagavatam is the literary incarnation of God, and it is compiled by Srila Vyasadeva, the incarnation of God. It is meant for the ultimate good of all people, and it is all-successful, all-blissful and all-perfect.

His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada very nicely mentions in the purport to above verse that, "**One can derive from the study of the Bhagavatam all benefits that are possible to be derived from the personal presence of the Lord. It carries with it all the transcendental blessings of Lord Sri Krishna that we can expect from His personal contact.**" If not for painstaking efforts of His Divine Grace to translate this glorious purana into English, most of us would have never even known or touched Bhagavatam. By the sincere efforts of a pure devotee, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, now Bhagavatam has become available in multiple languages, in multiple countries across the world.

Acharyas like His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada and our beloved spiritual master HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj are living Mahabhagavatas and knowing the full purport of the above verses, they not only made their lives fruitful, but out of great compassion for all suffering souls all over the world, ignoring their personal discomforts, travelled all over the world many times to give this nectar of Bhagavatam to all. The only way we can try to express our gratitude to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva is to make our lives fruitful by studying Srimad Bhagavatam, practising it and sharing the message with others.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam as spoken by Dhundukari in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 35

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled 'Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam'. In the previous offering we saw how after hearing Srimad Bhagavatam Dhundukari was released from his ghostly form and began to glorify Srimad Bhagavatam. Now we shall continue further.

Dhundukari says in shloka 58 through 61 of fifth chapter of Uttarakhanda about the temporary nature of material body and about futility of over-caring for it.

*asthi-stambham snāyu-buddham mām̐sa-śoṇita-lepitam
carmāvanaddham durgandham pātram mūtra-purīṣayoḥ
jarā-śoka-vipākārtam roga-mandiram āturam
duṣpūram durdharam duṣtam sa-doṣam kṣaṇa-bhaṅgaram
kṛmi-viḍ-bhasma-samjñātam śarīram iti varṇitam
asthiraṇa sthiram karma kuto 'yam sādhyen na hi
yat prātaḥ saṁskṛtam cānam sāyam tac ca vinaśyati
tadīya-rasa-saṁpuṣṭe kāye kā nāma nityatā*

The body is supported on columns of bones held together by a network of nerves and tendons smeared with flesh and blood, covered all over with skin full of bad smell being a receptacle of urine and stool. It is ever afflicted with old age, sorrow and it is home of diseases, frail, difficult to satisfy, hard to maintain, corrupt, faulty, and momentary. It has been characterized as having its finality in what goes by the name of worms, faeces and ashes. Why then should one not perform with this unstable body, action leading to immortality?

Since this body is just a bag of bile, urine and mucus and is also a temple of diseases, what is the point in being proud of body? Dhundukari further says in shloka 61:

*yat prātaḥ saṁskṛtam cānam sāyam tac ca vinaśyati
tadīya-rasa-saṁpuṣṭe kāye kā nāma nityatā*

The food that is prepared in the morning gets spoilt in the evening automatically. So what kind of eternity can body which is nourished by such kind of food have?

Neither the body, nor the possessions, nor the relatives associated with the body are going to accompany us after death. So Dhundukari insists that instead of wasting our time in bodily matters we should use our time and energy in devotional service unto Supreme Lord, for Lord and service are always eternal. Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.2.10 Suta Goswami says, "Life's desires should never be directed toward sense gratification. One should desire only a healthy life, or self-preservation, since a human being is meant for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Nothing else should be the goal of one's works."

Srila Prabhupada in his lecture on Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.8.22 in Los Angeles, given on 14th April 1973 mentions that Srimad Bhagavatam is amala puran and whatever knowledge is there in this world, is all available in it. He says that "This is the topmost education and that if one simply reads this Srimad Bhagavatam, his education is the topmost. Vidyaa bhaagavataavadhih. If one studies Srimad Bhagavatam he is well versed in every subject matter." Dhundukari initially lead such a sinful life. But after hearing Bhagavatam he is completely transformed. The words of wisdom we

hear from him proves how true are the words of His Divine Grace.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam as spoken by Dhundukari in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

The Material Nature - Part 6

Dear Prabhus and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous topic "The Material Nature". In the previous offering we saw that when all paraphernalia which we use in this material world is engaged in the service of Krishna, Durga devi is pleased and that is the best method of worshipping her. Thus, in this way we may act in a full understanding of material nature itself as a personal servant of God, who in fact dies to cooperate with us in Krishna consciousness and thoroughly rectifies us if we try to enjoy her for ourselves.

It is important for us to understand that the word "*maya*" applied to Durga in its deepest sense refers to the ONE original potency of the Lord (called *yoga-maya*) of which its illusory counterpart (called *maha-maya*) is an expansion. In his wonderful purport to verse 10.1.69 of Srimad Bhagavatam Srila Prabhupada explains:

"...the entire creation has two divisions — transcendental, or spiritual, and material. Yoga-maya manages the spiritual world, and by her partial expansion as Maha-maya she manages the material world. As stated in the Narada-pancaratra, Maha-maya is a partial expansion of Yoga-maya. The Narada-pancaratra clearly states that the Supreme Personality has one potency, which is sometimes described as Durga. The Brahma-samhita says, chāyeva yasya bhuvanāni vibharti durgā. Durga is not different from Yoga-maya. When one understands Durga properly, he is immediately liberated, for Durga is originally the spiritual potency, hlādinī-śakti, by whose mercy one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead very easily. Rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī-śaktir asmād. The maha-maya-śakti, however, is a covering of Yoga-maya, and she is therefore called the covering potency. By this covering potency, the entire material world is bewildered (yaya sammohitam jagat). In conclusion, bewildering the conditioned souls and liberating the devotees are both functions belonging to Yoga-maya."

By becoming servants of Krishna instead of trying to enjoy His material energy, we can easily resolve our problems with matter and become fully situated in His spiritual energy, our eternal abode of knowledge and bliss. And the first step to become a servant of God may be to simply utter the sound vibration of His names, like in the Hare Krishna mantra, of which "Hare" actually is a direct pleading to the personified pleasure energy (*hlādinī-śakti*) of the Lord for being allowed re-entrance into His service. The scriptures explain that *it is only at the moment we get the wrong idea, viz. to enjoy God's energy for ourselves, that the original pleasure energy turns into the illusory material nature meant for our reformation.*

In Ramayana, Ravana, when kidnapping Sita, the eternal consort of Lord Rama, only got her illusory representation (Maya-Sita). Because Ravana's motive was to enjoy the Supreme Lord's pleasure potency instead of serving Him, he did not receive the mercy of the real pleasure potency of the Lord, viz. *yoga-maya*, but instead got the illusory counterpart, *maha-maya*. As a result, Ravana's outcome was only distress, climaxing in his agonized heart falling prey to the deadly arrow of Lord Rama.

Krishna willing, we will pursue our studies of His material nature in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Amogha-drk Krishna das
Denmark.

Causeless Devotional Service

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

In Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 5, Chapter 3 describes how Maharaja Nabhi along with his wife Merudevi, performed many austerities, penances and sacrifices and worshiped the Supreme Lord to beget son like the Lord. The Supreme Lord pleased with the faith and devotion and prayers offered by Maharaja Nabhi appeared before Maharaja Nabhi and the priests in the sacrificial arena. At that time, the priests began to offer beautiful prayers glorifying the Supreme Lord's beauty and mercy. They knew that it was not so appropriate or necessary to conduct such sacrifices to please the Lord or to seek material benedictions. As Krishna Himself declares in Bhagavata Gita verse 9.26, Lord is pleased when one simply offers to Him with devotion a leaf, fruit, flower or water. So in Srimad Bhagavatam verse 5.3.13 the priests say,

*kiñcāyaṁ rājarṣir apatya-kāmaḥ prajāṁ bhavādrśīm āśāsāna īśvaram āśiṣāṁ svargāpavargayor api bhavantam
upadhāvati prajāyām artha-pratyayo dhanadam ivādhanaḥ phalīkaraṇam.*

Dear Lord, here is the great King Nabhi, whose ultimate goal in life is to have a son like You. Your Lordship, his position is like that of a person approaching a very rich man and begging for a little grain. Maharaja Nabhi is so desirous of having a son that he is worshiping You for a son, although You can offer him any exalted position, including elevation to the heavenly planets or liberation back to Godhead.

In his wonderful purport to the above verse Srila Prabhupada says, "A devotee is never concerned about anything material. Although Nabhi Maharaja wanted a son like Vishnu, wanting a son like God is also a form of sense gratification. A pure devotee wants only to engage in the Lord's loving service." His Divine Grace also mentions in the purport as to how Caitanya Mahaprabhu has taught us the mood with which we should approach the Supreme Lord. In Siskhashtakam verse 4, Mahaprabhu says,

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitam va jagadisa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth.

This is the best way to approach the Lord. In case of Maharaja Nabhi, Lord appeared in person before them, not because of the sacrifices, but He was pleased with the devotional mood of Nabhi and that of the brahmanas. And by His own sweet will He agreed to appear as their son, in the form of Lord Rshabadeva. But we cannot try to imitate Maharaja Nabhi, nor can we imitate Mahaprabhu. Lord knows our inner motives. So if we have desires to have a family (wife/child) to advance in devotional service, we can pray to Lord. But we need to understand the reality that Supreme Lord has all the authority to fulfill or not to fulfill our prayers. Lord being the ultimate well-wisher, knows what is good for us and what we deserve. Failing to accept His Supreme will, will make our life miserable.

So whether we have good wife or no wife or bad wife, whether we have no child or good child or bad child, let us pray to Lord to give us sane mind to perform devotional service unto Him in all circumstances, life after life. Constant engagement in devotional service, under the guidance of bona-fide spiritual master will clear out all anarthas and inner motives. Gradually by the mercy of Guru and Krishna, we will be able to relish and appreciate the beauty of causeless devotional service, like Dhruva Maharaj.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Shyamsundar das
Vrindavan.

Most Miserable Persons - Part 1

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

The more we study and hear the scriptures, we are forced to come to the conclusion that we are all labouring uselessly in this material world, while stubbornly maintaining false hopes of enjoyment and this is the cause of all our miseries. In Srimad Bhagavatam 11th canto, Lord Krishna while instructing Shri Uddhava makes it very clear that all our senses are useless if not engaged in glorifying the Supreme Lord. Also dry vedic speculation and study which does not bring us to the point of devotional service to the Lord is completely useless and this also makes us miserable. To illustrate this point, the Lord gives five examples and says that these people are the most miserable. The Lord says in SB 11.11.19,

*gām dugdha-dohām asatīm ca bhāryām
deham parādhīnam asat-prajām ca
vittam tv atīrthī-kṛtam aṅga vācam
hīnām mayā rakṣati duḥkha-duḥkhī*

My dear Uddhava, that man is certainly most miserable who takes care of a cow that gives no milk, an unchaste wife, a body totally dependent on others, useless children or wealth not utilized for the right purpose. Similarly, one who studies Vedic knowledge devoid of My glories is also most miserable.

We shall see the list of the most miserable persons (duhkha dukkhi)

1. *gām dugdha dohām rakṣati*: A man who maintains a cow that gives no milk.
2. *asatīm ca bhāryām rakṣati*: A man who maintains an unchaste wife.
3. *deham parādhīnam rakṣati*: A man who maintains a body that is completely dependent upon others.
4. *asat prajām rakṣati*: A man who maintains useless children.
5. *vittam ca atīrthī-kṛtam rakṣati*: A man who keeps wealth not utilized for a good purpose.

We shall see them one by one.

1. **Gām dugdha dohām rakṣati** - A man who maintains a cow that gives no milk. It is very nicely explained in the purport that the example of the milkless cow is significant. A gentleman never kills a cow, and therefore when a cow becomes sterile and no longer gives milk, one must engage in the laborious task of protecting her, since no one will purchase a useless cow. It requires great endeavor to take care of a cow. One must either grow food grains to feed the cow or maintain suitable pastures. If the pasture is not properly maintained, poisonous weeds will grow, or snakes will multiply, and there will be danger. Cows are infected by many types of diseases and bugs and must be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Similarly, fences must be maintained around the cow pasture, and there is even more work to be done. If the cow gives no milk, however, then one certainly performs hard labor with no tangible result. For some time, the greedy owner of a sterile cow may continue thinking, "I have already invested so much money in taking care of this cow, and certainly in the near future she will again become pregnant and give milk." But when this hope is proven futile, he becomes neglectful and indifferent to the health and safety of the animal. Because of such sinful neglect, he must suffer in the next life, after having already suffered because of the sterile cow in the present life.

In the present day society we all have the experience of maintaining so many vehicles for which the fuel cost is very high and maintenance cost in the form of repairing, cleaning, insurance, tax, etc is very high. If after all such costs, we are unable to use the vehicle because of parking difficulties, traffic jam and other things, it is just like maintaining a white elephant and there are no proper returns. Now we have so much advancement of technology and so many

electrical and electronic equipments purchased by us for performance of even simple and easy tasks, but the cost of repairing and maintaining them is beyond our capacity and just to maintain them we are forced to engage in hard labour without respite and because of this all of us have become miserable.

Krishna willing, we shall see the rest of the miserable persons, in the ensuing offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Most Miserable Persons - Part 2

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "**Most Miserable Persons**", wherein we were meditating on verse 11.11.19 of Srimad Bhagavatam. In this verse Lord Krishna gives us the list of miserable persons. In the previous offering we saw the example of the man who maintains a milkless cow and we shall see further.

2. **Asatīm ca bhāryām rakṣati** - A man who maintains an unchaste wife - Similarly, although a man may discover that his wife is neither chaste nor affectionate, he may be so eager to get children that he goes on taking care of such a useless wife, thinking, "I will teach my wife the religious duties of a chaste woman. By hearing historical examples of great women surely her heart will change, and she will become a wonderful wife to me." Unfortunately, the unchaste wife in many cases does not change and also gives a man many useless children who are just as foolish and irreligious as she. Thus household life becomes hellish and miserable. Canakya pandita says in Niti sastra,

*mātā yasya ḡrhe nāsti bhāryā cāpriya-vādinī
araṇyam tena gantavyam yathāraṇyam tathā ḡham*

If a person has neither a mother nor a pleasing wife at home, he should leave home and go to the forest, because for him there is no difference between the forest and home.

The real mata, or mother, is devotional service to the Lord, and the real patni, or devoted wife, is a wife who helps her husband execute religious principles in devotional service. These two things are required for a happy home. Srila Prabhupada writes that, "So women should be trained up to be very faithful and chaste. Then the life will be very happy. That is the only education for woman."

3. **Deham paraadhinam rakṣati** - A man who maintains a body that is completely dependent upon others. Srila Prabhupada states that, "In the material world, to be dependent on the mercy of someone else is the utmost sign of misfortune." In the Third Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Lord Kapila describes very clearly that in spite of the exhausting work a man performs throughout his life, his family is ultimately dissatisfied, and when the exhausted father reaches old age, the irritated family members look upon him just as farmers look upon an old and useless ox. Sometimes the sons dream of receiving their father's money as an inheritance and secretly wish for him to die. Nowadays people strongly resent the trouble of caring for elderly parents and therefore send them to an institution, where they die lonely and neglected after a life of hard work for their so-called loved ones. Thus life is so miserable for a person when he or she becomes dependent upon others. That is why our beloved Gurudev, HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj instructs us to pray to Krishna.

*anāyāsenā maraṇam vinā dainyena jīvanam
dehi me kṛpayā kṛṣṇa tvayi bhaktim acancalā*

I should get a sudden death without any prolonged illness (this he asks mainly because he does not want to put others into inconvenience), I should not depend upon anybody for my life's needs, and as long as my soul is in this body, I should do steady unflinching devotional service unto You.

Krishna willing, we shall see the rest of the miserable persons in the ensuing offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Most Miserable Persons - Part 3

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "Most Miserable Persons", wherein we were meditating on verse 11.11.19 of Srimad Bhagavatam. In this verse Lord Krishna gives us the list of miserable persons. So far we saw two types of miserable persons. Now we shall see further here.

3. **Asat prajāṁ rakṣati - A man who maintains useless children**: When King Yayati asks his son Puru to give his youth in exchange to his old age, Puru says in Srimad Bhagavatam verse 9.18.44,

*uttamaś cintitaṁ kuryāt prokta-kārī tu madhyamaḥ
adhamo 'śraddhayā kuryād akartoccaritaṁ pituḥ*

A son who acts by anticipating what his father wants him to do is first class, one who acts upon receiving his father's order is second class, and one who executes his father's order irreverently is third class. But a son who refuses his father's order is like his father's stool.

Srila Prabhupada writes in the purport that, "One Indian poet has spoken of putra and mūtra. putra means "son," and mūtra means "urine." Both a son and urine come from the same genitals. If a son is an obedient devotee of the Lord, he is called putra, or a real son; otherwise, if he is not learned and is not a devotee, a son is nothing better than urine ." In Niti shastra Chanakya Pandit says,

*ko 'rthaḥ putreṇa jātena yo na vidvān na dhārmikaḥ
kāṇena cakṣuṣā kiṁ vā cakṣuḥ pīḍaiva kevalam*

What is the value of a son who is neither learned nor religious? Such a son is compared to a blind eye that is only a source of pain.

Krishna willing, we shall continue on this topic in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Most Miserable Persons - Part 4

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in conclusion of the previous offering titled, "Most Miserable Persons", wherein we were meditating on verse 11.11.19 of Srimad Bhagavatam. In this verse Lord Krishna gives us the list of miserable persons. So far we saw two types of miserable persons. Now we shall see further here.

4. **Vittam ca atirhi-krtam raksati** - A man who keeps wealth not utilized for a good purpose: One who has accumulated wealth by the mercy of God must be vigilant to give in charity to the right person and for the right cause. If such a right person or cause appears and one hesitates and selfishly does not give in charity, one loses his reputation, and in the next life he will be poverty-stricken. One who fails to give properly in charity spends his life anxiously protecting his wealth, which ultimately brings him no fame or happiness. Our beloved spiritual master, HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj has written the following verses from the shastras in his diary.

*dānaṁ bhogo nāśastisro gatayo bhavanti vittasya
yo na dadāti na bhuṅkte tasya tritīyā gatir bhavati*

Money has three states of existence - to be given in charity, to be enjoyed and to be destroyed. If one does not give it in charity or utilize it, then that money will be destroyed by itself.

*upārjitānām arthānām tyāga eva hi rakṣaṇam
taḍāgodara saṁsthānām parivāha ivāmbhasām*

For water in the lake, flowing is the only protection (if it is stored in a stationary place it will be spoiled). Similarly for the earned money, charity for good cause is the only protection.

The Lord gives the above examples and concludes by saying that just as these people suffer miseries, those who do not hear, chant and utilize their senses in pleasing the Lord are also the most miserable persons. That is why srimad Bhagavatam gives the conclusion in 3.7.14,

*aśeṣa-saṅkleśa-śamaṁ vidhatte
guṇānuvāda-śravaṇam murāreḥ
kiṁ vā punas tac-caraṇāravinda-
parāga-sevā-ratir ātma-labdhā*

Simply by chanting and hearing of the transcendental name, form, etc., of the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, one can achieve the cessation of unlimited miserable conditions. Therefore what to speak of those who have attained attraction for serving the flavor of the dust of the Lord's lotus feet?

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Abu Dhabi.

Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam - Part 36

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva.

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, '**Glories of Srimad Bhagavatam**'. In the previous offering we saw how after hearing Srimad Bhagavatam Dhundukari was released from his ghostly form and began to glorify Srimad Bhagavatam. Now we shall continue further. Dhundukari says in sloka 63 of fifth chapter of Uttarakhanda about how futile is the life if we don't engage in hearing Srimad Bhagavatam.

*budbudā iva toyeṣu maśakā iva jantuṣu
jāyante maraṇāyaiva kathā-śravaṇa-varjitāḥ*

Just like the bubbles appearing on the surface of water disappear within few moments, just like flies and insects are very short-lived, people who don't engage themselves in hearing Srimad Bhagavatam, who deprive themselves from hearing Srimad Bhagavatam are just born to die.

We find Dhundukari very nicely comparing our lives to that of bubble and mosquito. Bubble appears in water, just to be burst in few seconds. It is of no use to anyone. Mosquito on the other hand, although has life in it, still it is of no use to others. In fact it sucks the blood of people and many times is carrier of fatal diseases like dengue, malaria etc. Even if such flies and insects don't bite others, still their life is miserable and of no use to others.

Srila Prabhupada in one of his classes on Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.8.31, given in Mayapur on October 11 1974 mentions that, "*Just see the flies, the insects, how much they are suffering. Whole night, they struggle to enjoy the lamp. And in the morning all dead. All dead. This is their life. So we are thinking that we are better situated. No, we are not better situated. Our, the principle is the same, that you come here, you accept a certain type of body, and whole night, or whole life... Night means ignorance, darkness. **So in ignorance you go on struggling whole life, and then you become dead, finished. The same thing. There is no difference between the life of the insect.***"

It is a very great fortune to get human birth and shastras say how even demigods wait to be born as human being in Bhuloka as that gives one the opportunity to perform devotional service to Lord. In all other species of life, we don't have this facility. Though we think life of demigod offers one a lot of opportunities to enjoy sense gratification, demigods consider such opportunities as obstacles in their path of spiritual advancement and wait to take birth here. So having got this human birth, if we waste it like a small insect, trying to become happy by hankering and running around the fire of sense enjoyment and lead a life of ignorance it is no good. So Dhundukari is advising us not to lead a momentary life like insects which neither live peacefully, nor let others live peacefully.

So let us pray to Srila Gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krishna so that our life becomes meaningful, purposeful and pleasing to Supreme Lord, by engaging ourselves in His service, by hearing Srimad Bhagavatam ourselves and serving others by sharing that nectar of Krishna katha.

Krishna willing we shall try to meditate on further glories of Srimad Bhagavatam as spoken by Dhundukari in the subsequent offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.