

Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Birth in the Lord’s family or in the Acharya’s family cannot constitute the qualification for a respectable person.

“Every living being is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, as stated in the Bhagavad-gītā (mamaivāṁśaḥ). Every living entity is originally a son of God, yet to execute His pastimes the Lord selects certain highly qualified living entities whom He allows to take birth as His personal relatives. But those living entities who appear as descendants of the Lord’s



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personal family may undoubtedly become proud of such a position and thus abuse the great adulation they receive from ordinary people. In this way such persons may artificially get undue attention and divert people from the actual principle of spiritual advancement, which is to surrender to the pure devotee who represents the Lord. Ordinary people, however, not understanding the higher principles of spiritual knowledge, easily forget the actual qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master and instead give undue importance to people born in the Lord's so-called family. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, therefore, avoided this impediment on the path of spiritual enlightenment by leaving behind no children. Although Caitanya Mahāprabhu married twice, He was childless. Nityānanda Prabhu, who is also the Supreme Personality of Godhead, did not accept any of the natural sons born of His own son, Śrī Vīrabhadra.

“In the Middle Ages, after the disappearance of Lord Caitanya's great associate Lord Nityānanda, a class of priestly persons claimed to be the descendants of Nityānanda, calling themselves the gosvāmī caste. They further claimed that the practice and spreading of devotional service belonged only to their particular class, which was known as nityānanda-vamśa. In this way they exercised their artificial power for some time, until Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the powerful ācārya of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya, completely smashed their idea. There was a great hard struggle for some time, but it has turned out successful, and it is now correctly and practically established that devotional service is not restricted to a particular class of men. Besides that, anyone who is engaged in devotional service is already a high-class brāhmaṇa. So Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's struggle for this movement has come out successful. It is on the basis of his position that anyone, from any part of the universe, can become a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava.”

In other words, the essence of spiritual knowledge is that every living being, regardless of his present status in life, is originally a servant of the Supreme Lord, and it is the mission of the Lord to reclaim all of these fallen living entities. Despite his past situation, any living being who is willing to surrender again at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord or His bona fide representative can purify himself by strictly adhering to the rules and regulations of



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bhakti-yoga and thus act as a high-class brāhmaṇa. Nonetheless, the seminal descendants of the Lord think themselves to have acquired their ancestor's character and position. Thus the Supreme Lord, who is the well-wisher of the entire universe and especially of His devotees, bewilders the discriminatory power of His own descendants in such a contradictory way that these seminal descendants become recognized as deviant and the actual qualification to be a representative of the Lord, namely unalloyed surrender to the will of Kṛṣṇa, remains prominent."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 01 – Text 05.



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Krishna is always present in His eternal abode in the spiritual sky.

The statement agāt svam padam īśvaraḥ indicates not only that Kṛṣṇa went to His abode, but that Kṛṣṇa realized His determined desire. If we say that Kṛṣṇa returned to His eternal abode, we imply that Kṛṣṇa had been absent from His abode and was now returning. Therefore, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura points out that it is incorrect to say in a normal sense that Kṛṣṇa “went back to His abode.” According to the Brahma-saṁhitā, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always present in His eternal abode in the spiritual sky. Yet by His causeless mercy He also manifests Himself from time to time within the material world. In other words, God is all-pervading. Even when present before us He is simultaneously in His abode. The ordinary soul, or jīva, is not all-pervading like the Supersoul, and therefore by his presence in the material world he is absent from the spiritual world. In fact, we are suffering due to that absence from the spiritual world, or Vaikuṇṭha. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, is all-pervading, and therefore Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura translates the words agāt svam padam to mean that Kṛṣṇa achieved exactly what He desired. The Lord is all-pervading and self-sufficient in fulfilling His perfect desires. His appearance and disappearance in this world should never be compared to ordinary material activities.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 01 – Text 06-07



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The ultimate purpose of Vedic literatures is to bring the living entity back to his original consciousness.

“As explained in Bhagavad-gītā (2.42-43):

yām imām puṣpitām vācam pravadanty avipaścitāḥ
veda-vāda-ratāḥ pārtha nānyad astīti vādināḥ
kāmātmānaḥ svarga-parā janma-karma-phala-pradām
kriyā-viśeṣa-bahulām bhogaiśvarya-gatim prati

“Men of small knowledge are very much attached to the flowery words of the Vedas, which recommend various fruitive activities for elevation to heavenly planets, resultant good birth, power, and so forth. Being desirous of sense gratification and opulent life, they say that there is nothing more than this.”

On the other hand, certain parts of Vedic literature are specifically meant to award material sense gratification to the conditioned soul and at the same time gradually condition him to obey the Vedic injunctions. The portions of the Vedas that recommend fruitive activities for regulated sense gratification are themselves dangerous, because the living being who engages in such activities becomes easily entangled in the material enjoyment offered and neglects the ultimate purpose of the Vedas. The ultimate purpose of Vedic literature is to bring the living entity back to his original consciousness, in which he acts as an eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By rendering service to the Lord, the living entity can enjoy unlimited spiritual bliss in the association of the Lord in His own kingdom. Thus, one who seriously desires to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should specifically hear the Vedic literature that deals with pure devotional service to the Lord. One should hear from those who are highly advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and avoid interpretations that stimulate materialistic desires for enjoyment.



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When the tiny living entity is finally able to see the difference between the temporary affairs of this world and the transcendental activities of Lord Trivikrama, Kṛṣṇa, he devotes himself to the Lord and removes from his heart the dark covering of matter, no longer desiring sense gratification, which is enjoyed under the two headings sin and piety. In other words, although people within this world are considered sinful or pious, on the material platform both sin and piety are performed for one's personal gratification. If one can understand that his real happiness lies in giving pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa takes such a fortunate living being back to His own abode, which is called Goloka Vṛndāvana. According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the Lord first gives a sincere soul the opportunity to hear about His pastimes. When the devotee has advanced in his spontaneous attraction to such narrations, the Lord gives him the opportunity to take part in His spiritual pastimes as they appear within this world. By taking part in the pastimes of the Lord within a particular universe, the living being becomes completely detached from the material world, and ultimately the Lord brings him to His personal abode in the spiritual sky."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 01 – Text 06-07.



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It is natural that people in the material world hanker to see a beautiful object.

It is natural that people in the material world hanker to see a beautiful object. In materialistic life, however, our consciousness is polluted by the influence of the three modes of nature, and therefore we hanker for material objects of beauty and pleasure. The materialistic process of sense gratification is imperfect, because the laws of material nature will not allow us to be happy or satisfied in materialistic life. The living entity is constitutionally an eternal servant of God and is meant to appreciate the infinite beauty and pleasure of the Supreme Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth and the reservoir of all beauty and pleasure. By serving Kṛṣṇa we can also share in His ocean of beauty and pleasure, and thus our desire to see beautiful things and enjoy life will be fully satisfied. The example is given that the hand cannot enjoy food independently but can assimilate it indirectly by giving it to the stomach. Similarly, by serving Lord Kṛṣṇa the living entity, who is part and parcel of the Lord, will derive unlimited happiness.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 01 – Text 06-07.



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The desire to merge into nothingness is a reaction against material pain.

Sometimes a living being is able to understand the miserable result of materialistic sense gratification. Being frustrated by the pain and suffering of materialistic life and being ignorant of any superior life, he adopts a neo-Buddhist philosophy and seeks shelter in so-called nothingness. But there is no actual void within the kingdom of God. The desire to merge into nothingness is a reaction against material pain; it is not a tangible concept of the Supreme. For example, if I feel unbearable pain in my leg and the pain cannot be cured, I may finally agree to have my leg amputated. But it is far better to remove the pain and keep my leg. Similarly, because of false ego we think, “I am everything. I am the most important person. No one is as intelligent as me.” Thinking in this way, we suffer constantly and experience intense anxiety. But as soon as we purify the ego by admitting that we are insignificant eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, our ego will give us great pleasure.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 02.



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The result the demigods award to living beings correspond exactly to the living beings actions.

“The words *chāyeva karma-sacivāḥ* are significant here. *Chāyā* means “shadow.” The shadow of the body precisely follows the movements of the body. The shadow has no power to move in a way different from the movement of the body. Similarly, as stated here, *bhajanti ye yathā devān devā api tathaiva tān*: the results the demigods award to living beings correspond exactly to the living beings’ actions. The demigods are empowered by the Lord to follow precisely the particular karma of a living entity in awarding him happiness and distress. Just as a shadow cannot move independently, the demigods cannot punish or reward a living being independently. Although the demigods are millions of times more powerful than the human beings on earth, they are ultimately tiny servants of God whom the Lord allows to play as the controllers of the universe. In the Fourth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *Ṛṣhu Mahārāja*, an empowered incarnation of the Lord, states that even the demigods are subject to punishment by the Lord if they deviate from His laws. On the other hand, devotees of the Lord such as *Nārada Muni*, by their potent preaching, can interfere in the karma of a living being by persuading him to give up his fruitive activity and mental speculation and surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In material existence, one works hard under the bondage of ignorance. But if one becomes enlightened by association with a pure devotee of the Lord, one can understand one’s actual position as an eternal servant of God. By rendering such service, one dissolves his attachment to the material world and the reactions of his previous activities, and as a surrendered soul he is endowed with unlimited spiritual freedom in the service of the Lord. In this regard, the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.54) states:

“yas tv indragopam athavendram aho sva-karma-bandhānurūpa-phala-bhājanam ātanoti karmāṇi nirdahati kintu ca bhakti-bhājām govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi”

“I adore the primeval Lord, Govinda, who burns to the root all the fruitive activities of those imbued with devotion. For those who walk the path of work — no less for Indra, king of the demigods, than for the tiny insect indragopa — He impartially ordains the due



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enjoyments of the fruits of activities in accordance with the chain of works previously performed.” Even the demigods are bound to the laws of karma, whereas a pure devotee of the Lord, having completely given up the desire for material enjoyment, successfully burns to ashes all traces of karma.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 06.



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By mere humanitarianism or altruism, people do not actually become free from unhappiness.

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, in this world there are different varieties of mercy. But ordinary mercy cannot bring about the cessation of all unhappiness. In other words, there are many humanitarians, altruists and social reformers who certainly work for the betterment of humanity. Such persons are universally considered merciful. But in spite of their mercy, humanity continues to suffer in the grip of birth, old age, disease and death. I may distribute free food to the needy, but even after eating my merciful gift, the recipient will again become hungry, or he will suffer in some other way. In other words, by mere humanitarianism or altruism, people do not actually become free from unhappiness. Their unhappiness is merely postponed or altered.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 30.



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Lord Krishna can present Himself before the worshiper in five different manifestations.

“According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī should very seriously engage in regulated worship of the Deity. The Deity is a particular incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa can present Himself before the worshiper in five different manifestations, namely His original form as Kṛṣṇa (para), His quadruple expansions (vyūha), His pastime incarnations (vaibhava), the Supersoul (antaryāmī) and the Deity (arcā). Within the Deity form (arcā) is the Supersoul, who in turn is included within the Lord’s pastime forms (vaibhava).

The Supreme Lord’s vaibhava-prakāśa is an emanation from the catur-vyūha. This quadruple expansion of the Lord is situated within the supreme truth, Vāsudeva, who Himself is situated within the svayaṁ-prakāśa-tattva. This svayaṁ-prakāśa consists of expansions of the ultimate svayaṁ-rūpa-tattva, the original form of Kṛṣṇa within Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual sky. This hierarchy of the expansions of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world is realized even within the material world in terms of one’s eagerness to render service to the Lord. A beginner in the lowest stage of devotional service should try to dedicate all his activities to the satisfaction of the Lord and cultivate the worship of Kṛṣṇa in the temple.

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, all the plenary expansions of the Supreme Lord mentioned above descend into this world and enter within the Deity, who exhibits the function of the Supersoul by accompanying the daily life of the Vaiṣṇava. Although the vaibhava, or pastime expansions, of the Lord incarnate at specific times (rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan), the Supersoul and Deity forms are constantly available for the spiritual advancement of the devotees in this world.

As one comes to the madhyama-adhikārī platform, one is able to understand the expansions of the Supreme Lord, whereas the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī’s entire knowledge of the Lord is limited to the Deity. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa is so kind that to encourage even the



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lowest class of Vaiṣṇavas He condenses all of His various forms into the Deity so that by worshiping the Deity the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī devotee is worshiping all the forms of the Lord. As the devotee makes advancement, he can understand these forms as they appear in their own way, both within this world and in the spiritual sky.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 47.



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There are three classes of intelligent living beings within this world.

“According to Śrīla Madhvācārya there are three classes of intelligent living beings within this world, namely the demigods, ordinary human beings, and demons. A living being endowed with all auspicious qualities — in other words, a highly advanced devotee of the Lord — either on the earth or in the higher planetary systems is called a deva, or demigod. Ordinary human beings generally have good and bad qualities, and according to this mixture they enjoy and suffer on the earth. But those who are distinguished by their absence of good qualities and who are always inimical to pious life and the devotional service of the Lord are called asuras, or demons.

Of these three classes, the ordinary human beings and demons are terribly afflicted by birth, death and hunger, whereas the godly persons, the demigods, are aloof from such bodily distress. The demigods remain aloof from such distress because they are enjoying the results of their pious activities; by the laws of karma, they are unaware of the gross suffering of the material world. As the Lord says in Bhagavad-gītā (9.20):

*“traī-vidyā mām soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā yajñair iṣṭvā svar-gatiṁ prārthyante
te puṇyam āsādy surendra-lokam aśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān ”*

“Those who study the Vedas and drink the soma juice, seeking the heavenly planets, worship Me indirectly. They take birth on the planet of Indra, where they enjoy godly delights.” But the next verse of Bhagavad-gītā says that when one uses up the results of these pious activities, one has to forfeit his status as a demigod, along with the pleasure of the heavenly kingdom, and return to earth as a nara, or ordinary human being (kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti). In fact the laws of nature are so subtle that one may not even return to earth as a human, but may take birth as an insect or tree, depending on the particular configuration of his karma.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 49.



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Who is a pure devotee?

According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, the essence of a pure devotee's qualifications is one who has attracted the Lord by his love so that the Lord cannot give up the devotee's heart. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the word sākṣāt in this verse indicates that a pure devotee has realized knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, having given his heart to the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, who is all-attractive in six opulences, including beauty. A pure devotee can never be attracted by the fleshy bags of women's breasts or by the hallucinations of so-called society, friendship and love within the material world. Therefore his clean heart becomes a suitable abode for the Supreme Lord. A gentleman will live only in a clean place. He will not live in a polluted, contaminated place. Educated people in the Western countries are now greatly protesting the pollution of water and air by urban industrial enterprises. People are demanding the right to live in a clean place. Similarly, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme gentleman, and therefore He will not live in a polluted heart, nor will He appear within the polluted mind of a conditioned soul. When a devotee surrenders to Lord Kṛṣṇa and becomes a lover of the Lord by direct realization of Kṛṣṇa's all-attractive nature, the Lord makes His residence in the clean heart and mind of such a pure devotee.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 02 – Text 55.



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The arrangement for sense gratification is ultimately meant to bring the living entities to the single purpose of going back to Godhead.

“The three general divisions of material life are called deva, tiryak and nara — that is, demigods, subhuman creatures and human beings. In the various species of life there are various facilities for material sense gratification. Different species are distinguished by differently formed senses, such as the genitals, nostrils, tongue, ears and eyes. Pigeons, for example, are given the facility for almost unlimited sex. Bears have an ample opportunity for sleeping. Tigers and lions exhibit the propensities for fighting and meat-eating, horses are distinguished by their legs for swift running, vultures and eagles have keen eyesight, and so on. The human being is distinguished by his large brain, which is meant for understanding God.

The phrase sva-mātrātma-prasiddhaye is very significant in this verse. The word sva indicates possession. All living beings belong to the Supreme Lord (mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ). Therefore according to this verse they have two options — mātrā-prasiddhaye and ātma-prasiddhaye.

Mātrā refers to the material senses, and prasiddhaye refers to effective accomplishment. Therefore mātrā-prasiddhaye means “efficiently engaging in sense gratification.”

On the other hand, ātma-prasiddhaye refers to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. There are two categories of ātmā — the jīvātmā, or ordinary living entity, who is dependent, and the Paramātmā, the supreme living entity, who is independent. Some living entities desire to understand both categories of ātmā, and in this verse the word ātma-prasiddhaye indicates that the material world is created to give those living entities the opportunity to achieve such an understanding and thus return to the kingdom of God, where life is eternal and full of bliss and knowledge.



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Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī confirms this by quoting a verse from the veda-stuti of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.87.2):

*“buddhīndriya-manaḥ-prāṇān janānām asṛjat prabhuḥ
mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ ca ātmane 'kalpanāya ca”*

“The Lord created the intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the living beings for sense gratification, for performing sacrifices to attain higher births, and ultimately for offering sacrifices to the Supreme Soul.”

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the actual purpose of the Lord’s creation is only one: to facilitate the advancement of devotional service to the Lord Himself. Although it is stated that the Lord facilitates sense gratification, it should be understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not ultimately condone the foolishness of the conditioned souls. The Lord facilitates sense gratification (mātrā-prasiddhaye) so that the living entities will gradually understand the futility of trying to enjoy without Him. Every living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. In the Vedic literature the Lord gives a regulative program so that the living beings can gradually exhaust their tendencies to be foolish and learn the value of surrender unto Him. The Lord is undoubtedly the reservoir of all beauty, bliss and satisfaction, and it is the duty of every living entity to engage in the loving service of the Lord. Although there are apparently two purposes for creation, it should be understood that ultimately the purpose is one. The arrangement for sense gratification is ultimately meant to bring the living entities to the single purpose of going back home, back to Godhead.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 03.



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The actual purpose of the Lords creation is only one.

According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the actual purpose of the Lord's creation is only one: to facilitate the advancement of devotional service to the Lord Himself. Although it is stated that the Lord facilitates sense gratification, it should be understood that the Supreme Personality of Godhead does not ultimately condone the foolishness of the conditioned souls. The Lord facilitates sense gratification (mātrā-prasiddhaye) so that the living entities will gradually understand the futility of trying to enjoy without Him. Every living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. In the Vedic literature the Lord gives a regulative program so that the living beings can gradually exhaust their tendencies to be foolish and learn the value of surrender unto Him. The Lord is undoubtedly the reservoir of all beauty, bliss and satisfaction, and it is the duty of every living entity to engage in the loving service of the Lord. Although there are apparently two purposes for creation, it should be understood that ultimately the purpose is one. The arrangement for sense gratification is ultimately meant to bring the living entities to the single purpose of going back home, back to Godhead.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 03



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If a living entity were subject to the results of his previous activities there would be no scope for free will.

“The argument may be given that if a living entity were subject to the results of his previous activities there would be no scope for free will; once having committed a sinful action, the living entity would be bound in an endless chain of suffering, being perpetually subject to previous reactions. According to this speculation there cannot be a just and omniscient God, since the living entity is forced to commit sinful activities by the reactions of his previous activities, which were reactions to still previous activities. Since even an ordinary gentleman will not unfairly punish an innocent person, how could there be a God witnessing the helpless suffering of the conditioned souls within this world? This foolish argument can easily be refuted by a practical example. If I purchase a ticket for an airline flight, board the plane and commence the flight, once the plane has taken off my decision to board the plane forces me to continue flying until the plane lands. But although I am forced to accept the reaction of this decision, on board the plane I have many new decisions I can make. I may accept the food and drink from the stewardesses or reject it, I may read a magazine or newspaper, I may sleep, walk up and down the aisle, converse with other passengers, and so on. In other words, although the general context — flying to a particular city — is forcibly imposed upon me as a reaction to my previous decision to board the plane, even within that situation I am constantly making new decisions and creating new reactions. For example, if I cause a disturbance on the airplane I may be arrested when the plane lands. On the other hand, if I make friends with a businessman sitting next to me on the plane, such a contact may lead to a favorable business transaction in the future. Similarly, although the living entity is forced to accept a particular body by the laws of karma, within the human form of life there is always scope for free will and decision-making. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead cannot be considered unjust for holding the living entity in human life responsible for his present activities despite the living entity’s undergoing the reactions of his previous work.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 06.



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In certain cases Brahmā himself may not be a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has quoted the following verse as evidence that Lord Brahmā is supposed to go back to Godhead at the time of annihilation:

*“brahmaṇā saha te sarve samprāpte pratisaṅcare
parasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ praviśanti param padam”*

“At the time of final annihilation all self-realized souls enter with Brahmā into the supreme abode.” Since Brahmā is sometimes considered the best devotee of the Supreme Lord, he surely should obtain liberation rather than merely entering into the unmanifest state of material nature called avyakta. In this connection Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that there is a class of nondevotees who attain the planet of Brahmā by performing aśvamedha-yajñas and other sacrifices, and in certain cases Brahmā himself may not be a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So the words avyaktam viśate sūkṣmam can be understood to indicate that such a nondevotee Brahmā cannot enter the spiritual sky, despite having achieved the ultimate universal status of material expertise. But when Brahmā is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the word avyaktam can be taken to indicate the spiritual sky; since the spiritual sky is not manifest to the conditioned souls, it may also be considered avyakta. If even Lord Brahmā cannot enter the kingdom of God without surrendering to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then what to speak of other so-called pious or expert nondevotees.

In this regard Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has pointed out that there are three categories within the status of Brahmā, namely those of karmī, jñānī and devotee. A Brahmā who is the most exalted karmī of the universe will have to come back to the material world; a living entity who has achieved the post of Brahmā by being the greatest speculative philosopher within the universe may attain impersonal liberation; and a living entity who has been awarded the post of Brahmā due to being a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters into the personal abode of the Lord. In the



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Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.15) yet another case is described: a Brahmā who is a devotee of the Lord but who has the tendency to think himself independent of or equal to the Lord may achieve Mahā-Viṣṇu's abode at the time of annihilation, but when creation begins again he has to return and again take the post of Brahmā. The word used in this case is bheda-dṛṣṭyā, which refers to the tendency to think oneself independently powerful. The various destinations possible for such an exalted living entity as a Lord Brahmā definitely prove that any material position is worthless for guaranteeing an eternal life of bliss and knowledge. In Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa promises that if one gives up all other so-called obligations and surrenders to the devotional service of the Lord, the Lord will personally protect him and bring him back to the supreme abode in the spiritual sky. It is futile and foolish to try to achieve perfection by one's own strenuous endeavor and not surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Such a blind attempt is described in the Eighteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā as bahulāyāsam, indicating that it is work in the material mode of passion. Brahmā is the lord of passion, and his creation and management of the entire universe are certainly bahulāyāsam, or strenuous endeavor, in the most exalted sense. But all such passionate work, even that of Lord Brahmā, is ultimately useless without surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 12.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Lord's universal form is the temporary imaginary resemblance of His personal form within the kingdom of Maya.

According to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura the word vairājaḥ in this verse indicates the totality of the individual conditioned souls who originally take birth from Brahmā and are amalgamated back into him at the time of annihilation. By the manifestation of the virāṭ-puruṣa, the universal form of the Lord, there is a temporary display of forms, qualities and activities within the material creation. But the entire cosmic scene reverts to inert formlessness when the creation is withdrawn by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore the Lord's universal form cannot be accepted as an eternal form of the Lord. It is merely the temporary imaginary resemblance of His personal form within the kingdom of māyā. In the First Canto of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, as well as in the Second Canto, the universal form of the Lord is clearly explained to be an imaginary form offered to the neophyte for meditation on God. Those who are excessively materialistic are totally unable to understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is actually sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha, or the eternal form of bliss and knowledge, transcendental to the exhibition of material energy. Therefore to encourage such gross materialists to become faithful theists, the Vedic literature instructs them to meditate upon the physical universe as the gigantic body of the Supreme Lord. This pantheistic conception does not reflect the ultimate reality of the Supreme Lord but is a technique to bring the mind gradually toward God.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 12



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



What will happen to Lord Brahma at the time of annihilation?

“Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has quoted the following verse as evidence that Lord Brahmā is supposed to go back to Godhead at the time of annihilation:

brahmaṇā saha te sarve samprāpte pratisaṅcare
parasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ praviśanti param padam

“At the time of final annihilation all self-realized souls enter with Brahmā into the supreme abode.” Since Brahmā is sometimes considered the best devotee of the Supreme Lord, he surely should obtain liberation rather than merely entering into the unmanifest state of material nature called avyakta. In this connection Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that there is a class of nondevotees who attain the planet of Brahmā by performing aśvamedha-yajñas and other sacrifices, and in certain cases Brahmā himself may not be a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So the words avyaktam viśate sūkṣmam can be understood to indicate that such a nondevotee Brahmā cannot enter the spiritual sky, despite having achieved the ultimate universal status of material expertise. But when Brahmā is a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead the word avyaktam can be taken to indicate the spiritual sky; since the spiritual sky is not manifest to the conditioned souls, it may also be considered avyakta. If even Lord Brahmā cannot enter the kingdom of God without surrendering to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then what to speak of other so-called pious or expert nondevotees.

In this regard Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has pointed out that there are three categories within the status of Brahmā, namely those of karmī, jñānī and devotee. A Brahmā who is the most exalted karmī of the universe will have to come back to the material world; a living entity who has achieved the post of Brahmā by being the greatest speculative philosopher within the universe may attain impersonal liberation; and a living entity who has been awarded the post of Brahmā due to being a great devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters into the personal abode of the Lord. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.32.15) yet another case is described: a Brahmā who is a devotee of



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the Lord but who has the tendency to think himself independent of or equal to the Lord may achieve Mahā-Viṣṇu's abode at the time of annihilation, but when creation begins again he has to return and again take the post of Brahmā. The word used in this case is bheda-dṛṣṭyā, which refers to the tendency to think oneself independently powerful. The various destinations possible for such an exalted living entity as a Lord Brahmā definitely prove that any material position is worthless for guaranteeing an eternal life of bliss and knowledge. In Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa promises that if one gives up all other so-called obligations and surrenders to the devotional service of the Lord, the Lord will personally protect him and bring him back to the supreme abode in the spiritual sky. It is futile and foolish to try to achieve perfection by one's own strenuous endeavor and not surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Such a blind attempt is described in the Eighteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā as bahulāyāsam, indicating that it is work in the material mode of passion. Brahmā is the lord of passion, and his creation and management of the entire universe are certainly bahulāyāsam, or strenuous endeavor, in the most exalted sense. But all such passionate work, even that of Lord Brahmā, is ultimately useless without surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 12.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The reverse order, how creation is wound up?

At the time of annihilation the five great elements, namely earth, water, fire, air and ether, merge into false ego in the mode of ignorance, from which they were originally generated; the ten senses and intelligence merge into false ego in passion; and the mind, along with the demigods, merges into false ego in the mode of goodness, which then merges into mahat-tattva, which further takes shelter of the prakṛti or unmanifest pradhāna.

As described above, each of the gross elements is wound up when its distinguishing quality is removed; the element then merges into the previous element. This can be understood as follows. In space or ether there is the quality of sound. In air there are the qualities of sound and touch. In fire there are sound, touch and form. In water there are sound, touch, form and taste. And in earth there are sound, touch, form, taste and aroma. Therefore from ether down to earth each element is distinguished by the addition of its own unique quality, called guṇa-viśeṣam. When that quality is removed, an element becomes nondifferent from its previous element and thus merges into it. For example, when great winds take aroma away from earth, earth contains only sound, touch, form and taste and thus becomes nondifferent from water, into which it merges. Similarly when water loses its rasa, or taste, it contains only sound, touch and form, thus becoming nondifferent from fire, which also contains those three qualities. So the wind takes away aroma to merge earth into water and takes away taste to merge water into fire. Then when the universal darkness removes form from fire, fire merges into air. Space then removes the sense of touch from air, and air merges into space. The Supreme Personality of Godhead as the time element removes sound from space, and space then merges into the false ego in the mode of ignorance, from which it arose. Finally, false ego is merged into the mahat-tattva, which is merged into the unmanifest pradhāna, and thus the universe is annihilated.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 16



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The basis of material enjoyment is the particular body one has acquired.

The basis of material enjoyment is the particular body one has acquired. The material body is karma-citaḥ, the accumulated result of one's previous material activities. If one is awarded a body decorated with beauty, education, popularity, strength and so on, his standard of material enjoyment is certainly high class. On the other hand, if one is ugly, mentally retarded, crippled or repulsive to others, there is very little hope for his material happiness. In both cases, however, the situation is flickering and temporary. One who has acquired an attractive body should not rejoice, since death will quickly bring an end to such an intoxicating situation. Similarly, one who has taken birth in an obnoxious situation should not lament, since his suffering is also temporary. The beautiful man and the ugly man, the rich and the poor, the educated and the foolish should all endeavor to become Kṛṣṇa conscious so that they can be elevated to their eternal constitutional situation, which is to reside in the planets beyond this material universe. Originally every living entity is unimaginably beautiful, intelligent, wealthy, and so strong that his spiritual body lives forever. But we foolishly give up this eternal, blissful situation because we are unwilling to meet the condition for eternal life. The condition is that one should be a lover of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. Although love of Kṛṣṇa is the most exquisite ecstasy, surpassing by millions of times the most intense pleasure of the material universe, we foolishly break off our loving affair with the Supreme Lord and artificially try to become independent enjoyers in the material atmosphere of self-delusion and false pride.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 20.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Material happiness is actually another type of punishment.

Although we mistakenly consider material sense gratification the ultimate reward of life, material happiness is actually another type of punishment, since it entices one to continue rotating in the cycle of birth and death. In the Western countries violent prisoners are placed in solitary confinement whereas well-behaved prisoners are sometimes allowed to work in the warden's garden or library as a reward. But any position in prison is ultimately a punishment. Similarly, the existence of higher and lower categories of material sense gratification does not explain the living entity's ultimate reward, which must constitute the natural antithesis of the punishment of material existence. That actual reward is an eternal life of bliss and knowledge in the kingdom of God, where there is no punishment. The kingdom of God is Vaikuṇṭha, or unconditional pleasure. There is no punishment in the spiritual world; it is a place of ever-increasing pleasure.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 21.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



In kaliyuga extreme austerities are not appreciated.

One should live in the association of Vaiṣṇavas, where the common goal is advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Especially in the Kali-yuga, if one tries to remain physically isolated from all others the result will be degradation or insanity. Aniketatām means that one should not be intoxicated by the ephemeral satisfaction of one's "home sweet home," which will vanish at any moment by the unforeseen circumstances produced by one's previous activities. In this age it is not actually possible to dress in tree bark in modern cities, nor to wear mere scraps of cloth. Previously, human culture accommodated those practicing tapasya, or penances in the interest of spiritual advancement. In this age, however, the most urgent necessity is for preaching the message of Bhagavad-gītā throughout human society. Therefore, it is recommended that Vaiṣṇavas dress with clean and neat cloth, covering the body decently so that the conditioned souls will not be frightened or repulsed by the severe penances of the Vaiṣṇavas. In the Kali-yuga the conditioned souls are extremely attached to material sense gratification, and extreme austerities are not appreciated, but are instead considered abominable denials of the flesh. Of course, austerity is required for spiritual advancement, but the practical example set by Śrīla Prabhupāda in successfully spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was that all material things should be used to attract people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, Vaiṣṇavas may at times adopt ordinary dress to serve the higher principle of distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 25.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One should have complete faith in transcendental literatures.

“Śrīla Madhvācārya has quoted the following statement from the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa: “One should have complete faith in transcendental literature such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other literature that directly glorifies the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should also have faith in Vaiṣṇava tantras, the original Vedas, and Mahābhārata, which includes Bhagavad-gītā and which is considered the fifth Veda. The Vedic knowledge originally emanated from the breathing of Viṣṇu, and Vedic literature has been compiled in literary form by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of Viṣṇu. Therefore, Lord Viṣṇu should be understood to be the personal speaker of all this Vedic literature.

“There are other Vedic literatures, called kalā-vidyā, which give instructions in material arts and sciences. Since all such Vedic arts and sciences are ultimately intended to be used to render devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Keśava, saintly persons in the renounced order of life should never blaspheme such apparently mundane literatures; because such literatures are indirectly connected with the Supreme Lord, one may go to hell for blaspheming these secondary literatures.

“Śraddhā indicates a faithful mentality, which can be analyzed in two sections. The first type of faith is a firm conviction that all the statements of the multifarious Vedic literatures are true. In other words, the understanding that Vedic knowledge in general is infallible is called śraddhā, or faith. A second type of faith is the belief that one must personally carry out a particular injunction of Vedic literature in order to achieve his goal in life. A devotee of the Supreme Lord should thus apply the first type of faith to the various kalā-vidyās, or Vedic material arts and sciences, but he should not accept such scriptures as pointing out his personal goal in life. Nor should he carry out any Vedic injunction that is contradictory to the injunctions of Vaiṣṇava scriptures such as the Pañcarātra.

“Thus one should faithfully accept all Vedic literature as directly or indirectly describing the Supreme Personality of Godhead and should not blaspheme any portion of it. Even for



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Lord Brahmā, as well as for other creatures, down to the insignificant unmoving species such as trees and stones, blasphemy of any Vedic literature causes one to merge into the darkness of ignorance. Thus the suras — the demigods, great sages and devotees of the Lord — should understand that the Pañcarātric literatures, as well as the four Vedas, the original Rāmāyaṇa, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Purāṇas, and the Mahābhārata, are Vedic literatures that establish the supremacy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the unique transcendental position of the Lord’s devotees according to their status of spiritual advancement. Any other vision of Vedic literatures is to be considered an illusion. In all authorized religious scriptures the ultimate goal is to understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller of everything and everyone, and that the Lord’s devotees are not different from Him, although such devotees are to be understood in terms of their level of spiritual advancement.” Lord Kṛṣṇa has stated in Bhagavad-gītā, vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo/ vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham: “By all the Vedas, I am to be known; indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta, and I am the knower of the Vedas.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 26



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(Q & A Format)



Every negative injunction is understood to have a specific limit in scriptures.

Vedic śruti (śabda) forbids us to speculate upon the Absolute Truth, such restrictive injunctions indirectly constitute positive assertions of the existence of the supreme living entity. In fact, the Vedic restrictions are meant to save one from the false path of mental speculation and ultimately bring one to the point of devotional surrender. As Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself states in Bhagavad-gītā, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: by all Vedic literatures the Supreme Personality of Godhead is to be known. The assertion that a particular process, such as mental speculation, is useless (*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*) constitutes an indirect assertion of the existence of a correct path of achieving the Supreme. As Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has stated, *sarvasya niṣedhasya sāvadhivāt*: “Every negative injunction is understood to have a specific limit. Negative injunctions cannot be taken as applicable in all cases.” For example, a negative injunction is that no living entity can be equal to or greater than the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam clearly states that because of the intense love of the residents of Vṛndāvana for Kṛṣṇa, they sometimes assume a superior position. Thus mother Yaśodā binds Kṛṣṇa with ropes, and the influential cowherd boys sometimes ride on the shoulders of Kṛṣṇa or defeat Him in wrestling. Negative injunctions, therefore, may sometimes be adjusted according to the transcendental situation.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 36.



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(Q & A Format)



Mere logic cannot explain how even material objects expand their potency.

“Mere logic cannot explain how even material objects expand their potency. These things can be understood by mature observation. The Absolute Truth expands His potency in the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the material world just as fire expands its potency of heat.” (Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.3.2) Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that one can understand the power of a valuable gem not by logical statements but by observing the effect of the gem. Similarly, one can understand the potency of a mantra by observing its power to achieve a particular effect. Such potency doesn’t depend on so-called logic. There is no logical necessity for a seed’s growing into a tree and giving fruits that nourish the human body. One may argue that the genetic code for the entire tree is contained within the seed. But there is no logical necessity for the existence of the seed, nor for the seed’s expanding itself into a gigantic tree. Ex post facto, or after the manifestation of the wonderful material nature, the foolish material scientist traces out the expansion of a seed’s potency in an apparently logical sequence of events. But there is nothing within the realm of so-called pure logic that dictates that a seed should expand into a tree. Rather, such expansion should be understood to be the potency of the tree.

Similarly, the potency of a jewel is its mystic power, and various mantras also contain innate potencies. Ultimately the mahā-mantra — Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare — has the potency to transfer one to the spiritual world of bliss and knowledge. In the same way, the Absolute Truth has the natural quality of expanding itself into innumerable varieties of material and spiritual worlds. We may logically describe this expansion after the fact, but we cannot deny the expansion of the Absolute Truth. The conditioned soul who purifies his consciousness through the process of devotional service can scientifically observe the expansion of the Absolute Truth as described here, just as one who is not blind can observe the expansion of a seed into a huge tree. One can understand the potency of a seed not by speculation but rather by practical observation. Similarly, one must purify his vision so that he can



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practically observe the expansion of the Absolute Truth. Such observation can take place either by the ears or by the eyes. Vedic knowledge is śabda-brahma, or transcendental potency in the form of sound vibration. Therefore, one can observe the functions of the Absolute Truth through submissive hearing of transcendental sound. śāstra-cakṣus. When one's consciousness becomes fully purified one can perceive the Absolute Truth with all of one's spiritualized senses.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 37.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The material world is not false.

“The Absolute Truth possesses innumerable potencies (uru-śakti brahmaiva bhāti). Thus by the expansion of the Absolute Truth the gross and subtle features of the material world become manifest. As stated by Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, kāryaṁ kāraṇād bhinnam na bhavati: “The result is not different from its cause.” Therefore, since the Absolute is eternal existence, this material world, being the potency of the Absolute, must also be accepted as real, although the various manifestations of the material world are temporary and thus illusory. The material world should be understood to consist of the bewildering interactions of real elements. The material world is not false in the imaginary sense of the Buddhists and Māyāvādīs, who state that in fact the material world does not exist outside the mind of the observer. The material world, as the potency of the Absolute, has real existence. But the living entity becomes bewildered by the temporary manifestations, foolishly taking them to be permanent. Thus the material world functions as an illusory potency, causing the living entity to forget the spiritual world, wherein life is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. Because the material world thus bewilders the conditioned soul, it is called illusory. When a magician performs his tricks onstage, that which the audience apparently sees is an illusion. But the magician actually exists, and the hat and rabbit exist, although the appearance of a rabbit coming out of a hat is an illusion. Similarly, when the living entity identifies himself as part and parcel of the material world, thinking, “I am American,” “I am Indian,” “I am Russian,” “I am black,” “I am white,” he is bewildered by the magic of the Lord’s illusory potency. The conditioned soul must come to understand, “I am a pure spirit soul, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Now let me stop my useless activities and serve Kṛṣṇa, since I am part of Him.” Then he is free from the illusion of māyā. If one artificially tries to escape the clutches of the illusory energy by declaring that there is no illusory potency and that this world is false, he merely falls into another illusion created by māyā to keep him in ignorance. Kṛṣṇa states in Bhagavad-gītā (7.14):

*“daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te”*



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Unless one surrenders at the lotus feet of Māyeśa, the Lord of the illusory potency, there is no possibility of escaping from illusion. Childishly declaring that there is no illusory potency is useless, since māyā is duratyayā, or insurpassable for the tiny living entity. But Lord Kṛṣṇa, the omnipotent Personality of Godhead, can immediately call off the illusory potency.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 37



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(Q & A Format)



One can understand the existence of the absolute truth by the expansion of its potencies.

“The Absolute contains multipotencies, as stated in the Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad): parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate. The Absolute Truth is not śakti, or energy, but śaktimān, the possessor of innumerable potencies. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, one should submissively hear these authorized descriptions of the Absolute Truth. As stated in the previous verse, yathānalam arciṣaḥ svāḥ: the insignificant sparks of a fire have no power to illuminate the blazing fire, which is itself the source of illumination. Similarly, the tiny living entity, who is like a spark of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, cannot illuminate the Personality of Godhead by his insignificant intellectual power. One may argue that the sun expands its potency in the form of its rays and it is through the illumination of those rays that we are able to see the sun. In the same way, we should be able to perceive the Absolute Truth by the expansion of its potency. In answer to this it may be stated that if the sun creates a cloud covering the sky, then despite the presence of sun rays the sun cannot be seen. Therefore, ultimately the power to see the sun depends not only on the sun’s rays but on the presence of a clear sky, which is also an arrangement by the sun. Similarly, as stated in this verse, one can understand the existence of the Absolute Truth by the expansion of its potencies.

*“atas tad apavādārthaṁ bhaja sarvātmanā harim
paśyaṁs tad-ātmakam viśvaṁ sthity-utpatty-apyayā yataḥ”*

“You should always know that this cosmic manifestation is created, maintained and annihilated by the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently, everything within this cosmic manifestation is under the control of the Lord. To be enlightened by this perfect knowledge, one should always engage himself in the devotional service of the Lord.” (Bhāg. 4.29.79) As stated here, bhaja sarvātmanā harim: one must worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead so that one’s consciousness will become clean and pure, just like the clear blue sky in which the potent sun is fully manifest. When one sees the sun, he immediately sees the sun’s rays in full potency. Similarly, if one engages in the



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devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, one's mind becomes cleansed of material dirt, and thus he can see not only the Lord but the Lord's expansions as the spiritual world, as the pure devotees, as the Paramātmā, as the impersonal Brahman effulgence and as the subsequent creation of the material world, the shadow of the kingdom of God (chāyeva), in which so many material varieties become manifest."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 37.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



In the state of Prasupti or deep sleep, both the mind and the sense become inactive.

“When a living entity is awake the material senses and mind are constantly active. Similarly, when one is sleeping the false ego recollects one’s waking experiences, and thus one experiences dreams or fragments of dreams while sleeping. But in the state of prasupti, or deep sleep, both the mind and the senses become inactive, and the false ego does not recall previous experiences or desires. The subtle mind and false ego are called liṅga-śarīra, or the subtle material body. This liṅga-śarīra is experienced in the form of temporary material designations such as “I am a rich man,” “I am a strong man,” “I am black,” “I am white,” “I am American,” “I am Chinese.” The sum total of one’s illusory conceptions of oneself is called ahaṅkāra, or false ego. And due to this illusory conception of life the living entity transmigrates from one species of life to another, as clearly explained in Bhagavad-gītā. The spirit soul, however, does not change its constitutional position of eternity, knowledge and bliss, although the soul may temporarily forget this position. To cite an analogous situation, if one dreams at night that he is walking in the forest, such a dream does not change one’s actual position of lying in bed within his apartment. Thus it is stated in this verse, kūṭa-stha āśayam ṛte: despite the transformations of the subtle body, the spirit soul does not change. Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has given the following example to illustrate this point. Etāvantam kalam sukham aham asvāpsam, na kiñcid avediṣam. One often thinks, “I was sleeping very peacefully, although I was not dreaming or aware of anything.” It can be logically understood that one cannot remember something of which he has had no experience. Therefore, since one remembers peacefully sleeping although there was no mental or sensual experience, such a memory should be understood to be a vague experience of the spirit soul.

Śrīla Madhvācārya has explained that the demigods, who are a superior race of humanlike entities on the higher planetary systems of this universe, do not actually undergo the gross ignorance of deep sleep as do ordinary human beings. Because the demigods have superior intelligence, they are not merged into ignorance at the time of sleeping. In



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Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa says, mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca. Sleep is apohanam, or forgetfulness. Sometimes by dreaming there is smṛti, or memory of one's actual condition, although in a dream one may experience one's family or friends in an altered, illusory state. But all such conditions of remembering and forgetting are due to the presence of the Supersoul within the heart. By the mercy of the Supersoul one can have a preliminary glimpse of the soul by remembering how one was peacefully resting even without mental or sensual experience."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 39



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



No one can refrain from doing something not even for a moment.

“As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (3.5):

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ

“All men are forced to act helplessly according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.” Since the living entity cannot remain inactive, he must learn to dedicate his activities to the Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments on this verse from Bhagavad-gītā as follows: “It is not a question of embodied life, but it is the nature of the soul to be always active. Without the presence of the spirit soul, the material body cannot move. The body is only a dead vehicle to be worked by the spirit soul, which is always active and cannot stop even for a moment. As such, the spirit soul has to be engaged in the good work of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, otherwise it will be engaged in occupations dictated by illusory energy. In contact with material energy, the spirit soul acquires material modes, and to purify the soul from such affinities it is necessary to engage in the prescribed duties enjoined in the śāstras. But if the soul is engaged in his natural function of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whatever he is able to do is good for him.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 41.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Vedic scriptures describes the primary purpose indirectly conceding the actual purpose.

“If a father tells his child, “You must take this medicine by my order,” the child may become fearful and rebellious and reject the medicine. Therefore, the father entices his child by saying, “I am going to give you a delicious piece of candy. But if you want this candy, first just take this little bit of medicine, and then you can have the candy.” Such indirect persuasion is called *parokṣa-vādaḥ*, or an indirect description that conceals the actual purpose. The father presents his proposal to the child as if the ultimate goal were to receive the candy and only a minor condition must be fulfilled to receive it. Actually, however, the father’s goal is to administer the medicine to the child and cure him of his disease. Thus, describing the primary purpose indirectly and concealing it with a secondary proposal is called *parokṣa-vādaḥ*, or indirect persuasion.

Since the great majority of conditioned souls are addicted to sense gratification (*pravṛttir eṣā bhūtānām*), the Vedic karma-kāṇḍa rituals offer them a chance to become free from temporary materialistic sense gratification by making them greedy for fruitive Vedic results such as promotion to heaven or a powerful ruling position on earth. In all Vedic rituals Viṣṇu is worshiped, and thus one is gradually promoted to the understanding that one’s actual self-interest is to surrender to Viṣṇu. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum*. Such an indirect method is prescribed for *bālānām*, those who are childish or foolish. An intelligent person can immediately understand by direct analysis the actual purpose of Vedic literature as described by the Lord Himself (*vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyāḥ*). All Vedic knowledge ultimately aims at achieving shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Without such shelter one must rotate within the 8,400,000 species offered by the illusory energy of the Lord.

In Lord Caitanya’s movement there is no need to childishly pursue fruitive material results and gradually be dragged to actual knowledge. According to Caitanya Mahāprabhu:



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*“harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā”*

In Kali-yuga life is very short (prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ), and people are generally undisciplined (mandāḥ), misguided (sumanda-matayaḥ), and overwhelmed by the unfavorable results of their previous activities (manda-bhāgyāḥ). Thus their minds are never peaceful (upadrutāḥ), and their very brief life span vitiates the possibility of their gradually progressing through the path of Vedic ritualistic activities. Therefore, the only hope is to chant the holy names of the Lord, harer nāma. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.51) it is stated:

*“kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet”*

Kali-yuga is an ocean of hypocrisy and pollution. In Kali-yuga all natural elements are polluted, such as water, earth, sky, mind, intelligence and ego. The only auspicious aspect of this fallen age is the process of chanting the holy names of the Lord (asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ). Simply by the delightful process of kṛṣṇa-kīrtana one is freed from his connection to this fallen age (mukta-saṅga) and goes back home, back to Godhead (param vrajet). Sometimes the preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement also use the parokṣa, or indirect method of persuasion, offering a nice transcendental sweet to the conditioned soul to entice him to come to the lotus feet of the Lord. Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s movement is kevala ānanda-kāṇḍa, simply blissful. But by the mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu even one who is indirectly attracted to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement achieves very quickly the perfection of life and goes back home, back to Godhead.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 03 – Text 44.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Those who do not accept the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can be considered in two categories.

Those who do not accept the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can be considered in two categories. Those engaged in sense gratification are easily conquered by the demigods through various weapons such as hunger, thirst, sexual desire, lamentation for the past and vain hoping for the future. Such materialistic fools, infatuated with the material world, are easily controlled by the demigods, who are the ultimate supplying agents of sense gratification. But according to Śrīdhara Svāmī, persons who attempt to subdue the desires of the material senses and thus avoid the control of the demigods without surrendering to the Supreme Lord are even more foolish than the sense gratifiers. Although crossing the ocean of sense gratification, those who perform severe penances without service to the Lord eventually drown in tiny puddles of anger. One who simply performs material penances does not actually purify his heart.

By one's material determination one may restrict the activities of the senses although one's heart is still filled with material desires. The practical result of this is krodha, or anger. We have seen artificial performers of penance who have become very bitter and angry through denial of the senses. Being indifferent to the Supreme Lord, such persons do not achieve ultimate liberation, nor can they enjoy material sense gratification; rather, they become angry, and through cursing others or enjoying false pride they uselessly exhaust the results of their painful austerities. It is understood that when a yogī curses he diminishes the mystic power he has accumulated.

Thus, anger gives neither liberation nor material sense gratification but merely burns up all the results of material penances and austerities. Being useless, such anger is compared to a useless puddle found in a cow's hoofprint. Thus after crossing over the ocean of sense gratification the great yogīs who are indifferent to the Supreme Lord drown in puddles of anger.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Although the demigods admit that the devotees of the Lord actually conquer the miseries of material life, it is understood here that a similar result is not to be obtained by so-called yogīs who are not interested in devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 04 – Text 11.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Those who are not situated in pure Krishna consciousness are always inclined toward material sense gratification.

Those who are not situated in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness are always inclined toward material sense gratification in the form of illicit sex, meat-eating and intoxication. They simply desire a party life of eat, drink and be merry. Such materialistic persons are unwilling to give up such temporary gratification because they are firmly bound up in the bodily concept of life. For such persons there are numerous Vedic injunctions for rituals that bestow material sense pleasure in a regulated manner. The conditioned soul thereby becomes accustomed to indirectly worshiping the Supreme Lord by accepting the austerity of regulated sense gratification in obedience to the Vedic way of life. Through purification the living entity gradually develops a higher taste and becomes directly attracted to the spiritual nature of the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 11.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



All material activities, whether pious or impious, are inevitably contaminated by sinful activity.

“Those who are completely in the darkness of ignorance and thus bereft even of material pious life commit innumerable sinful activities and suffer greatly. Due to such intense suffering such persons sometimes seek the shelter of the devotees of the Lord and, being blessed by such transcendental association, are sometimes elevated to the highest perfectional stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Those who are not completely sinful experience some mitigation of the miseries of material life and thus develop a false sense of well-being within the material world. Because those who are materially pious generally obtain worldly prosperity, bodily beauty and a pleasant family situation, they become falsely proud of their position and are not inclined to associate with or accept instructions from the devotees of the Lord. Unfortunately, all material activities, whether pious or impious, are inevitably contaminated by sinful activity. Those who are proud of their piety and do not like to hear about Kṛṣṇa sooner or later fall down from their artificial position. Every living entity is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, until we surrender to Kṛṣṇa, our position is actually always impious. The word akṣaṇikāḥ (“not having even a moment to reflect”) is significant in this verse. Materialistic persons cannot spare a single moment for their eternal self-interest. This is a symptom of misfortune. Such persons are considered to be killing their own souls because by their obstinacy they are preparing a dark future for themselves from which they will not escape for a very long time.

A sick man receiving medical treatment may be encouraged by the preliminary results of the doctor’s care. But if the patient becomes falsely proud of the preliminary progress in his treatment and prematurely gives up the doctor’s orders, thinking himself already cured, there will undoubtedly be a relapse. The words ye kaivalyam asamprāptāḥ in this verse clearly indicate that material piety is a long way from perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth. If one gives up his spiritual progress before achieving the lotus feet of



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Kṛṣṇa, he will undoubtedly fall back down into the most unpleasant material situation, even if he has achieved impersonal realization of the Brahman effulgence. As stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ patanty adhaḥ.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 16.



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(Q & A Format)



The Supreme living entity, Krishna, eternally manifests Himself as the catur-vyuha or quadruple plenary expansion.

The supreme living entity, Kṛṣṇa, eternally manifests Himself as the catur-vyūha, or quadruple plenary expansion. Although the Absolute Truth is one without a second, the Absolute Truth displays His unlimited opulences and potencies by expanding Himself in innumerable plenary forms, of which the catur-vyūha is a principal expansion. The original being is Vāsudeva, the Personality of Godhead. When the Godhead manifests His primeval energies and opulences, He is called Saṅkarṣaṇa. Pradyumna is the basis of the Viṣṇu expansion who is the soul of the entire universe, and Aniruddha is the basis of the personal manifestation of Viṣṇu as the Supersoul of every individual entity within the universe. Among the four plenary expansions mentioned here, the original expansion is Vāsudeva, and the other three are considered to be particular manifestations of Him.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 29-30.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Lord Caitanya is Lord Krishna Himself.

*“kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ”*

“Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that kṛṣṇa-varṇam means Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Kṛṣṇa-varṇam and Kṛṣṇa Caitanya are equivalent. The name Kṛṣṇa appears with both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Kṛṣṇa. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He always engages in describing Kṛṣṇa and thus enjoying transcendental bliss by chanting and remembering His name and form. Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself appears as Lord Caitanya to preach the highest gospel. Varṇayati means ‘utters’ or ‘describes.’ Lord Caitanya always chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and describes it also, and because He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, whoever meets Him will automatically chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and later describe it to others. He injects one with transcendental Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which merges the chanter in transcendental bliss. In all respects, therefore, He appears before everyone as Kṛṣṇa, either by personality or by sound. Simply by seeing Lord Caitanya one at once remembers Lord Kṛṣṇa. One may therefore accept Him as viṣṇu-tattva. In other words, Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

“Sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam further indicates that Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa. His body is always decorated with ornaments of sandalwood and with sandalwood paste. By His superexcellent beauty He subdues all the people of the age. In other descents the Lord sometimes used weapons to defeat the demoniac, but in this age the Lord subdues them with His all-attractive figure as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains that His beauty is His astra, or weapon, to subdue the demons. Because He is all-attractive, it is to be understood that all the demigods lived with Him as His companions. His acts were uncommon and His associates wonderful. When He propagated the saṅkīrtana movement, He attracted many great scholars and ācāryas, especially in Bengal and Orissa. Lord Caitanya is always accompanied by His best associates like Lord Nityānanda, Advaita, Gadādhara and Śrīvāsa.



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(Q & A Format)



“Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī cites a verse from the Vedic literature that says that there is no necessity of performing sacrificial demonstrations or ceremonial functions. He comments that instead of engaging in such external, pompous exhibitions, all people, regardless of caste, color or creed, can assemble together and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to worship Lord Caitanya. Kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam indicates that prominence should be given to the name Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chanted the name of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, to worship Lord Caitanya, everyone should together chant the mahā-mantra — Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. To propagate worship in churches, temples or mosques is not possible because people have lost interest in that. But anywhere and everywhere, people can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Thus worshiping Lord Caitanya, they can perform the highest activity and fulfill the highest religious purpose of satisfying the Supreme Lord.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 32.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The Supreme Lord has kindly invested all of His potencies in His Holyname.

The words *dhyeyaṁ sadā*, or “always to be meditated upon,” indicate that there are no hard-and-fast rules in this age for chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. In Kali-yuga the authorized process of meditation is to chant the holy names of the Lord, especially the mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This process is to be executed constantly and always (*sadā*). Similarly, Caitanya Mahāprabhu stated, *nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālāḥ*: in Kali-yuga, the Supreme Lord has kindly invested all of His potencies in His holy name, and there are no hard-and-fast rules for chanting such names. The mention of such rules refers to *kāla-deśa-niyama*, or regulations of time and place. Normally there are strict regulations governing the time, season, place, conditions, etc., under which one may execute a particular Vedic ceremony or chant a particular mantra. However, one should chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa everywhere and at all times, twenty-four hours a day. Thus there is no restriction in terms of time and place. This is the meaning of Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s statement.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 33.



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(Q & A Format)



Sincere follower of the Lord should never be discouraged in the execution of his prescribed duty.

“Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has stated, kalau dravya-deśa-kriyādi-janitam durvāram apāvitryam api nāśaṅkanīyam iti bhāvaḥ. In this age the world is so polluted by sinful life that it is very difficult to become free from all of the symptoms of Kali-yuga. Still, one who is faithfully serving in the missionary work of Caitanya Mahāprabhu need not fear occasional, unavoidable symptoms of Kali-yuga. The followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu strictly follow the four regulative principles of no illicit sex, no intoxication, no meat-eating and no gambling. They try to always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and engage in the service of the Lord. However, it may happen that by accident an occasional symptom of Kali-yuga such as envy, anger, lust, greed, etc., may momentarily appear in the life of a devotee. But if such a devotee is actually surrendered at the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, by His mercy such an unwanted symptom, or anartha, will quickly disappear. Therefore, a sincere follower of the Lord should never be discouraged in the execution of his prescribed duty but should be confident that he will be protected by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It is also mentioned in this verse, śiva-viriñci-nutam. Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are undoubtedly the two most powerful personalities within this universe. Still, they meticulously worship the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Why? Śaraṇyam. Even Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are not safe without the shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 33.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Why the incarnation of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is revealed in Vedic literature in a confidential discrete way.

“The Lord reveals Himself in each of the four ages — Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali — in a form appropriate for worship by the human beings of that age. In his Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (Pūrva-khaṇḍa 1.25), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

kathyate varṇa-nāmābhyāṁ śuklaḥ satya-yuge hariḥ
raktaḥ śyāmaḥ kramāt kṛṣṇas tretāyāṁ dvāpare kalau

“The Supreme Lord Hari is described in terms of His color and names as śukla [white, or the most pure] in Satya-yuga, and as red, dark blue and black respectively in Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.” Thus, although in each age various names suitable for glorifying the Lord are given, such as Haṁsa and Suparṇa in Satya-yuga, Viṣṇu and Yajña in Tretā-yuga, and Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa in Dvāpara-yuga, similar names are not given for Kali-yuga, although such names exist, in order to avoid disclosing cheaply the truth of the incarnation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

In Kali-yuga human society is infested with hypocrisy and superficiality. There is a strong tendency toward imitation and fraud in this age. Therefore the incarnation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is revealed in Vedic literature in a confidential, discrete way, so that it will be known to the authorized persons who can then propagate the mission of the Lord on the earth. We actually see in this modern age that many foolish and ordinary persons claim to be God or incarnations, avatāras, etc. There are many cheap philosophies and academies that promise, for a moderate fee, to make one God in a short time. In America one famous religious group promises its followers that they will all become the Supreme Lord in heaven. Such bogus preaching goes on in the name of Christianity. Thus, were Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s name widely spoken of in Vedic literature, there would soon be a veritable plague of imitation Caitanya Mahāprabhus infesting the world.



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(Q & A Format)



Therefore, to prevent this pandemonium, discretion is exercised in the Vedic literatures in Kali-yuga, and in a sober, concealed way the actual followers of Vedic culture are informed through the Vedic mantras of the descent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This discrete system, selected by the Lord Himself for His appearance in Kali-yuga, is proving to be greatly successful on the earth planet. And throughout the world millions of people are chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa without the unbearable harassment of hundreds and thousands of imitation Caitanya Mahāprabhhus. Those who seriously desire to approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead can easily understand the Lord's mission, whereas cynical materialistic rascals, puffed up by false prestige and madly considering their insignificant intelligence to be greater than the intelligence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, cannot understand the beautiful arrangements made by the Lord for His graceful descent into the material world. Thus, although Kṛṣṇa is śreyasām īśvaraḥ, or the Lord of all benedictions, such foolish persons turn away from the Lord's mission and in this way deprive themselves of their own true benefit in life."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 35.



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(Q & A Format)



Among the four ages – Satya, Treta, Dvapara and Kali, Kali-yuga is the best.

“It is stated here that among the four ages — Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali — Kali-yuga is actually the best because in this age the Lord mercifully distributes the highest perfection of consciousness, namely Kṛṣṇa consciousness, very freely. The word ārya has been defined by Śrīla Prabhupāda as “one who is advancing spiritually.” The nature of an advanced person is to search for the essence of life. For example, the essence of the material body is not the body itself but the spirit soul that is within the body; therefore an intelligent person gives more attention to the eternal spirit soul than to the temporary body. Similarly, although Kali-yuga is considered to be an ocean of contamination, there is also an ocean of good fortune in Kali-yuga, namely the saṅkīrtana movement. In other words, all of the degraded qualities of this age are completely counteracted by the process of chanting the holy names of the Lord. Thus it is stated in the Vedic language,

dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais tretāyām dvāpare 'rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam

“Whatever is achieved in Satya-yuga by meditation, in Tretā by offering ritual sacrifices and in Dvāpara by temple worship is achieved in Kali-yuga by chanting the names of Lord Keśava congregationally.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 36.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Krishna is not the superintendent of this world but rather the enjoyer of His own world.

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead is not primarily the superintendent of this world but rather the enjoyer of His own world, which is beyond the most fantastic dreams of the conditioned living entity. In other words, although the king or president of a country is ultimately the controller of the prison department, the king or president derives actual pleasure within his own palace and not in administering justice to the foolish prisoners. Similarly, the Lord appoints the demigods to administer the material creation on His behalf while He Himself personally enjoys the ocean of transcendental bliss in His own transcendental kingdom.

Thus, realization of the Lord within His own kingdom is far superior to the primitive understanding that the Lord is the “creator” of the prison of the material world. This realization of Bhagavān begins with understanding that there are innumerable Vaikuṇṭha planets in the spiritual sky and that on each of them a particular expansion of Nārāyaṇa dwells with His innumerable devotees who are attached to that particular form. The central and chief planet in the spiritual sky is called Kṛṣṇaloka, and there the Personality of Godhead exhibits His supreme and original form of Govinda. As confirmed by Lord Brahmā, govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi. Lord Brahmā also states:

*“īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam ”*

(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)

Thus, love of Kṛṣṇa and entrance into Kṛṣṇa’s planet in the spiritual sky is the most supremely perfect and exalted status of life available anywhere, at any time, throughout the totality of existence. That perfection is available in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the holy names of God: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Therefore every sane man, woman or child should deeply



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understand the unprecedented opportunity offered by Caitanya Mahāprabhu and seriously take up this chanting process. Only the most unfortunate and irrational person will neglect this transcendental opportunity.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 36.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



In former ages such as Satya-yuga human beings were perfectly qualified and easily performed even the most difficult spiritual processes.

In former ages such as Satya-yuga human beings were perfectly qualified and easily performed even the most difficult spiritual processes, meditating for many thousands of years practically without eating or sleeping. Thus, although in any age one who completely takes shelter of the Lord's holy name gets all perfection, the highly qualified inhabitants of Satya-yuga do not consider that merely moving the tongue and lips, chanting the Lord's holy name, is a complete process and that the Lord's holy name is the only shelter within the universe. They are more attracted to the difficult and elaborate yoga system of meditation, complete with sophisticated sitting postures, painstaking control of the breath and deep, extended meditations in trance on the Personality of Godhead within the heart. In Satya-yuga sinful life is practically unheard of, and therefore people are not afflicted with the terrible reactions seen in Kali-yuga, such as world war, famine, plague, drought, insanity, etc. Although in Satya-yuga people always worship the Personality of Godhead as the ultimate goal of life and meticulously follow His laws, called dharma, they do not feel themselves to be in a helpless condition, and thus they do not always experience intense love for the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 37.



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(Q & A Format)



The inhabitants of Satya-yuga and other ages eagerly desire to take birth in this age of kali.

“The Vedas contain information of past, present and future living conditions throughout the universe. This is not very wonderful. For example, although at present time in India we are experiencing spring weather, we know that in the future the torrid summer will come, followed by the rainy season, autumn and eventually winter and a new spring. Similarly, we know that these seasons have occurred repeatedly in the past. Thus, just as ordinary human beings can understand the past, present and future seasons of the earth, the liberated followers of Vedic culture can easily understand the past, present and future conditions of the seasonal ages of the earth and other planets. The inhabitants of Satya-yuga are certainly aware of the conditions of Kali-yuga. They know that in Kali-yuga the difficult material situation forces the living entity to take complete shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that the inhabitants of Kali-yuga therefore develop a high degree of love of Godhead. Therefore although the inhabitants of Satya-yuga are far more sinless, truthful and self-controlled than the people of other ages, they desire to take birth in Kali-yuga in order to taste pure love of Kṛṣṇa.

Without associating with the devotees of the Lord no one can become an advanced devotee of the Lord. Therefore, since in Kali-yuga other Vedic processes collapse due to the unfavorable condition, and since the only authorized Vedic process is the devotional chanting of the Lord’s holy name, which is available to everyone, there will undoubtedly be innumerable Vaiṣṇavas, or devotees of the Lord, in this age. Birth in this age is very favorable for one who is eager to associate with the devotees. In fact, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is establishing authorized Vaiṣṇava temples throughout the world so that in innumerable areas one may avail himself of association with pure Vaiṣṇavas.

Association with the devotees of the Lord is far more valuable than any amount of association with persons who are merely self-controlled, sinless or expert in Vedic scholarship. Therefore it is stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.5):



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



*“muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
su-durlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭīṣv api mahā-mune”*

“O great sage, among many millions who are liberated and perfect in knowledge of liberation, one may be a devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees, who are fully peaceful, are extremely rare.” Similarly, it is stated in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.54):

*“‘sādhū-saṅga’, ‘sādhū-saṅga’ — sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhū-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya ”*

“The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment’s association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 38-40.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



How can the lord tolerate that His orders be occasionally neglected, even by His devotees.

“As described in the Sixth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, a surrendered devotee has no need to perform prāyaścitta, or atonement for an accidental falldown into sinful activity. Since devotional service is itself the most purifying process, a sincere devotee who has accidentally stumbled on the path should immediately resume his pure devotional service at the lotus feet of the Lord. And thus the Lord will protect him, as stated in Bhagavad-gītā (9.30):

*“api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasito hi saḥ”*

The word tyaktānya-bhāvasya in this verse is very significant. A pure devotee realizes clearly that all living entities, including Brahmā and Śiva, are part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus have no separate or independent existence. Realizing that everything and everyone is part and parcel of the Lord,

a devotee automatically is not inclined to commit sinful activities by violating the order of God. However, due to the powerful influence of material nature, even a sincere devotee may be temporarily overwhelmed by illusion and deviate from the rigid path of pure devotional service. In such a case, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, acting within the heart, removes such sinful activities.

The argument may be raised that the smṛti-śāstra states, śruti-smṛtī mamaivājñe: the Vedic scriptures are the direct orders of the Personality of Godhead. Therefore, one may ask, how can the Lord tolerate that His orders be occasionally neglected, even by His devotees? To answer this possible objection, the word priyasya is used in this verse. The devotees of the Lord are very dear to the Lord.

Although the beloved child may accidentally commit an abominable activity, the loving father forgives the child, taking into consideration the actual good intentions of the child.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Thus, although the devotee of the Lord does not try to exploit the Lord’s mercy by requesting the Lord to free him from any future suffering, the Lord, by His own initiative, frees the devotee from the reactions to accidental falldowns.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 05 – Text 42.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



What is dandavat?

“Dandavat means offering full obeisances “like a stick”:

*“dorbhyām padābhyām jānubhyām urasā śirasā dṛśā
manasā vacasā ceti praṇāmo 'ṣṭāṅga īritah”*

“The obeisances offered with eight limbs are made with the two arms, the two legs, the two knees, the chest, the head, the eyes, the mind and the power of speech.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 07.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



In order to discredit God, materialists frequently give the argument that often times innocent people suffer whereas impious rogues enjoy life unimpeded.

The Personality of Godhead is awarding us the results of our previous activities. In order to discredit God, materialists frequently give the argument that oftentimes innocent people suffer whereas impious rogues enjoy life unimpeded. The fact is, however, that the Personality of Godhead is not a fool, as are the materialistic persons who place such arguments. The Lord can see our many previous lives; therefore He may allow one to enjoy or suffer in this life not only as a result of one's present activities, but also as a result of one's previous activities. For example, by working very hard a man may accumulate a fortune. If such a newly rich man then gives up his work and takes to a degenerate life, his fortune does not immediately disappear. On the other hand, one who is destined to become rich may now be working very hard, with discipline and austerity, and yet be without spending money. So a superficial observer might well be confused upon seeing the moral, hard-working man without funds and the degenerate, lazy man in possession of riches. Similarly, a materialistic fool without knowledge of past, present and future is unable to understand the perfect justice of the Personality of Godhead.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 14.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



By the laws of nature all material things including our own bodies gradually disintegrate.

The word *gabhīra-rayah*, or “imperceptible speed and power,” is significant. We observe that by the laws of nature all material things, including our own bodies, gradually disintegrate. Although we can perceive the long-term results of this aging process, we cannot experience the process itself. For example, no one can feel how his hair or fingernails are growing. We perceive the cumulative result of their growth, but from moment to moment we cannot experience it. Similarly, a house gradually decays until it is demolished. From moment to moment we cannot perceive exactly how this is happening, but in the course of longer intervals of time we can actually see the deterioration of the house. In other words, we can experience the results or manifestations of aging and deterioration, but as it is taking place the process itself is imperceptible. This is the wonderful potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form of time.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 15



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Krishna is complete in Himself. He does not lust after anything material or spiritual.

Kṛṣṇa is complete in Himself. He is the reservoir of all pleasure, and He does not lust after anything material or spiritual. The argument may be given that Kṛṣṇa, in order to please His wife Satyabhāmā, stole a pārijāta flower from heaven and thus appeared to be a henpecked husband under the control of His loving wife. But although Kṛṣṇa is sometimes conquered by the love of His devotees, He is never influenced by the desire to enjoy like an ordinary, lusty materialistic person. The nondevotees cannot understand the overwhelming loving feelings exchanged between the Lord and His pure devotees. Kṛṣṇa may be conquered by our intense love for Him, and thus pure devotees can control the Lord. For example, the elderly gopīs in Vṛndāvana would clap their hands in different rhythms to make Kṛṣṇa dance, and in Dvārakā Satyabhāmā ordered Kṛṣṇa to bring her a flower as proof of His love for her. As stated in Śrīnivāsa Ācārya's song to the Six Gosvāmīs, gopī-bhāva-rasāmṛtābdhi-laharī-kallola-magnau muhuḥ: the love between the Lord and His pure devotee is an ocean of spiritual bliss.

But at the same time, Kṛṣṇa remains completely self-satisfied. Kṛṣṇa indifferently gave up the company of the incomparable young damsels of Vraja-bhūmi, the gopīs, and went to Mathurā at the request of His uncle, Akrūra. Thus neither the gopīs of Vṛndāvana nor the queens of Dvārakā could arouse an enjoying spirit in Kṛṣṇa. When all is said and done, pleasure in this world means sex. But this mundane sexual attraction is simply a perverted reflection of the transcendental loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates in the spiritual world.

The gopīs of Vṛndāvana are unsophisticated village girls, whereas the queens in Dvārakā are aristocratic young ladies. But both the gopīs and the queens are overwhelmed with love for Kṛṣṇa. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa displays the highest perfection of beauty, strength, wealth, fame, knowledge and renunciation and is thus completely satisfied by His own supreme position. He reciprocates spiritual loving affairs with the gopīs and queens simply for their sake. Only fools think that Lord Kṛṣṇa could be



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



attracted by the perverted illusory pleasures to which we poor conditioned souls are so blindly attached. Therefore everyone should recognize the supreme transcendental position of the Personality of Godhead and surrender to Him. That is the clear implication of this statement by the demigods.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 18.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Lord Krishna's pastime of removing the yadu dynasty is ultimately auspicious.

“Many demigods, coming to the earth to assist Lord Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes, took birth within the Yadu dynasty and appeared as Lord Kṛṣṇa's associates. When the Lord had completed His earthly pastimes He wanted to send these demigods back to their previous service in universal administration. Each demigod was to return to his respective planet. The transcendental city of Dvārakā is so auspicious that whoever dies there immediately goes back home, back to Godhead, but because the demigod members of the Yadu dynasty, in many cases, were not yet prepared to go back to Godhead, they had to die outside the city of Dvārakā. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, pretending to be an ordinary living being, said,

“We are all in danger. Let us all immediately go to Prabhāsa.” In this way, by His yoga-māyā Kṛṣṇa bewildered such demigod members of the Yadu dynasty and led them away to the holy place Prabhāsa.

Since Dvārakā is parama-maṅgala, the most auspicious place, not even an imitation of inauspiciousness can take place there. Actually, Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastime of removing the Yadu dynasty is ultimately auspicious, but since it outwardly appeared inauspicious, it could not take place in Dvārakā; therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa led the Yadus away from Dvārakā. After having sent the demigods back to their planets, Lord Kṛṣṇa planned to return to the spiritual world, Vaikuṇṭha, in His original form and remain in the eternal city of Dvārakā.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has made the following important comments on this verse. Prabhāsa is a famous holy place located near the Veraval railway station, within the region of Junagarah. In Chapter Thirty of the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is written that after hearing the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Yādavas went to the mainland from the island city of Dvārakā by means of boats and then traveled to Prabhāsa in chariots.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



At Prabhāsa-kṣetra they drank a beverage called maireya and became engaged in a mutual quarrel. A great battle ensued, and killing each other with hard stalks of cane, the members of the Yadu dynasty acted out the pastime of their own annihilation.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 35.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The Lord's actual four armed form was never touched by the arrow of jara (The hunter).

“Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifesting His four-armed form, sat down under a pippala tree, placing His left foot, the heel of which was colored red like the red koka-nada lotus, upon His right thigh. A hunter named Jarā, watching from the shore of the ocean at Prabhāsa, mistook the Lord's red-colored foot to be the face of a deer and shot his arrow at it.

At the base of that same pippala tree under which Lord Kṛṣṇa had sat there is now a temple. One mile away from the tree, on the seashore, is the Vīra-prabhañjana Maṭha, and it is said that from this point the hunter Jarā fired his arrow.

In the conclusion to his work Mahābhārata-tātparya-nirṇaya, Śrī Madhvācārya-pāda has written the following purport to the mauṣala-līlā. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, in order to bewilder the demons and ensure that the word of His own devotees and of the brāhmaṇas be maintained, created a body of material energy into which the arrow was shot. But the Lord's actual four-armed form was never touched by the arrow of Jarā, who is actually the Lord's devotee Bhṛgu Ṛṣi. In a previous age Bhṛgu Muni had placed his foot on the chest of Lord Viṣṇu. In order to counteract the offense of improperly placing his foot on the Lord's chest, Bhṛgu had to take birth as a degraded hunter. But even though a great devotee willingly accepts such a low birth, the Personality of Godhead cannot tolerate seeing His devotee in such a fallen condition. Thus the Personality of Godhead arranged that at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, when the Lord was winding up His manifest pastimes, His devotee Bhṛgu, in the form of the hunter Jarā, would cast the arrow into a material body created by the Lord's illusory energy. Thus the hunter would become remorseful, gain release from his degraded birth and go back to Vaikuṇṭha-loka.

Therefore, to please His devotee Bhṛgu and to confuse the demons, the Supreme Lord manifested His mauṣala-līlā at Prabhāsa, but it should be understood that this is an illusory pastime. The Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, from His very appearance on the earth, did not manifest any of the material qualities of ordinary human beings. The



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

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Lord did not appear from the womb of His mother. Rather, by His inconceivable power He descended into the maternity room. At the time of His giving up this mortal world, He similarly manifested an illusory situation for the sake of bewildering the demons. To bewilder the nondevotees, the Lord created an illusory body out of His material energy while simultaneously remaining personally in His own sac-cid-ānanda body, and thus He manifested the downfall of an illusory material form. This pretense effectively bewilders foolish demons, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's actual transcendental, eternal body of bliss never experiences death."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 06 – Text 35.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The Lord advises all living entities that they should never remain anywhere within the material universe – during any age.

In Kali-yuga the devotees of the Personality of Godhead, who are engaged in the ever-increasing loving service of the Lord, should never be attracted to living on the earth, the population of which is covered in the darkness of ignorance and devoid of any loving relationship with the Lord. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Uddhava not to remain on the earth in Kali-yuga. In fact, in Bhagavad-gītā the Lord advises all living entities that they should never remain anywhere within the material universe — during any age. Therefore every living being should take advantage of the pressures of Kali-yuga to understand the overall useless nature of the material world and surrender himself at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Following in the footsteps of Śrī Uddhava, one should surrender to Kṛṣṇa and go back home, back to Godhead.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 05.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One should practice seeing all things and all people as part and parcel of Krishna.

“One who is on the path of self-realization should always endeavor to see the ultimate spiritual nature of all existence.” One should fix one’s mind on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the source of everything. Thus as one passes one’s life on the earth, using up one’s allotted time, one should practice seeing all things and all people as part and parcel of the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead. Since all living entities are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, ultimately they all have the same spiritual status. The material nature, also being an emanation of Kṛṣṇa, has a similar spiritual status, but although matter and spirit are both emanations from the Personality of Godhead, they do not exist exactly on the same level. In Bhagavad-gītā it is said that the spirit soul is the superior energy of the Lord, whereas the material nature is His inferior energy. However, since Lord Kṛṣṇa is equally present in all things, the word sama-dṛk in this verse indicates that one must ultimately see Kṛṣṇa within everything and everything within Kṛṣṇa. Thus equal vision is compatible with mature knowledge of the varieties present within this world.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 06.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One should experience all relationship on the higher, spiritual platform of Krishna-sambandha.

“As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (2.40):

*“nehābhikrama-nāśo ’sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt “*

Lord Kṛṣṇa also advised Uddhava in this verse to give up the illusory attachment to so-called friends and family within this material world. One may not be able to physically give up association with family and friends, but one should understand that everyone and everything is part and parcel of God and is meant for the pleasure of God. As soon as one thinks, “This is my personal family,” immediately one will see the material world as no more than a place for enjoying family life. As soon as one is attached to one’s so-called family, false prestige and material possessiveness arise. Actually, everyone is part and parcel of God and therefore, on the spiritual platform, related to all other entities. This is called kṛṣṇa-sambandha, or the constitutional relationship with Kṛṣṇa. It is not possible to advance to the highest stage of spiritual awareness and at the same time maintain a petty material concept of society, friendship and love. One should experience all relationships on the higher, spiritual platform of kṛṣṇa-sambandha, which means seeing everything in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 06



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The material mode of goodness is not itself spiritual.

“The argument may be given that since in the Vedas there are prescribed and forbidden activities, the Vedas also accept the concept of good and evil within the material world. The fact is, however, that it is not the Vedas themselves but the conditioned souls who are bound up in material duality. The function of Vedic literature is to engage each individual at the particular level on which he is presently situated and gradually elevate him to the perfection of life. The material mode of goodness is not itself spiritual, but it does not impede spiritual life. Since the material mode of goodness purifies one’s consciousness and creates a hankering for higher knowledge, it is a favorable platform from which to pursue spiritual life, just as the airport is a favorable place from which to travel. If a man desires to travel from New York to London, the New York airport is certainly the most favorable place from which to travel. But if the man misses his plane, he is no closer to London than anyone in New York who did not go to the airport. In other words, the advantage of the airport is meaningful only if one catches his plane. Similarly, the material mode of goodness is the most favorable situation from which to move up to the spiritual platform. The Vedas prescribe and forbid various activities to lift the conditioned soul to the material mode of goodness, and from that point he should rise to the spiritual platform by transcendental knowledge. Therefore if one does not come to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his elevation to the material mode of goodness is useless, just as a trip to the airport is useless for one who misses his plane. In the Vedas there are injunctions and prohibitions that appear to accept good and evil among material things, but the ultimate purpose of the Vedic regulations is to create a favorable situation for spiritual life. If one can immediately take to spiritual life then there is no need to waste time with rituals within the modes of nature. Therefore Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna in Bhagavad-gītā (2.45):

*“traī-guṇya-visayā vedā nīstrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna
nīrdvandvo nitya-sattva-stho nīryoga-kṣema ātmavān”*

“The Vedas mainly deal with the subject of the three modes of material nature. Rise above these modes, O Arjuna. Be transcendental to all of them. Be free from all dualities and from



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



all anxieties for gain and safety, and be established in the Self.” In this connection, Śrīla Madhvācārya has quoted the following verses from Mahābhārata:

*“svargādyāś ca guṇāḥ sarve doṣāḥ sarve tathaiva ca
ātmanaḥ kartṛtā-bhrāntyā jāyante nātra saṁśayaḥ “*

“Within the material world, the conditioned souls consider residence on the heavenly planets and celestial pleasures, such as the pious enjoyment of beautiful women, to be good and desirable things. Similarly, painful or miserable conditions are considered to be evil or bad. However, all such perception of good and bad in the material world is undoubtedly based upon the fundamental mistake of considering oneself, and not the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to be the ultimate doer or performer of all actions.”

*“paramātmānam evaikaṁ kartāraṁ vetti yaḥ pumān
sa mucyate ’smāt saṁsārāt paramātmānam eti ca “*

“On the other hand, a person who knows that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the actual controller of material nature, and that it is ultimately He who is moving everything, can free himself from the bondage of material existence. Such a person goes to the abode of the Lord.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 08.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Two stages of devotional service.

One who has developed transcendental knowledge never acts whimsically. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes two stages of devotional service: sādhana-bhakti and rāgānuga-bhakti. Rāgānuga-bhakti is the stage of spontaneous love of Godhead, whereas sādhana-bhakti means the conscientious practice of the regulative principles of devotional service. In most cases, one who is now enjoying transcendental consciousness has rigidly practiced the rules and regulations of devotional service. Thus, due to previous practice, one spontaneously avoids sinful life and acts in accordance with the standards of ordinary piety. This does not mean that a self-realized soul is consciously avoiding sin and pursuing piety. Rather, due to his self-realized nature, he spontaneously engages in the most exalted spiritual activities, just as an innocent child may spontaneously exhibit good qualities such as kindness, tolerance, and so on. The spiritual platform is called śuddha-sattva, or purified goodness, to distinguish it from the material mode of goodness, which is always to some extent polluted by the lower modes of passion and ignorance.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 11.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



We have to link ourselves with Krishna and not with the objects of the senses.

“In the material world we falsely try to link ourselves with the objects of the senses. Man wants to link with woman and woman with man, or one tries to link up with nationalism, socialism, capitalism or innumerable other creations of the illusory energy of the Lord. Since we are linking ourselves to temporary objects the relationships are temporary, the results are temporary, and at the time of death we become bewildered when all of our connections are suddenly cut off by *māyā*. If we link ourselves to Kṛṣṇa, however, our relationship with Him will continue even after death. As explained in Bhagavad-gītā, the relationship with Kṛṣṇa that we develop in this life will continue to increase in our next life until we achieve the supreme goal of entering Kṛṣṇa’s planet. Those who sincerely serve the mission of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, following the transcendental lifestyle prescribed by the Lord, will enter the Lord’s abode at the end of this lifetime.

One can never achieve a permanent situation by mental speculation, and what to speak of by ordinary material sense gratification. By the methods of *haṭha-yoga*, *karma-yoga*, *rāja-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, etc., one does not actually awaken his propensity for rendering eternal loving service to the Personality of Godhead. Thus, one is bereft of the transcendental tastes of spiritual enjoyment. Sometimes the conditioned soul, disgusted by his failure to gratify his senses, bitterly decides to renounce the material world and merge into an impersonal, painless transcendence. But our actual happy situation is to render loving service at the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead. All of the different yoga processes gradually lead one to love of Godhead, and it is Lord Kṛṣṇa’s aim to re-establish the conditioned souls in this happy position. Caitanya Mahāprabhu is making this perfection easily available through the chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the supreme yoga process for this age.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 14.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Supreme Personality of Godhead is not a product of the imagination.

“According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the word *yuktāḥ* indicates those engaged in the regulative practice of *bhakti-yoga*. The devotees of the Lord do not abandon their intelligence and become mindless fanatics, as some fools think. As indicated by the words *anumānataḥ* and *guṇair liṅgaiḥ*, a devotee engaged in *bhakti-yoga* intensely searches out the Personality of Godhead through all of the rational faculties of the human brain. The word *mṛgayanti*, or “searching,” does not, however, indicate an unregulated or unauthorized process. If we are searching for the telephone number of a particular person, we look in the authorized telephone directory. Similarly, if we are searching for a particular product, we go to a specialized store where we are likely to find what we are looking for. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not a product of the imagination, and thus we cannot whimsically imagine what the Lord might be. Therefore, to gain information about Lord Kṛṣṇa, one must conduct a regulated search in the authorized Vedic scriptures. The word *agrāhyam* in this verse indicates that no one can achieve or understand Lord Kṛṣṇa by ordinary speculation or through the activities of the material senses. In this regard Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states the following verse in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.234):

*“ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ”*

“No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, quality and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 23.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One may learn the art of tolerance by studying the earth.

The earth is the symbol of tolerance. By deep oil-drilling, atomic explosions, pollution, and so on, the earth is constantly harassed by demoniac living entities. Sometimes lush forests are cut down by greedy men with commercial interests, and thus a wasteland is created. Sometimes the earth's surface is soaked by the blood of soldiers fighting in savage warfare. Yet, despite all these disturbances, the earth continues to provide all the necessities of the living beings. In this way one may learn the art of tolerance by studying the earth. Similarly, a sober person, even when harassed by other living beings, should understand that his aggressors are acting helplessly under the control of God, and thus he should never be distracted from progress on his own path.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 37.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One should moderately and intelligently regulate all of one's bodily activities.

“A wise man does not absorb his consciousness in the forms, flavors, aromas and sensations of material sense gratification, but rather accepts activities such as eating and sleeping simply to keep body and soul together. One must properly maintain one's body by regulated activities of eating, sleeping, cleansing, etc., otherwise the mind will become weak, and one's spiritual knowledge will fade away. If one eats too austere, or if in the name of selflessness one accepts impure food, surely one loses control of the mind. On the other hand, if one eats food that is excessively fatty or rich there will be an unwanted increase in sleep and semen, and thus the mind and speech will be overwhelmed by the modes of passion and ignorance. Lord Kṛṣṇa has summarized the whole matter in Bhagavad-gītā by His statement yuktāhāra-vihārasya yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu. One should moderately and intelligently regulate all of one's bodily activities so that they are favorable for self-realization. This technique is taught by the bona fide spiritual master. If one is too austere or if one engages too much in sense gratification, self-realization is impossible. It is the duty of a devotee of the Lord to avoid seeing any object as separate from Kṛṣṇa, because that is illusion. A gentleman will never try to enjoy the property of another gentleman. Similarly, if one sees everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, there is no scope for material sense gratification. But if one sees material objects as separate from Kṛṣṇa, then one's material enjoying propensity is immediately aroused. A human being must be intelligent enough to distinguish between preyas, or temporary gratification, and śreyas, permanent benefit. One may accept sense activity in a regulated, limited fashion so that one will be strong for serving Kṛṣṇa, but if one excessively indulges the material senses, one will lose one's gravity and seriousness in spiritual life and act like an ordinary materialist. The ultimate goal, as stated here, is jñānam, or steady consciousness of the Absolute Truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 07 – Text 39.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Even the best material situation is actually a punishment for previous unlawful activities.

“One should not uselessly waste his life pursuing material sense gratification, because a specific quantity of material happiness will automatically come to one as a result of one’s past and present fruitive activities. This lesson is learned from the ajagara, or python, who lies down and accepts for his maintenance whatever comes of its own accord. Remarkably, in both material heaven and hell happiness and unhappiness come automatically, due to our previous activities, although the proportions of happiness and unhappiness certainly vary. Either in heaven or in hell one may eat, drink, sleep and have sex life, but these activities, being based on the material body, are temporary and inconsequential. An intelligent person should see that even the best material situation is actually a punishment for previous unlawful activities executed outside the scope of loving devotional service to God. A conditioned soul undergoes great trouble to obtain a little happiness. After struggling in material life, which is full of hardship and hypocrisy, one may receive a little sense gratification, but this illusory pleasure in no way offsets the burden of suffering one must bear to obtain it. After all, a pretty hat is no cure for a homely face. If one really wants to solve life’s problems, one should live simply and reserve the major portion of one’s life for loving service to Kṛṣṇa. Even those who do not serve God receive a certain standard of maintenance from Him; therefore we can just imagine the security the Lord affords to those who dedicate their lives to His devotional service.

Unrefined fruitive workers foolishly worry only about the present life, whereas more pious karmīs imprudently make elaborate arrangements for future material sense gratification, unaware that all such enjoyment is temporary. The real solution, however, is to understand that by pleasing the Personality of Godhead, who is the master of all senses and all desires, one can attain permanent happiness. Such knowledge easily solves the problems of life.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 01.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



A saintly person should go from door to door accepting just a little bit of food from each family.

Sometimes a honeybee is attracted by the extraordinary aroma of a particular lotus flower and lingers there, neglecting his usual activity of flying from flower to flower.

Unfortunately, at sunset the lotus flower closes, and thus the infatuated honeybee is trapped. Similarly, a sannyāsī or brahmacārī may discover that excellent foodstuff is available at a particular house, and therefore, instead of wandering from place to place, he may become a veritable resident of such a well-fed household. Thus he will become bewildered by the illusion of family life and fall down from the platform of renunciation. Therefore, a saintly person should accept only enough food to keep his body and soul together. He should go from door to door accepting just a little bit of food from each family.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 09.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



A saintly person should not store foodstuffs acquired by begging.

A saintly person should not think, “This food I will keep to eat tonight and this other food I can save for tomorrow.” In other words, a saintly person should not store foodstuffs acquired by begging. Rather, he should use his own hands as his plate and eat whatever fits on them. His only storage container should be his belly, and whatever conveniently fits into his belly should be his stock of food. Thus one should not imitate the greedy honeybee who eagerly collects more and more honey. One who is interested in making spiritual progress should avoid such a situation; however, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura points out that for the purpose of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness one may accumulate an unlimited amount of material opulence. This is called yukta-vairāgya, or using everything in the service of Kṛṣṇa. A saintly person who is unable to work in Lord Caitanya’s mission should practice austerities and collect only what he can hold in his hands and belly.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 11.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Even if one eats only the foods authorized in the Vedas, there is still danger.

The fisherman places meaty bait on a sharp hook and easily attracts the unintelligent fish, who is greedy to enjoy its tongue. Similarly, people are mad after gratifying their tongues and lose all discrimination in their eating habits. For momentary gratification they construct huge slaughterhouses and kill millions of innocent creatures, and by inflicting such atrocious suffering they prepare a ghastly future for themselves. But even if one eats only the foods authorized in the Vedas, there is still danger. One may eat too sumptuously and then the artificially stuffed belly will create pressure on the sexual organs. Thus one will fall down into the lower modes of nature and commit sinful activities that lead to the death of one's spiritual life. From the fish one should carefully learn the real dangers involved in gratifying the tongue.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 19.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



An intelligent person does not fall under the control of the tongue.

“In South America there is a saying that when the belly is full the heart is content. Thus, one who is eating sumptuously is jolly, and if one is deprived of proper food one’s appetite becomes even more voracious. An intelligent person, however, does not fall under the control of the tongue, but rather tries to make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By accepting the remnants of food offered to the Lord (prasādam), one gradually purifies the heart and automatically becomes simple and austere.

In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura states that the business of the tongue is to gratify itself with the varieties of flavor, but by wandering in the twelve holy forests of Vraja-maṇḍala (Vṛndāvana), one can be freed from the twelve flavors of material sense gratification. The five principal divisions of material relationships are neutral admiration, servitude, friendship, parental affection and conjugal love; the seven subordinate features of material relationships are material humor, astonishment, chivalry, compassion, anger, dread and ghastliness. Originally, these twelve rasas, or flavors of relationships, are exchanged between the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the living entity in the spiritual world; and by wandering in the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana one can respiritualize the twelve flavors of personal existence. Thus one will become a liberated soul, free from all material desires. If one artificially tries to give up sense gratification, especially that of the tongue, the attempt will be a failure, and in fact one’s desire for sense gratification will increase as a result of artificial deprivation. Only by experiencing real, spiritual pleasure in relationship with Kṛṣṇa can one give up material desires.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 20.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



If one is able to control the tongue then one is understood to be in full control of all the senses.

“By eating, one gives energy and activity to all of the senses, and thus if the tongue is uncontrolled all of the senses will be dragged down to the material platform of existence. Therefore, by all means one must control the tongue. If one fasts, then all of the other senses become weak and lose their potency. The tongue, however, becomes more greedy to taste delicious preparations, and when one finally indulges the tongue, all of the senses quickly go out of control. Therefore, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura advises that one accept mahā-prasādam, or the remnants of the Lord’s food, in a moderate proportion. Since the tongue’s function is also to vibrate, one should vibrate the glorious holy name of the Supreme Lord and taste the ecstasy of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As stated in Bhagavad-gītā, *rasa-varjaṁ raso ’py asya param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*: only by the higher taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can one give up the deadly lower taste that keeps one imprisoned in material bondage.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura states that as long as one’s intelligence is materially covered, one cannot understand the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Trying to enjoy without Kṛṣṇa, the living entity leaves the abode of the Supreme Lord, called Vrajabhūmi, and comes down into the material world, where he quickly loses control of his senses. One becomes particularly victimized by the tongue, belly and genitals, which exert intolerable pressure on the conditioned soul. These desires subside, however, when one reestablishes one’s blissful relationship with the Lord, who is actually the reservoir of all pleasure. One who is attached to the taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness automatically follows all of the rules and regulations of religious life due to spontaneous attraction to viśuddha-sattva, or the mode of pure goodness. Without such spontaneous attraction, one is certainly bewildered by the pushing of the material senses.

Even the beginning stage of devotional service, called sādhana-bhakti (regulatory practice), is so powerful that it brings one to the platform of anartha-nivṛtti, where one



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becomes free from unwanted sinful habits and gains relief from the pressure of the tongue, belly and genitals. Thus one is delivered from the bondage of material addiction and can no longer be cheated by the allurements of the material energy. As it is said, all that glitters is not gold. In this regard Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura recommends that we consider the following song written by his father, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

*“ śarīra avidyā-jāl, jaḍendriya tāhe kāl, jīve phele viṣaya-sāgare
tā’ra madhye jihvā ati, lobhamay sudurmati, tā’ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa baḍa dayāmay, karibāre jihvā jay, sva-prasādānna dila bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo, preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi “*

“O Lord, this material body is a lump of ignorance, and the senses are a network of paths to death. Somehow, we have fallen into this ocean of material sense enjoyment, and of all the senses the tongue is most voracious and uncontrollable; it is very difficult to conquer the tongue in this world. But You, dear Kṛṣṇa, are very kind to us and have given us such nice prasādam, just to control the tongue. Now we take this prasādam to our full satisfaction and glorify Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and in love call for the help of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 08 – Text 21.



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(Q & A Format)



Materially alert and ambitious persons are constantly in anxiety.

Those who fervently seek material sense gratification are gradually pushed down into a miserable condition of life because as soon as one even slightly violates the laws of nature, one must suffer sinful reactions. Thus even materially alert and ambitious persons are constantly in anxiety, and from time to time they are plunged into great misery. Those who are nonsensical and retarded, however, live in a fool's paradise, and those who have surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa are filled with transcendental bliss. Therefore both the fool and the devotee may be said to be peaceful, in the sense that they are free from the ordinary anxiety of the materially ambitious person. However, this does not mean that the devotee and the retarded fool are on the same platform. A fool's peace is like that of a dead stone, whereas a devotee's satisfaction is based on perfect knowledge.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 09 – Text 04.



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(Q & A Format)



The material body is ultimately consumed by others.

Although the body bestows great benefit by enabling one to learn about this world, one should always remember its unhappy, inevitable future. If cremated, the body is burned to ashes by fire; if lost in a lonely place, it is consumed by jackals and vultures; and if buried in a luxurious coffin, it decomposes and is consumed by insignificant insects and worms. Thus it is described as *pārakyam*, “ultimately to be consumed by others.” One should, however, carefully maintain bodily health to execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but without undue affection or attachment. By studying the body’s birth and death, one can acquire *virakti-viveka*, the intelligence to detach oneself from useless things. The word *avasita* indicates conviction. One should be convinced of all the truths of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 09 – Text 25.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Why Supeme Lord created human life?

“God has specifically created the human form of life to facilitate the liberation of the conditioned soul. Therefore one who abuses human life prepares his path to hell. As stated in the Vedas, puruṣatve cāvistarām ātmā: “In the human form of life there is good possibility of understanding the eternal soul.” The Vedas also state:

*“tābhyo gām ānayat tā abruvan na vai no 'yam alam iti
tābhyo 'śvam ānayat tā abruvan na vai no 'yam alam iti
tābhyah puruṣam ānayat tā abruvan su-kṛtaṁ bata “*

The purport of this śruti-mantra is that lower forms of life, such as the cow and horse, are not actually suitable to fulfil the purpose of creation. But human life awards the opportunity to understand one's eternal relationship with God. Thus, one must control the material senses and fulfil the real purpose of human life. If one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the Supreme Lord personally feels happiness and gradually reveals Himself to His devotee.

The Lord's material creation consists of the living entities and dead matter, which the less intelligent try to enjoy. The Lord, however, is not satisfied by those species that blindly strive for sense gratification without understanding spiritual nature. We are suffering due to our forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa and the blissful situation of His abode. If we accept the Lord as protector and shelter and execute His order, we can easily revive our eternal, blissful nature as parts and parcels of the Personality of Godhead. It is for this purpose that the Lord has created human life.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 09 – Text 28.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



How it is possible for the living entity to exist separately from the body.

“Regarding the analogy comparing fire and its fuel to the soul and the body, one may argue that to some extent fire is dependent upon its fuel and cannot exist without it. Since we do not experience the existence of fire independent of fuel, one may therefore still question how it is possible for the living entity to exist separately from the body, become covered by it and eventually become free from it. Only through the Supreme Personality of Godhead’s knowledge potency (vidyā) can one clearly understand the nature of the living entity. By vidyā, or real knowledge, one may cut material existence to pieces and even in this lifetime experience spiritual reality. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, our material existence is an artificial imposition. By the Lord’s inconceivable potency of nescience, the qualities of gross and subtle material forms are psychologically imposed upon the living being, and because of misidentification with the body, the living entity initiates a series of illusory activities. The present material body is like a tree that produces the karmic seed of the next body. However, this cycle of ignorance can be cut to pieces by the transcendental knowledge explained by the Lord.

Unfortunately, the conditioned souls, being inimical to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, do not accept the perfect knowledge spoken by the Lord. Instead they remain absorbed in gross and subtle illusion. But if the living entity accepts the Lord’s knowledge, his whole situation can be rectified, and he can return to his original, eternal, blissful life of perfect knowledge in the direct association of the Lord.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 10 – Text 10.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Within the material world we do not find absolute happiness or unhappiness.

We observe that even the most foolish or sinful persons sometimes experience happiness, because even those completely dedicated to sin sometimes accidentally perform pious activities by inadvertently traveling through a holy place or helping a saintly person. The material creation of God is so complex and bewildering that even those dedicated to piety sometimes commit sins, and even those dedicated to sinful life sometimes perform pious actions. Therefore, within the material world we do not find absolute happiness or unhappiness. Rather, every conditioned soul is hovering in confusion, without perfect knowledge. Piety and sin are relative material ideas that bestow relative happiness and unhappiness. Absolute happiness is experienced on the spiritual platform in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or love of God. Thus material life is always ambiguous and relative, whereas Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the actual platform of perfect happiness.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 10 – Text 18.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Unless one is more or less crazy, one cannot be enthusiastic or even peaceful in material life.

It is customary throughout the world that a condemned man is offered a sumptuous last meal. For the condemned man, however, such a feast is a chilling reminder of his imminent death, and therefore he cannot enjoy it. Similarly, no sane human being can be satisfied in material life, because death is standing near and may strike at any moment. If one is sitting in one's living room with a deadly snake at one's side, knowing that at any moment the poisonous fangs might pierce the flesh, how can one sit peacefully and watch television or read a book? Similarly, unless one is more or less crazy, one cannot be enthusiastic or even peaceful in material life. Knowledge of the inevitability of death should encourage one to become determined in spiritual life.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 10 – Text 20.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One should turn one's face to the Lord within the heart.

“The example of two birds in the same tree is given to illustrate the presence within the heart of the material body of both the individual soul and the Supersoul, the Personality of Godhead. Just as a bird makes a nest in a tree, the living entity sits within the heart. The example is appropriate because the bird is always distinct from the tree. Similarly, both the individual soul and the Supersoul are distinct entities, separate from the temporary material body. The word balena indicates that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is satisfied by His own internal potency, which consists of eternality, omniscience and bliss. As indicated by the word bhūyān, or “having superior existence,” the Supreme Lord is always in a superior position, whereas the living entity is sometimes in illusion and sometimes enlightened. The word balena indicates that the Lord is never in darkness or ignorance, but is always full in His perfect, blissful consciousness.

Thus, the Lord is niranna, or uninterested in the bitter fruits of material activities, whereas the ordinary conditioned soul busily consumes such bitter fruits, thinking them to be sweet. Ultimately, the fruit of all material endeavor is death, but the living entity foolishly thinks material things will bring him pleasure. The word sakhāyau, or “two friends,” is also significant. Our real friend is Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is situated within our heart. Only He knows our actual needs, and only He can give us real happiness.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He patiently sits in the heart, trying to guide the conditioned soul back home, back to Godhead. Certainly no material friend would remain with his foolish companion for millions of years, especially if his companion were to ignore him or even curse him. But Lord Kṛṣṇa is such a faithful, loving friend that He accompanies even the most demoniac living entity and is also in the heart of the insect, pig and dog. That is because Lord Kṛṣṇa is supremely Kṛṣṇa conscious and sees every living entity as part and parcel of Himself. Every living being should give up the bitter fruits of the tree of material existence. One should turn one's face to the Lord within the heart and revive one's eternal loving relationship with one's real friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa. The word sadṛśau, or “of similar nature,” indicates that both the living entity and the Personality of Godhead are conscious



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entities. As part and parcel of the Lord we share the Lord's nature, but in infinitesimal quantity. Thus the Lord and the living entity are sadṛśau. A similar statement is found in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.6):

*“ dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānam vṛkṣam pariśasvajāte
tayor anyah pippalam svādu atty anaśnann anyo 'bhicākaśīti “*

“There are two birds in one tree. One of them is eating the fruits of the tree, while the other is witnessing the actions. The witness is the Lord, and the fruit-eater is the living entity.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 06.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



A man is certainly most miserable who takes care of a cow that gives no milk.

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. 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.

The example of milkless cow is given to illustrate the uselessness of laboriously studying Vedic knowledge that does not glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the spiritual vibration of the Vedas is meant to bring one to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa. Many processes for achieving the Supreme Truth are recommended in the Upaniṣads and other Vedic literatures, but because of their innumerable and seemingly contradictory explanations, commentaries and injunctions, one cannot achieve the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, merely by reading such literature.

If, however, one understands Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the ultimate cause of all causes and reads the Upaniṣads and other Vedic literature as glorification of the Supreme Lord, then one can actually become fixed at the Lord’s lotus feet. For example, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda translated and commented upon Śrī Īsopaniṣad in such a way that it brings the reader closer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Undoubtedly, the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa are the only reliable boat by which to cross the turbulent ocean of material existence.



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Even Lord Brahmā has stated in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that if one gives up the auspicious path of bhakti and takes to the fruitless labor of Vedic speculation, one is just like a fool who beats empty husks in hopes of getting rice. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī recommends that one completely ignore dry Vedic speculation because it does not bring one to the point of devotional service to the Absolute Truth, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 19.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



An intelligent person should never take to literatures that do not contain descriptions of Lord Krishna activities.

“The Lord’s incarnation for executing wonderful pastimes is called līlāvatāra, and such wonderful forms of Viṣṇu are glorified by the names Rāmacandra, Nṛsimhadeva, Kūrma, Varāha, and so on. Among all such līlāvatāras, however, the most beloved, even to this day, is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original source of the viṣṇu-tattva. The Lord appears in the prison house of Kāṁsa and is immediately transferred to the rural setting of Vṛndāvana, where He exhibits unique childhood pastimes with His cowherd boyfriends, girlfriends, parents and well-wishers.

After some time, the Lord’s pastimes are transferred to Mathurā and Dvārakā, and the extraordinary love of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana is exhibited in their anguished separation from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such pastimes of the Lord are īpsita, or the reservoir of all loving exchanges with the Absolute Truth.

The pure devotees of the Lord are most intelligent and expert and do not pay any attention to useless, fruitless literatures that neglect the highest truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although such literatures are very popular among materialistic persons all over the world, they are completely neglected by the community of pure Vaiṣṇavas. In this verse the Lord explains that the literatures approved for the devotees are those that glorify the Lord’s pastimes as the puruṣa-avatāra and the līlāvatāras, culminating in the personal appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, as confirmed in Brahma-saṁhitā (5.39):

*“rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan nānāvatāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi”*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who manifested Himself personally as Kṛṣṇa and the different avatāras in the world in the forms of Rāma, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, etc., as His subjective portions.”



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Even Vedic literatures that neglect the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be ignored. This fact was also explained by Nārada Muni to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of the Vedas, when the great Vedavyāsa felt dissatisfied with his work.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 20



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



If one offers one's activities to Lord Krishna without trying to enjoy the results, one's mind becomes purified.

"If one offers one's activities to Lord Kṛṣṇa without trying to enjoy the results, one's mind becomes purified. When the mind is purified, transcendental knowledge automatically manifests, since such knowledge is a by-product of pure consciousness. When the mind is absorbed in perfect knowledge, it can be raised to the spiritual platform, as described in Bhagavad-gītā (18.54):

*"brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām"*

"One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me."

By offering one's activities to the Personality of Godhead, one purifies one's mind to some extent and thus comes to the preliminary stage of spiritual awareness. Yet even then one may not be able to fix one's mind completely on the spiritual platform. At that point one should realistically assess one's position, noting the lingering material contamination within the mind. Then, as stated in this verse, one should intensify one's practical devotional work in the service of the Lord. If one artificially considers oneself to be supremely liberated or if one becomes casual on the path of spiritual advancement, there is serious danger of a fall down."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 22.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Whatever is most dear to oneself – one should offer that very thing to Krishna.

My dear Uddhava, one can give up false pride and prestige by engaging in the following devotional activities. One may purify oneself by seeing, touching, worshiping, serving, and offering prayers of glorification and obeisances to My form as the Deity and to My pure devotees. One should also glorify My transcendental qualities and activities, hear with love and faith the narrations of My glories and constantly meditate on Me.

One should offer to Me whatever one acquires, and accepting oneself as My eternal servant, one should give oneself completely to Me. One should always discuss My birth and activities and enjoy life by participating in festivals, such as Janmāṣṭamī, which glorify My pastimes. In My temple, one should also participate in festivals and ceremonies by singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and discussing Me with other Vaiṣṇavas. One should observe all the regularly celebrated annual festivals by attending ceremonies, pilgrimages and making offerings.

One should also observe religious vows such as Ekādaśī and take initiation by the procedures mentioned in the Vedas, Pañcarātra and other, similar literatures. One should faithfully and lovingly support the installation of My Deity, and individually or in cooperation with others one should work for the construction of Kṛṣṇa conscious temples and cities as well as flower gardens, fruit gardens and special areas to celebrate My pastimes. One should consider oneself to be My humble servant, without duplicity, and thus should help to clean the temple, which is My home. First one should sweep and dust thoroughly, and then one should further cleanse with water and cow dung. Having dried the temple, one should sprinkle scented water and decorate the temple with maṇḍalas. One should thus act just like My servant.

A devotee should never advertise his devotional activities; therefore his service will not be the cause of false pride. One should never use lamps that are offered to Me for other purposes simply because there is need of illumination, and similarly, one should never



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(Q & A Format)



offer to Me anything that has been offered to or used by others. Whatever is most desired by one within this material world, and whatever is most dear to oneself — one should offer that very thing to Me. Such an offering qualifies one for eternal life.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 34-41.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



It is impossible to escape material bondage without devotional service in the association of devotees.

My dear Uddhava, I am personally the ultimate shelter and way of life for saintly liberated persons, and thus if one does not engage in My loving devotional service, which is made possible by associating with My devotees, then for all practical purposes, one possesses no effective means for escaping from material existence. It is generally (prāyeṇa) impossible to escape material bondage without devotional service in the association of devotees, one can simply imagine the probabilities of liberation in Kali-yuga without the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The chances are certainly zero. One may concoct a type of liberation on the mental platform, or one may live in a so-called spiritual society of mutual flattery, but if one actually wants to go back home, back to Godhead, and see with spiritual eyes the beautiful kingdom of God called Kṛṣṇaloka, one must take to Lord Caitanya's movement and worship Lord Kṛṣṇa in the association of the bhakta-gaṇa, the devotees of the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 11 – Text 48.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The superiority of association with pure devotees, in awarding the fruit of love of Godhead does not mean that one should give up other processes.

“One should construct parks, recreational places, orchards, vegetable gardens, and so on. These serve to attract people to the temples of Kṛṣṇa, where they may directly engage in chanting the holy name of the Lord. Such construction projects may be understood as pūrtam, or public welfare activities. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions that association with His pure devotees is far more powerful than processes such as yoga, philosophical speculation, sacrifices and public welfare activities, these secondary activities also please Lord Kṛṣṇa, but to a lesser extent. Specifically, they please the Lord when performed by devotees rather than by ordinary materialistic persons. Therefore the comparative term yathā (“according to proportion”) is used. In other words, such practices as sacrifice, austerity and philosophical study may help one become fit for rendering devotional service, and when such activities are performed by devotees aspiring for spiritual advancement, they become somewhat pleasing to the Lord. One may study the example of vratāni, or vows. The injunction that one should fast on Ekādaśī is a permanent vow for all Vaiṣṇavas, and one should not conclude from these verses that one may neglect the Ekādaśī vow. The superiority of sat-saṅga, or association with pure devotees, in awarding the fruit of love of Godhead does not mean that one should give up other processes or that these secondary processes are not permanent factors in bhakti-yoga. There are many Vedic injunctions instructing one to execute the agnihotra sacrifice, and the modern-day followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu also occasionally execute fire sacrifices. Such sacrifice is recommended by the Lord Himself in the previous chapter, and therefore it should not be given up by the devotees of the Lord. By performing Vedic ritualistic and purificatory processes, one is gradually elevated to the platform of devotional service, whereupon one is able to directly worship the Absolute Truth.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 12 – Text 01 & 02.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The tree of material existence.

“The tree of material existence has two seeds, hundreds of roots, three lower trunks and five upper trunks. It produces five flavors and has eleven branches and a nest made by two birds. The tree is covered by three types of bark, gives two fruits and extends up to the sun. Those lusty after material enjoyment and dedicated to family life enjoy one of the tree’s fruits, and swanlike men in the renounced order of life enjoy the other fruit – The two seeds of this tree are sinful and pious activities, and the hundreds of roots are the living entities’ innumerable material desires, which chain them to material existence. The three lower trunks represent the three modes of material nature, and the five upper trunks represent the five gross material elements. The tree produces five flavors — sound, form, touch, taste and aroma — and has eleven branches — the five working senses, the five knowledge-acquiring senses and the mind. Two birds, namely the individual soul and the Supersoul, have made their nest in this tree, and the three types of bark are air, bile and mucus, the constituent elements of the body. The two fruits of this tree are happiness and distress.

Those who are busy trying to enjoy the company of beautiful women, money and other luxurious aspects of illusion enjoy the fruit of unhappiness. One should remember that even in the heavenly planets there is anxiety and death. Those who have renounced material goals and taken to the path of spiritual enlightenment enjoy the fruit of happiness. One who takes the assistance of bona fide spiritual masters can understand that this elaborate tree is simply the manifestation of the external potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is ultimately one without a second. If one can see the Supreme Lord as the ultimate cause of everything, then his knowledge is perfect. Otherwise, if one is entangled in Vedic rituals or Vedic speculation without knowledge of the Supreme Lord, he has not achieved the perfection of life.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 12 – Text 22-23.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Goodness in the material world never exists in a pure form.

Goodness in the material world never exists in a pure form. Therefore, it is common knowledge that on the material platform no one is working without personal motivation. In the material world goodness is always mixed with some amount of passion and ignorance, whereas spiritual, or purified, goodness (viśuddha-sattva) represents the liberated platform of perfection. Materially, one is proud to be an honest, compassionate man, but unless one is fully Kṛṣṇa conscious one will speak truths that are not ultimately significant, and one will give mercy that is ultimately useless. Because the onward march of material time removes all situations and persons from the material stage, our so-called mercy and truth apply to situations that shortly will not exist. Real truth is eternal, and real mercy means to situate people in eternal truth. Still, for an ordinary person, cultivation of material goodness may be a preliminary stage on the road to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. For example, it is stated in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that one who is addicted to meat-eating cannot understand the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. By cultivation of the material mode of goodness, however, one may become a vegetarian and perhaps come to appreciate the sublime process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Since it is clearly stated in Bhagavad-gītā that the material modes of nature constantly rotate, one must take advantage of an elevated position in material goodness to step onto the transcendental platform. Otherwise, as the wheel of time turns one will again go into the darkness of material ignorance.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 13 – Text 01.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



An increase in the mode of goodness strengthens religious principles.

“Since the three modes of material nature are constantly in conflict, vying for supremacy, how is it possible that the mode of goodness can subdue the modes of passion and ignorance? Lord Kṛṣṇa here explains how one can be strongly fixed in the mode of goodness, which automatically gives rise to religious principles. In the Fourteenth Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa elaborately explains the things that are in goodness, passion and ignorance. Thus, by choosing food, attitudes, work, recreation, etc., strictly in the mode of goodness, one will become situated in that mode. The usefulness of sattva-guṇa, or the mode of goodness, is that it produces religious principles aimed at and characterized by devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Without such devotional service to the Lord, the mode of goodness is considered useless and merely another aspect of material illusion. The word vṛddhāt, or “strengthened, increased,” indicates clearly that one should come to the platform of viśuddha-sattva, or purified goodness. The word vṛddhāt indicates growth, and growth should not be stopped until full maturity is reached. The full maturity of goodness is called viśuddha-sattva, or the transcendental platform on which there is no trace of any other quality. In pure goodness all knowledge automatically manifests, and one can easily understand one’s eternal loving relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is the actual meaning and purpose of dharma, or religious principles. Religious principles, strengthened by the mode of goodness, destroy the influence of passion and ignorance. When passion and ignorance are overcome, their original cause, irreligion, is quickly vanquished.

One who desires to cultivate the mode of goodness must consider the following points. One should study religious scriptures that teach detachment from mental speculation and material sense gratification, not scriptures that provide rituals and mantras to increase material ignorance. Such materialistic scriptures do not give attention to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus are basically atheistic. One should accept pure water for quenching thirst and cleaning the body. There is no need for a devotee to use colognes, perfume, whiskey, beer, etc., which are all polluted manifestations of water. One should associate with persons who are cultivating detachment from the material world and not



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



with those who are materially attached or sinful in their behavior. One should live in a solitary place where devotional service is practiced and discussed among Vaiṣṇavas. One should not be spontaneously attracted to busy highways, shopping centers, sports stadiums, and so on. Concerning time, one should rise by four o'clock in the morning and utilize the auspicious brāhma-muhūrta to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Similarly, one should avoid the sinful influence of hours such as midnight, when ghosts and demons are encouraged to become active. Concerning work, one should execute one's prescribed duties, follow the regulative principles of spiritual life and utilize all of one's energy for pious purposes. Time should not be wasted in frivolous or materialistic activities, of which there are now literally millions in modern society. One can cultivate birth in the mode of goodness by accepting the second birth of initiation from a bona fide spiritual master and learning to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. One should not accept initiation or so-called spiritual birth in unauthorized mystical or religious cults in the modes of passion and ignorance. One should meditate upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the enjoyer of all sacrifices, and similarly, one should meditate on the lives of great devotees and saintly persons. One should not meditate on lusty women and envious men. Concerning mantras, one should follow the example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and not other songs, verses, poetry or mantras that glorify the kingdom of illusion. Purificatory rituals should be performed to purify the spirit soul and not to bring down material blessings on one's material household.

One who increases the mode of goodness will certainly become fixed in religious principles, and automatically knowledge will arise. As knowledge increases one is able to understand the eternal spirit soul and the Supreme Soul, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus the soul becomes free from the artificial imposition of the gross and subtle material bodies caused by the modes of material nature. Spiritual knowledge burns to ashes the material designations that cover the living entity, and one's real, eternal life begins."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 13 – Text 02, 03 & 06.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Artificially, the mind is dragged down to a lower platform in passion or ignorance.

“Those who are trying to enjoy material sense gratification are not actually intelligent, although they consider themselves most intelligent. Although such foolish persons themselves criticize the miseries of material life in innumerable books, songs, newspapers, television programs, civic committees, etc., they cannot desist from material life for a single moment. The process by which one is helplessly bound in illusion is clearly described here.

A materialistic person is always thinking, “Oh, what a beautiful house. I wish we could buy it” or “What a beautiful woman. I wish I could touch her” or “What a powerful position. I wish I could occupy it” and so on. The words *saṅkalpaḥ sa-vikalpakaḥ* indicate that a materialist is always making new plans or modifying his old plans to increase his material enjoyment, although in his saner moments he admits that material life is full of suffering. The mind is created from the mode of goodness, as described in Sāṅkhya philosophy, and the natural, peaceful situation of the mind is pure love of Kṛṣṇa, in which there is no mental disturbance, disappointment or confusion. Artificially, the mind is dragged down to a lower platform in passion or ignorance, and thus one is never satisfied.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 13 – Text 9-10.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



It is most difficult to separate the material mind from its objects.

“It is most difficult to separate the material mind from its objects because the material mind by definition considers itself to be the doer and enjoyer of everything. It must be understood that giving up the material mind does not mean giving up all mental activities, but instead means purifying the mind and engaging one’s enlightened mentality in the devotional service of the Lord. Since time immemorial the material mind and senses have been in contact with the sense objects; therefore, how is it possible for the material mind to give up its objects, which are the basis of its existence? And not only does the mind reach out to material objects, but also, because of the mind’s desires, the material objects cannot remain out of the mind, helplessly entering at every moment. Thus, separation between the mind and sense objects is not actually feasible, nor does it serve any purpose. If one retains a material mentality, considering oneself to be supreme, one may renounce sense gratification, considering it to be ultimately the cause of unhappiness, but one will not be able to remain on such an artificial platform, nor will such renunciation serve any real purpose. Without surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord, mere renunciation cannot take one out of this material world. Just as the sun’s rays are part of the sun, the living entities are part of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When the living entity is completely absorbed in his identity as the part and parcel of the Personality of Godhead, he becomes actually wise and easily gives up the material mind and sense objects. The word *mad-rūpaḥ* in this verse indicates absorption of the mind in the form, qualities, pastimes and associates of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Immersed in such ecstatic meditation, one should render devotional service to the Lord, and this will automatically drive away the influence of sense gratification. By himself, the living entity does not have the potency to give up his false identification with the material mind and sense objects, but by worshiping the Lord in the mood of being His eternal part-and-parcel servant, one is infused with the Lord’s potency, which easily drives away the darkness of ignorance.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 13 – Text 26.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Pure devotional service to the Lord uproots one's material desires.

Although pious religious work, truthfulness, mercy, penances and knowledge partially purify one's existence, they do not take out the root of material desires. Thus the same desires will reappear at a later time. After an extensive program of material gratification, one becomes eager to perform austerities, acquire knowledge, perform selfless work and in general purify one's existence. After sufficient piety and purification, however, one again becomes eager for material enjoyment. When clearing an agricultural field one must uproot the unwanted plants, otherwise with the coming of rain everything will grow back as it was. Pure devotional service to the Lord uproots one's material desires, so that there is no danger of relapsing into a degraded life of material gratification. In the eternal kingdom of God, loving reciprocation between the Lord and His devotees is manifest. One who has not come to this stage of enlightenment must remain on the material platform, which is always full of discrepancies and contradictions. Thus everything is incomplete and imperfect without loving service to the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 14 – Text 22.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Constant remembrance is possible for one who always chants and hears the glories of Lord Krishna.

One should not think that one can attain complete transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa by mechanically engaging in worship of the Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa states here that one must endeavor constantly to keep the Lord within one's mind. Anusmarataḥ, or constant remembrance, is possible for one who always chants and hears the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is therefore stated, śravaṇam, kīrtanam, smaraṇam: the process of devotional service begins with hearing (śravaṇam) and chanting (kīrtanam), from which remembrance (smaraṇam) develops. One who constantly thinks of the objects of material gratification becomes attached to them; similarly, one who constantly keeps Lord Kṛṣṇa within his mind becomes absorbed in the Lord's transcendental nature and thus becomes qualified to render personal service to the Lord in His own abode.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 14 – Text 27.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Association with lusty men is often more dangerous than association with women.

One should make a great endeavor to give up intimate contact with women and those fond of women. A learned gentleman will automatically be on guard if placed in intimate contact with lusty women. In the company of lusty men, however, the same man may engage in all kinds of social dealings and thus be contaminated by their polluted mentality. Association with lusty men is often more dangerous than association with women and should be avoided by all means. There are innumerable verses in the Bhāgavatam describing the intoxication of material lust. Suffice it to say that a lusty man becomes exactly like a dancing dog and, by the influence of Cupid, loses all gravity, intelligence and direction in life. The Lord warns here that one who surrenders to the illusory form of a woman suffers unbearably in this life and the next.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 14 – Text 30.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One cannot fully appreciate the beauty and perfection of bhakti-yoga unless one sees its superiority to all other processes.

It has already been elaborately explained by the Supreme Lord that without loving devotional service rendered to Him in the association of devotees, no other process of self-realization will work. Therefore it may be asked why Uddhava is again referring to the system of meditation, dhyāna. The ācāryas explain that one cannot fully appreciate the beauty and perfection of bhakti-yoga unless one sees its superiority to all other processes. Through comparative analysis, the devotees become fully ecstatic in their appreciation of bhakti-yoga. It should also be understood that although Uddhava asks about those who aspire for liberation, he is not actually a mumukṣu, or salvationist; rather, he is asking questions for the benefit of those who are not on the platform of love of Godhead.

Uddhava wants to hear this knowledge for his personal appreciation and so that those who pursue salvation, or liberation, can be protected and redirected to the path of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Sitting on a level seat that is not too high or too low, keeping the body straight and erect yet comfortable, placing the two hands on one's lap and focusing the eyes on the tip of one's nose, one should purify the pathways of breathing by practicing the mechanical exercises of pūraka, kumbhaka and recaka, and then one should reverse the procedure (recaka, kumbhaka, pūraka). Having fully controlled the senses, one may thus practice prāṇāyāma step by step. According to this procedure, the hands are to be placed palms upward, one on top of the other. Thus, one may practice prāṇāyāma through mechanical breath control in order to achieve steadiness of the mind. As stated in the yoga-śāstra, antar-lakṣyo bahir-drṣṭiḥ sthira-cittaḥ susaṅgataḥ: "The eyes, which generally see externally, must be turned inward, and thus the mind is steadied and fully controlled." Beginning from the mūlādhāra-cakra, one should move the life air continuously upward like the fibers in the lotus stalk until one reaches the heart, where the sacred syllable om is situated like the sound of a bell. One should thus continue raising the sacred syllable upward the distance of twelve aṅgulas, and there the omkāra should be joined together with the fifteen



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vibrations produced with anusvāra. It appears that the yoga system is somewhat technical and difficult to perform. Anusvāra refers to a nasal vibration pronounced after the fifteen Sanskrit vowels. The complete explanation of this process is extremely complicated and obviously unsuitable for this age. From this description we can appreciate the sophisticated achievements of those who in former ages practiced mystic meditation. Despite such appreciation, however, we should stick firmly to the simple, foolproof method of meditation prescribed for the present age, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 14 – Text 31 to 34.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The Supremacy of Krishna consciousness.

In the spiritual world everything is naturally effulgent because that is the nature of spirit. Thus when one sees the individual soul as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, the experience can be compared to seeing the sun's rays emanating from the sun. The Supreme Lord is within the living entity, and simultaneously the living entity is within the Lord. But in both cases the Supreme Lord, and not the living entity, is the maintainer and controller. How happy everyone could be by taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and finding the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, within everything and everything within Kṛṣṇa. Liberated life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so pleasurable that the greatest misfortune is to be without such consciousness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is kindly explaining in many different ways the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and fortunate persons will understand the sincere message of the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 14 – Text 45.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The eight mystic potencies.

Among the eight primary mystic perfections, Through aṇimā-siddhi one can become so small that one can enter a stone or pass through any obstacle. Through mahimā-siddhi one becomes so great that one covers everything, and through laghimā one becomes so light that one can ride on the sun's rays into the sun planet. Through prāpti-siddhi one can acquire anything from anywhere and can even touch the moon with one's finger. By this mystic perfection one can also enter into the senses of any other living entity through the predominating deities of the particular senses; and by thus utilizing the senses of others, one can acquire anything. Through prākāmya one can experience any enjoyable object, either in this world or the next, and through īśitā, or the controlling potency, one can manipulate the subpotencies of māyā, which are material. In other words, even by acquiring mystic powers one cannot pass beyond the control of illusion; however, one may manipulate the subpotencies of illusion. Through vaśitā, or the power to control, one can bring others under one's dominion or keep oneself beyond the control of the three modes of nature. Ultimately, one acquires through kāmāvasāyitā the maximum powers of control, acquisition and enjoyment. The word autpattikāḥ in this verse indicates being original, natural and unexcelled. These eight mystic potencies originally exist in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, in the superlative degree. Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes so small that He enters within the atomic particles, and He becomes so large that as Mahā-Viṣṇu He breathes out millions of universes. The Lord can become so light or subtle that even great mystic yogīs cannot perceive Him, and the Lord's acquisitive power is perfect, because He keeps the total existence eternally within His body. The Lord certainly can enjoy whatever He likes, control all energies, dominate all other persons and exhibit complete omnipotency. Therefore it is to be understood that these eight mystic perfections are insignificant expansions of the mystic potency of the Lord, who in Bhagavad-gītā is called Yogeśvara, the Supreme Lord of all mystic potencies. These eight perfections are not artificial, but are natural and unexcelled because they originally exist in the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 15 – Text 04-05.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The ten secondary mystics perfection.

The ten secondary mystic perfections arising from the modes of nature are the powers of freeing oneself from hunger and thirst and other bodily disturbances, hearing and seeing things far away, moving the body at the speed of the mind, assuming any form one desires, entering the bodies of others, dying when one desires, witnessing the pastimes between the demigods and the celestial girls called Apsarās, completely executing one's determination and giving orders whose fulfillment is unimpeded.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 15 – Text 06-07.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The Lords external opulences are called mano-vikarah.

“The Lord’s external opulences are called mano-vikārāḥ, or ‘related to mental transformation,’ because ordinary people perceive extraordinary features of the material world according to their personal state of mind. Thus the word vācābhidhīyate indicates that conditioned souls describe the Lord’s material creation according to specific material circumstances. Because of the circumstantial relative definitions of material opulence, such opulence is never to be considered a direct plenary manifestation of the Lord’s personal form. When one’s state of mind is transformed into a favorable or affectionate state, one defines a manifestation of the Lord’s energy as ‘my son,’ ‘my father,’ ‘my husband,’ ‘my uncle,’ ‘the son of my brother,’ ‘my friend,’ and so on. One forgets that every living entity is actually part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that whatever opulences, talents or outstanding features one may exhibit are actually the potencies of the Lord. Similarly, when the mind is transformed into a negative or inimical state, one thinks, ‘This person will be the ruin of me,’ ‘This person must be finished by me,’ ‘He is my enemy’ or ‘I am his enemy,’ ‘He is a killer’ or ‘He should be killed.’ The negative state of mind is also expressed when one is attracted to the extraordinary material aspects of particular persons or objects but forgets that they are manifestations of the potency of the Personality of Godhead.

Even the demigod Indra, who is quite obviously a manifestation of the Lord’s material opulences, is misunderstood by others. For example, Indra’s wife, Śacī, thinks that Indra is ‘my husband,’ whereas Aditi thinks that he is ‘my son.’ Jayanta thinks that he is ‘my father,’ Bṛhaspati thinks that he is ‘my disciple,’ whereas the demons feel that Indra is their personal enemy. Thus different personalities define him according to their mental state. The Lord’s material opulences, being relatively perceived, are therefore called mano-vikāra, which means they are dependent on mental states. This relative perception is material because it does not recognize the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the actual source of the particular opulence. If one sees Lord Kṛṣṇa as the source of all opulences and gives up all desires to enjoy or possess the Lord’s opulences, then one can see the spiritual nature of these opulences. At that time, even though one may continue to perceive the



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variety and distinctions of the material world, one will become perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One should not conclude, as do the voidist philosophers, that the Lord's spiritual manifestations in the viṣṇu-tattva and liberated jīva categories are also products of relative perception and mental states. This useless idea is contrary to the entire body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's teachings to Śrī Uddhava."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 16 – Text 41.



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(Q & A Format)



In Satya-yuga there are no inferior human beings.

In Satya-yuga there is no influence of the lower modes of nature, and therefore all human beings belong to the highest social order, called haṁsa, in which one comes under the direct supervision of the Personality of Godhead. In the modern age people are crying out for social equality, but unless all human beings are situated in the mode of goodness, which is the position of purity and unalloyed devotion, social equality is not possible. As the lower modes of nature become prominent, secondary religious principles arise, by which people may be gradually elevated to the pure stage of unalloyed surrender to God. In Satya-yuga there are no inferior human beings, and thus there is no need of secondary religious principles. Everyone directly takes to the unalloyed service of the Lord, fulfilling perfectly all religious obligations. In Sanskrit, one who perfectly executes all duties is called kṛta-kṛtya, as mentioned in this verse. Therefore Satya-yuga is called Kṛta-yuga, or the age of perfect religious action. According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the word ādau (“in the beginning”) refers to the moment of universal creation. In other words, the varṇāśrama system is not a recent concoction but naturally arises at the time of creation and should therefore be accepted by all intelligent human beings.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 17 – Text 10.



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One can rectify one's position by dedicating one's hard-earned money.

The Lord has described how brāhmaṇas and devotees achieve the perfection of life, and now a similar perfection is offered to those who utilize their materialistic wealth to relieve the poverty-stricken condition of devotees and brāhmaṇas. Although one may neglect the devotional service of the Lord to pursue a material life of sense gratification, one can rectify one's position by dedicating one's hard-earned money to the service of the Lord. Seeing the difficult austerities accepted by saintly persons, a pious person should make arrangements for their comfort. Just as a boat saves hopeless people who have fallen into the ocean, similarly, the Lord uplifts persons who have hopelessly fallen into the ocean of material attachment if they have been charitable to the brāhmaṇas and devotees.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 17 – Text 44.



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(Q & A Format)



A householder taking care of many dependent family members should not consider himself to be the Lord.

“A family man often acts like a lord, protecting his wife, ordering his children, maintaining servants, grandchildren, domestic animals, and so forth. The words na pramādyet kuṭumby api indicate that although one acts like a little lord, surrounded by his family, servants and friends, one should not, through false pride, become mentally unbalanced, considering oneself to be the actual lord. The word vipaścit indicates that one should remain sober and intelligent, never forgetting oneself to be the eternal servant of the Supreme Lord.

Householders of the upper, middle and lower classes become attached to different types of sense gratification. In any economic or social class, however, one should remember that all material enjoyment, either here or in the next life, is temporary and ultimately useless. A responsible householder should guide his family members and other dependents back home, back to Godhead, for an eternal life of bliss and knowledge. One should not become a false and puffed-up lord for a brief span of time, for then one will remain bound up, along with his family members, in the cycle of repeated birth and death.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 17 – Text 52.



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(Q & A Format)



The devotee of the Lord does not see anything as separate from Lord Krishna.

By realized knowledge of the Lord one gives up the illusion that anything, anywhere, at any time, can be separate from Lord Kṛṣṇa. The devotee of the Lord does not see anything as separate from Lord Kṛṣṇa and thus does not consider himself to be a permanent resident of the material world. At every moment the devotee is moved by his desire to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. Just as those who are inclined to sense gratification pass their time making arrangements for their enjoyment, similarly the devotees are busy throughout the day arranging their devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore they have no time to act like materialistic sense enjoyers. To ordinary persons it may seem that a pure devotee is seeing something as separate from Kṛṣṇa, but a pure devotee is actually fixed in his status as a liberated soul and is guaranteed to achieve a spiritual body in the kingdom of God. Ordinary, materialistic persons cannot always understand the activities of a pure devotee of the Lord, and thus they may try to minimize his position, considering him to be the same as themselves. At the end of life, however, the results achieved by the devotees of the Lord and ordinary materialists are vastly different.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 18 – Text 37.



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(Q & A Format)



What are main prescribed religious duties for the members of different orders of varnashrama system?

The brahmacārī lives in the āśrama of the spiritual master and personally assists the ācārya. Householders generally are entrusted with the performance of sacrifice and Deity worship and should provide maintenance for all living entities. The vānaprastha must clearly understand the difference between body and soul in order to maintain his status of renunciation, and he should also perform austerities. The sannyāsī should fully absorb his body, mind and words in self-realization. Having thus achieved equanimity of mind, he is the best well-wisher of all living entities. Loving devotional service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal of the entire varṇāśrama system. In any social or occupational division of human society one must be a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and worship Him alone.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 18 – Text 42 and 44.



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The difference between jñāna (ordinary vedic knowledge) and vijñāna (self realization).

The difference between jñāna (ordinary Vedic knowledge) and vijñāna (self-realization) can be understood as follows. A conditioned soul, although cultivating Vedic knowledge, continues to identify himself to some extent with the material body and mind and consequently with the material universe. In trying to understand the world he lives in, the conditioned soul learns through Vedic knowledge that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the one supreme cause of all material manifestations. He comes to understand the world around him, which he accepts more or less as his world. As he progresses in spiritual realization, breaking through the barrier of bodily identification, and realizes the existence of the eternal soul, he gradually identifies himself as part and parcel of the spiritual world, Vaikuṇṭha. At that time he is no longer interested in the Personality of Godhead merely as the supreme explanation of the material world; rather, he begins to reorient his entire mode of consciousness so that the central object of his attention is the Personality of Godhead. Such a reorientation is required, since the Supreme Lord is the factual center and cause of everything. A self-realized soul in the stage of vijñāna thus experiences the Personality of Godhead not merely as the creator of the material world but as the supreme living entity existing blissfully in His own eternal context. As one progresses in one's realization of the Supreme Lord in His own abode in the spiritual sky, one gradually becomes disinterested in the material universe and ceases to define the Supreme Lord in terms of His temporary manifestations. A self-realized soul in the stage of vijñāna is not at all attracted by objects that are created, maintained and ultimately destroyed. The stage of jñāna is the preliminary stage of knowledge for those still identifying themselves in terms of the material universe, whereas vijñāna is the mature stage of knowledge for those who see themselves as part and parcel of the Supreme Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 19 – Text 15.



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Qualities that are desirable for persons advancing in human life.

“Lord Kṛṣṇa here describes those qualities that are desirable for persons advancing in human life. Śama, or “mental equilibrium,” means to fix the intelligence in Lord Kṛṣṇa. Mere peacefulness without Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a dull and useless state of mind. Dama, or “discipline,” means first to control one’s own senses. If one wants to discipline one’s children, disciples or followers without controlling one’s own senses, one becomes a mere laughingstock. Tolerance means to patiently endure unhappiness, such as that provoked by the insults or negligence of others. One must also sometimes accept material inconvenience to carry out the injunctions of scriptures, and that unhappiness must also be patiently endured. If one is not tolerant of the insults and abuse of others, nor tolerant of the inconveniences that may arise from following authorized religious scriptures, it is simply foolishness for him to make a whimsical show of tolerating extreme heat, cold and pain and so on, just to impress others. Concerning steadfastness, if one does not control the tongue and genitals, then any other steadfastness is useless. Real charity means to renounce all aggression toward others. If one gives money to charitable causes but at the same time engages in exploitative business enterprises or abusive political tactics, one’s charity is worth nothing at all. Austerity means to give up lust and sense gratification and to observe prescribed vows such as Ekādaśī; it does not mean inventing whimsical methods of torturing the material body. Real heroism is to conquer one’s lower nature. Certainly everyone likes to propagate his own fame as a brilliant person, but everyone is also subject to lust, anger, greed and so forth. Therefore, if one can conquer these lower characteristics generated from the modes of passion and ignorance, one is a greater hero than those who merely destroy their political opponents through intrigue and violence.

One can develop equal vision by giving up jealousy and envy and by recognizing the existence of the soul within every material body. This attitude pleases the Supreme Lord, who then reveals Himself, solidifying forever one’s equal vision. Merely describing things that exist does not constitute the last word in the perception of reality. One must also see



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the true spiritual equality of all living entities and all situations. Truthfulness means that one should speak in a pleasing way so that there will be a beneficial effect. If one becomes attached to pointing out the faults of others in the name of truth, then such faultfinding will not be appreciated by saintly persons. The bona fide spiritual master speaks the truth in such a way that people can elevate themselves to the spiritual platform, and one should learn this art of truthfulness. If one is attached to material things, his body and mind are understood to be always polluted. Cleanliness therefore means to give up material attachment, not merely to frequently rinse one's skin with water. Real renunciation is giving up one's false sense of proprietorship over one's relatives and wife, and not just giving away material objects, while real wealth is to be religious. Sacrifice is the Personality of Godhead Himself, because the performer of sacrifice, to be successful, must absorb his consciousness in the Personality of Godhead and not in temporary, material rewards that may accrue from sacrifice. Real religious remuneration means that one should serve saintly persons who can enlighten one with spiritual knowledge. One may offer remuneration to his spiritual master, who has enlightened him, by distributing the same knowledge to others, thereby pleasing the ācārya. Preaching work thus constitutes the highest form of remuneration. By performing the prāṇāyāma system of respiratory control, one can easily subdue the mind, and one who can in this way perfectly control the restless mind is the most powerful person."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 19 – Text 36-39.



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(Q & A Format)



Who is a good candidate for going backhome, back to godhead?

If somehow or other one gets the association of pure devotees of the Lord and hears from them the transcendental message of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then one has the chance to become a devotee of the Lord. As mentioned in the previous verse, those who become disgusted with material life take to impersonal philosophical speculation and rigorously try to stamp out any trace of personal existence. Those who are still attached to material sense gratification try to purify themselves by offering the fruits of their ordinary activities to the Supreme. A first-class candidate for pure devotional service, on the other hand, is neither completely disgusted with nor attached to material life. He does not desire to pursue ordinary material existence any further, because it cannot award real happiness. Nevertheless, a candidate for devotional service does not give up all hope for perfecting personal existence. A person who avoids the two extremes of material attachment and impersonal reaction to material attachment and who somehow or other gets the association of pure devotees, faithfully hearing their message, is a good candidate for going back home, back to Godhead, as described here by the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 20 – Text 08.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Excessive suffering or excessive enjoyment is thus impediments to spiritual advancement.

The residents of both heaven and hell desire human birth on the earth planet because human life facilitates the achievement of transcendental knowledge and love of Godhead, whereas neither heavenly nor hellish bodies efficiently provide such opportunities. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out that in material heaven one becomes absorbed in extraordinary sense gratification and in hell one is absorbed in suffering. In both cases there is little impetus to acquire transcendental knowledge or pure love of Godhead. Excessive suffering or excessive enjoyment is thus impediments to spiritual advancement.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 20 – Text 12.



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(Q & A Format)



If one is too austere or too sensuous one cannot control the mind.

Although one is seriously engaging the mind in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the mind is so flickering that it may suddenly be deviated from its spiritual position. One should then carefully bring the mind back under the control of the self. It is stated in Bhagavad-gītā that if one is too austere or too sensuous one cannot control the mind. Sometimes one may bring the mind under control by allowing the material senses limited satisfaction. For example, although one may eat austere, from time to time one may accept a reasonable amount of mahā-prasādam, opulent foods offered to the temple Deities, so that the mind will not become disturbed. Similarly, one may occasionally relax with other transcendentalists through joking, swimming and so forth. But if such activities are performed excessively, they will lead to a setback in spiritual life. When the mind desires sinful gratification such as illicit sex or intoxication, one must simply tolerate the mind's foolishness and by strenuous effort push on with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Then the waves of illusion will soon subside, and the path of advancement will again open wide.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 20 – Text 19.



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(Q & A Format)



A devotee should not be overly depressed or morose but to remain enthusiastic and to go on with his loving service.

The beginning stage of pure devotional service is described here by the Lord. A sincere devotee has practically seen that all material activities lead only to sense gratification and all sense gratification leads only to misery. Thus a devotee's sincere desire is to engage twenty-four hours a day in the loving service of Lord Kṛṣṇa without any personal motivation. The devotee sincerely desires to be established in his constitutional position as the Lord's eternal servitor, and he prays to the Lord to elevate him to this exalted position. The word *anīśvara* indicates that because of one's past sinful activities and bad habits one may not immediately be able to completely extinguish the enjoying spirit. The Lord here encourages such a devotee not to be overly depressed or morose but to remain enthusiastic and to go on with his loving service. The word *nirviṇṇa* indicates that a sincere devotee, although somewhat entangled in the remnants of sense gratification, is completely disgusted with material life and under no circumstances willingly commits sinful activities. In fact, he avoids every kind of materialistic activity. The word *kāmān* basically refers to sex attraction and its by-products in the form of children, home and so forth. Within the material world, the sex impulse is so strong that even a sincere candidate in the loving service of the Lord may sometimes be disturbed by sex attraction or by lingering sentiments for wife and children. A pure devotee certainly feels spiritual affection for all living entities, including the so-called wife and children, but he knows that material bodily attraction leads to no good, for it simply entangles one and one's so-called relatives in a miserable chain reaction of fruitive activities. The word *ḍṛḍha-nīścaya* ("steadfast conviction") indicates that in any circumstance a devotee is completely determined to go on with his prescribed duties for Kṛṣṇa. Thus he thinks, "By my previous shameful life my heart is polluted with many illusory attachments. Personally I have no power to stop them. Only Lord Kṛṣṇa within my heart can remove such inauspicious contamination. But whether the Lord removes such attachments immediately or lets me go on being afflicted by them, I will never give up my devotional service to Him. Even if the Lord places millions of obstacles in my path, and even if because of my offenses I go to



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hell, I will never for a moment stop serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am not interested in mental speculation and fruitive activities; even if Lord Brahmā personally comes before me offering such engagements, I will not be even slightly interested. Although I am attached to material things I can see very clearly that they lead to no good because they simply give me trouble and disturb my devotional service to the Lord. Therefore, I sincerely repent my foolish attachments to so many material things, and I am patiently awaiting Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy."

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 20 – Text 27-28.



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(Q & A Format)



The purity and impurity of all objects can be ascertained by combination with other substances.

“An object’s purity or impurity is established by application of another object, by words, by rituals, by the effects of time or according to relative magnitude. Cloth is purified by application of clean water and contaminated by application of urine. The words of a saintly brāhmaṇa are pure, but the sound vibration of a materialistic person is contaminated by lust and envy. A saintly devotee explains actual purity to others, whereas a nondevotee makes false propaganda that leads innocent people to commit polluted, sinful activities. Pure rituals are those meant for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, while materialistic ceremonies are those that lead their followers into materialistic and demoniac activities. The word saṁskāreṇa also indicates that the purity or impurity of a particular object is ascertained according to the regulations of ritualistic performances. For example, a flower to be offered to the Deity must be purified with water. Flowers or food cannot be offered to the Deity, however, if they have been contaminated by being smelled or tasted before the offering. The word kālēna indicates that certain substances are purified by time and others contaminated by time. Rainwater, for example, is considered pure after ten days’ time, and after three days in cases of emergency. On the other hand, certain foods decay in time and thus become impure. Mahatva indicates that great bodies of water do not become contaminated, and alpatayā means that a small amount of water can easily become polluted or stagnant. In the same way, a great soul is not polluted by occasional contact with materialistic persons, whereas one whose devotion to God is very small is easily carried away and put into doubt by bad association. In terms of combination with other substances, and in terms of speech, ritual, time and magnitude, the purity and impurity of all objects can be ascertained. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura remarks that impure or decayed food is certainly forbidden for normal persons but is permissible for those who have no other means of subsistence.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 21 – Text 10.



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(Q & A Format)



Relative purity and impurity of different places, times and material objects.

“The Lord has described the purity and impurity of different places, times and material objects. According to the laws of nature, that which is impure contaminates a particular person in accordance with that person’s situation, as described here. For example, on certain occasions, such as a solar eclipse or just after childbirth, one must restrict the intake of food according to ritualistic injunctions. One who is physically weak, however, may eat without being considered impious. Ordinary persons consider the ten days following childbirth to be most auspicious, whereas one who is learned knows that this period is actually impure. Ignorance of the law does not save one from being punished, but one who consciously commits sinful activities is considered most fallen. Concerning opulence (samṛddhi), worn-out, dirty clothing or a messy residence are considered impure for a rich man but acceptable for one who is poor. The word deśa indicates that in a safe and peaceful place one is obligated to strictly perform religious rituals, whereas in a dangerous or chaotic situation one may be excused for occasional negligence of secondary principles. One who is physically healthy must offer obeisances to the Deities, attend religious functions and execute his prescribed duties, but a young child or sickly person may be excused from such activities, as indicated by the word avasthā. Ultimately, as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

*“ anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu- śīlanam bhaktir uttamā ”*

“One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service.” (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11)

One should accept everything which is favorable for the devotional service of Lord Kṛṣṇa and reject whatever is unfavorable. One must learn the process of serving God from the bona fide spiritual master and thus always maintain one’s existence pure and free from



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anxiety. In general, however, when considering the relative purity and impurity of material things, all of the above-mentioned factors must be calculated.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 21 – Text 11.



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(Q & A Format)



Material piety and sin are always relative considerations.

“The Lord clearly explains here that material piety and sin are always relative considerations. For example, if a neighbor’s house is on fire and one chops a hole in the roof so that the trapped family may escape, one is considered to be a pious hero because of the dangerous condition. In normal conditions, however, if one chops a hole in his neighbor’s roof or breaks the neighbor’s windows, he is considered a criminal. Similarly, one who abandons one’s wife and children is certainly irresponsible and thoughtless. If one takes sannyāsa, however, and remains fixed on a higher spiritual platform, he is considered to be a most saintly person. Piety and sin therefore depend upon particular circumstances and are at times difficult to distinguish.

According to Śrīla Madhvācārya, persons above the age of fourteen are considered capable of distinguishing between good and bad and are thus responsible for their pious and sinful activities. Animals, on the other hand, being merged in ignorance, cannot be blamed for their offenses or praised for their so-called good qualities, which all arise ultimately from ignorance. Human beings who act like animals, with the idea that one should not feel any guilt but should do whatever one likes, will certainly take birth as animals absorbed in ignorance. And there are other foolish people who, observing the relativity of material piety and sin, conclude that there is no absolute good.

It should be understood, however, that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is absolutely good because it involves complete obedience to the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose goodness is eternal and absolute. Those who are inclined to study material piety and sin ultimately experience frustration due to the relativity and variability of the subject matter. One should therefore come to the transcendental platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is valid and perfect in all circumstances. The Lord here further describes the ambiguity in ascertaining material piety and sin. Although intimate association with women is most abominable for a renounced sannyāsī, the same association is pious for a householder, who is ordered by Vedic injunction to approach his wife at the suitable time for procreation. Similarly, a brāhmaṇa who drinks liquor is considered to be committing a



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most abominable act, whereas a śūdra, a low-class man, who can moderate his drinking is considered to be self-controlled. Piety and sin on the material level are thus relative considerations. Any member of society, however, who receives dīkṣā, initiation into the chanting of the Lord’s holy names, must strictly obey the four regulative principles: no eating of meat, fish or eggs, no illicit sex, no intoxication and no gambling. A spiritually initiated person neglecting these principles will certainly fall from his elevated position of liberation.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 21 – Text 16 & 17.



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(Q & A Format)



A lusty person is easily angered and becomes inimical to anyone frustrating his lusty desires.

“The actual goal of human life should not be material sense gratification, for it is the basis of conflict in human society. Although the Vedic literature sometimes sanctions sense gratification, the ultimate purpose of the Vedas is renunciation, since Vedic culture cannot possibly recommend anything that disturbs human life. A lusty person is easily angered and becomes inimical to anyone frustrating his lusty desires. Since his sex desire can never be satisfied, a lusty person ultimately becomes frustrated with his own sex partner, and thus a “love-hate” relationship develops. A lusty person considers himself to be the enjoyer of God’s creation and is therefore full of pride and false prestige. The lusty, proud person will not be attracted to the process of humble submission at the lotus feet of the bona fide spiritual master. Attraction to illicit sex is thus the direct enemy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which depends upon humble submission to the representative of the Supreme Lord. Lord Kṛṣṇa also states in Bhagavad-gītā that desire for illicit sex is the all-devouring, sinful enemy of this world.

Because modern society sanctions unrestricted mixing of men and women, its citizens cannot possibly achieve peace; rather, the regulation of conflict becomes the basis of social survival. This is the symptom of an ignorant society falsely accepting the material body as the highest good, as described here by the words viṣayeṣu guṇādhyāsāt. One who is too affectionate to his own body will inevitably be seized by sex desire.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 21 – Text 19.



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(Q & A Format)



The transcendental sound of the Vedas is very difficult to comprehend.

“According to Vedic knowledge, the Vedic sound is divided into four phases, which can be understood only by the most intelligent brāhmaṇas. This is because three of the divisions are internally situated within the living entity and only the fourth division is externally manifested, as speech. Even this fourth phase of Vedic sound, called vaikharī, is very difficult to understand for ordinary human beings. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains these divisions as follows. The prāṇa phase of Vedic sound, known as parā, is situated in the ādhāra-cakra; the mental phase, known as paśyantī, is situated in the area of the navel, on the maṇipūraka-cakra; the intellectual phase, known as madhyamā, is situated in the heart area, in the anāhata-cakra. Finally, the manifest sensory phase of Vedic sound is called vaikharī. Such Vedic sound is ananta-pāra because it comprehends all vital energies within the universe and beyond and is thus undivided by time or space. Actually, Vedic sound vibration is so subtle, unfathomable and deep that only the Lord Himself and His empowered followers such as Vyāsa and Nārada can understand its actual form and meaning. Ordinary human beings cannot comprehend all of the intricacies and subtleties of Vedic sound, but if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness one can immediately understand the conclusion of all Vedic knowledge, namely Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, the original source of Vedic knowledge. Foolish persons devote their vital air, senses and mind to sense gratification and thus do not understand the transcendental value of the holy name of God. Ultimately, the essence of all Vedic sound is the holy name of the Supreme Lord, which is not different from the Lord Himself. Since the Lord is unlimited, His holy name is equally unlimited. No one can understand the transcendental glories of the Lord without the Lord’s direct mercy. By offenselessly chanting the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, one can enter into the transcendental mysteries of Vedic sound. Otherwise the knowledge of the Vedas will remain durvigāhyam, or impossible to penetrate.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 21 – Text 36.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



It is not possible to exploit the property of the Lord and at the same time advance in self-realization.

Everything that exists is the potency and property of the Supreme Lord, meant to be used in His loving service. Seeing material objects as separate from the Lord and thus meant to be possessed and enjoyed by oneself is called *vaikalpikam bhramam*, the illusion of material duality. When selecting one's personal object of enjoyment, such as food, clothing, residence or vehicle, one considers the relative quality of the object to be acquired. Consequently, in material life one is in constant anxiety, trying to acquire the most excellent sense gratification for one's personal pleasure. If one realizes everything as the property of the Lord, however, he will see everything as meant for the Lord's pleasure. He will feel no personal anxiety, because he is satisfied simply to be engaged in the Lord's loving service. It is not possible to exploit the property of the Lord and at the same time advance in self-realization.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 22 – Text 57.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Anything used in the Lord’s loving service is understood to be spiritual.

That which one intends to use for one’s personal sense gratification is called material property, whereas paraphernalia to be used in the Lord’s loving service is understood to be spiritual. One should give up all one’s material property by utilizing it completely in the devotional service of the Lord. A person who owns a luxurious mansion should install the Deity of the Lord and hold regular programs to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Similarly, wealth should be used to build temples of the Lord and publish literature scientifically explaining the Personality of Godhead. One who blindly renounces material property without utilizing it in the service of the Lord does not understand that everything belongs to the Personality of Godhead. Such blind renunciation is based on the material idea that “This property could belong to me, but I don’t want it.” Everything, in fact, belongs to God; knowing this one neither tries to enjoy nor to reject the things of this world, but peacefully engages them in the service of the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 23 – Text 23.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



Our involvement in sense gratification drags our consciousness into the material body.

“Because a dead body does not feel pleasure or pain, our happiness and distress are due to our own consciousness, which is the nature of the soul. It is not, however, the original function of the soul to enjoy material happiness and suffer material distress. These are produced by ignorant material affection and enmity based on false ego. Our involvement in sense gratification drags our consciousness into the material body, where it is shocked by the inevitable bodily pains and problems.

On the spiritual platform there is neither material happiness nor distress because there the living consciousness is fully engaged, without personal desire, in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. This is the actual position of happiness, aloof from false bodily identification. Rather than uselessly becoming enraged with others for one’s own foolishness, one should take to self-realization and solve the problems of life.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 23 – Text 52.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The miserable or pleasurable reactions of karma ultimately act upon the false ego.

The material body is composed of earth, water, fire and air, just like bricks, stones and other objects. Our consciousness, falsely absorbed in the body, experiences happiness and distress, and fruitive work (karma) is performed when we falsely consider ourselves to be the enjoyers of the material world. False ego is thus the illusory combination within our minds of the self and the body, which are actually two separate objects. Since karma, or material work, is based on illusory consciousness, these activities are also illusory and have no factual basis in either the body or the soul. When a conditioned soul falsely considers himself to be the body, and consequently the enjoyer of the material world, he tries to find pleasure in illicit connection with women. Such sinful activity is based on his false concept of being the body and thus the enjoyer of women and of the world. Since he is not the body, his activity of enjoying a woman does not actually exist. There is merely the interaction of two machines, namely the two bodies, and the interaction of the illusory consciousness of the man and woman. The sensation of illicit sex occurs within the material body and is falsely assimilated by the false ego as its own experience. Thus the miserable or pleasurable reactions of karma ultimately act upon the false ego and not upon the body, which is composed of dull matter, nor upon the soul, which has nothing to do with matter. False ego is the illusory concoction of the mind; it is specifically this false ego that is suffering happiness and distress. The soul cannot become angry at others, since he is not personally enjoying or suffering. Rather, the false ego is doing this.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 23 – Text 54.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



On the spiritual platform of purified goodness one establishes a direct loving relationship with the Absolute truth.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī elaborately explains in his commentary that the material mode of goodness does not award perfect knowledge of the Absolute Truth. He quotes from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.2), proving that many great demigods in the mode of goodness could not understand the transcendental personality of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the material mode of goodness, one becomes pious or religious, aware of a higher, spiritual nature. On the spiritual platform of purified goodness, however, one establishes a direct, loving relationship with the Absolute Truth, rendering service to the Lord rather than merely maintaining a connection to mundane piety. In the mode of passion the conditioned soul speculates about the reality of his own existence and of the world around him, and considers speculatively the existence of a kingdom of God. In the mode of ignorance one acquires knowledge for sense gratification, absorbing the mind in varieties of eating, sleeping, defending and sex, without any higher purpose. Thus, within the modes of nature the conditioned souls are trying to gratify their senses, or else they are trying to free themselves from sense gratification. But they cannot directly engage themselves in their constitutional, liberated activities until they come to the transcendental position of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, beyond the modes of nature.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 25 – Text 24



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The entire cosmic manifestation is modelling clay in the hands of the Supreme lord.

Material situations and activities appear to be good, passionate or ignorant according to the interaction of the modes of nature. These modes are produced by the illusory potency of the Lord, which is itself not different from its master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So a devotee of the Lord remains aloof from the illusory, temporary manifestations of material nature. At the same time, he accepts material nature as the potency of the Lord and thus essentially real. The example may be given that modeling clay is shaped by a child into various playful forms such as tigers, men or houses. The modeling clay is real, whereas the temporary shapes it assumes are illusory, not being actual tigers, men or houses. Similarly, the entire cosmic manifestation is modeling clay in the hands of the Supreme Lord, who acts through *māyā* to shape the glaring temporary forms of illusion, which absorb the minds of those who are not devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 28 – Text 01.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



One who indulges in praising or criticizing the qualities and behaviour of others will quickly become deviated from his own best interest.

“A conditioned soul desires to lord it over material nature and thus criticizes another conditioned soul whom he considers inferior. Similarly, one praises a superior materialist because one aspires to that superior position, in which one may dominate others. Praising and criticizing other materialistic people are thus directly or indirectly based on envy of other living entities and cause one to fall down from *sva-artha*, one’s real self-interest, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The words *asaty abhiniveśataḥ*, “by absorption in the temporary, or unreal,” indicate that one should not adopt a concept of material duality and praise or criticize other materialistic persons. Rather, one should praise the pure devotees of the Supreme Lord and criticize the mentality of rebellion against the Personality of Godhead, by which one becomes a non-devotee. One should not criticize a low-class materialist, thinking that a high-class materialist is nice. In other words, one should distinguish between the material and the spiritual and should not become absorbed in good and bad on the material platform. For example, an honest citizen distinguishes between the life of civil freedom and that of imprisonment, whereas a foolish prisoner distinguishes between comfortable and uncomfortable prison cells. Just as for a free citizen any situation in prison is unacceptable, for a liberated, Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee any material position is unappealing.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura indicates that rather than trying to separate conditioned souls by materialistic distinctions, one should bring them together to chant the holy names of the Lord and propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya. A nondevotee, or even an envious third-class devotee, is not interested in uniting people on the platform of love of Godhead. Instead he unnecessarily separates them by emphasizing material distinctions like “communist,” “capitalist,” “black,” “white,” “rich,” “poor,”



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



“liberal,” “conservative” and so on. Material life is always imperfect, full of ignorance and disappointing in the end. Rather than praising and criticizing the high and low features of ignorance, one should be absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, on the spiritual platform of eternity, bliss and knowledge.”

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 28 – Text 02.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



It is not possible for this material existence to be the experience of either the soul or of the body.

Since the living entity is pure spirit soul, innately full of perfect knowledge and bliss, and since the material body is a biochemical machine without knowledge or personal consciousness, who or what is actually experiencing the ignorance and anxiety of this material existence? The conscious experience of material life cannot be denied, and thus Uddhava asks Lord Kṛṣṇa this question to elicit a more precise understanding of the process by which illusion occurs. The spirit soul is inexhaustible, transcendental, pure, self-luminous and never covered by anything material. It is like fire, which can never be covered with darkness because by nature fire is illuminating. Similarly, the spirit soul is *svayaṁ-jyotiḥ*, or self-luminous, and thus the soul is transcendental — he can never be covered by the darkness of material life. On the other hand, the material body, like firewood, is by nature dull and unilluminated. In itself it does not have any awareness of life. If the soul is transcendental to material life and the body is not even conscious of it, the following question arises: How does our experience of material existence actually take place? Here the word *sannikarṣaṇam* indicates that the pure spirit soul voluntarily connects himself with the material body, considering this a most fruitful arrangement. Actually, the situation is *apārtha*, useless, unless one uses one's embodied situation to engage in the loving service of the Lord. At that time one's connection is actually with Lord Kṛṣṇa, not with the body, which becomes a mere instrument for executing one's higher purpose.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), “Srimad Bhagavatam”, Eleventh Canto, Chapter 28 – Text 10, 11 & 12.



Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



False ego is the pure soul's illusory identification with the subtle material mind and the gross material body.

False ego is the pure soul's illusory identification with the subtle material mind and the gross material body. As a result of this illusory identification, the conditioned soul feels lamentation for things lost, jubilation over things gained, fear of things inauspicious, anger at the frustration of his desires, and greed for sense gratification. And so, bewildered by such false attractions and aversions, the conditioned soul must accept further material bodies, which means he must undergo repeated births and deaths. One who is self-realized knows that all such mundane emotions have nothing to do with the pure soul, whose natural propensity is to engage in the loving service of the Lord.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 28 – Text 15.



Śrīmad-Bhāgvatam – Canto 11

(Q & A Format)



The withdrawal of the Yadu dynasty and Lord Kṛṣṇa's own disappearance from this earth were not material historical events.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that the fratricidal battle of the Yadu dynasty and the hunter's attack upon Lord Kṛṣṇa are clearly activities of the Lord's internal potency for the purpose of fulfilling the Lord's pastime desires. According to the evidence, the quarrel among the members of the Yadu dynasty occurred at sunset; then the Lord sat down on the bank of the Sarasvatī River. It is stated that a hunter then arrived with the intention of killing a deer, but it is highly unlikely — when more than 560 million warriors had just been killed in a great uproarious battle and the place had been flooded with blood and strewn with corpses — that a simple hunter would somehow come along trying to kill a deer. Since deer are by nature fearful and timid, how could any deer possibly be on the scene of such a huge battle, and how could a hunter calmly go about his business in the midst of such carnage? Therefore, the withdrawal of the Yadu dynasty and Lord Kṛṣṇa's own disappearance from this earth were not material historical events; they were instead a display of the Lord's internal potency for the purpose of winding up His manifest pastimes on earth.

Source: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (2014 edition), "Srimad Bhagavatam", Eleventh Canto, Chapter 30 – Text 37.

