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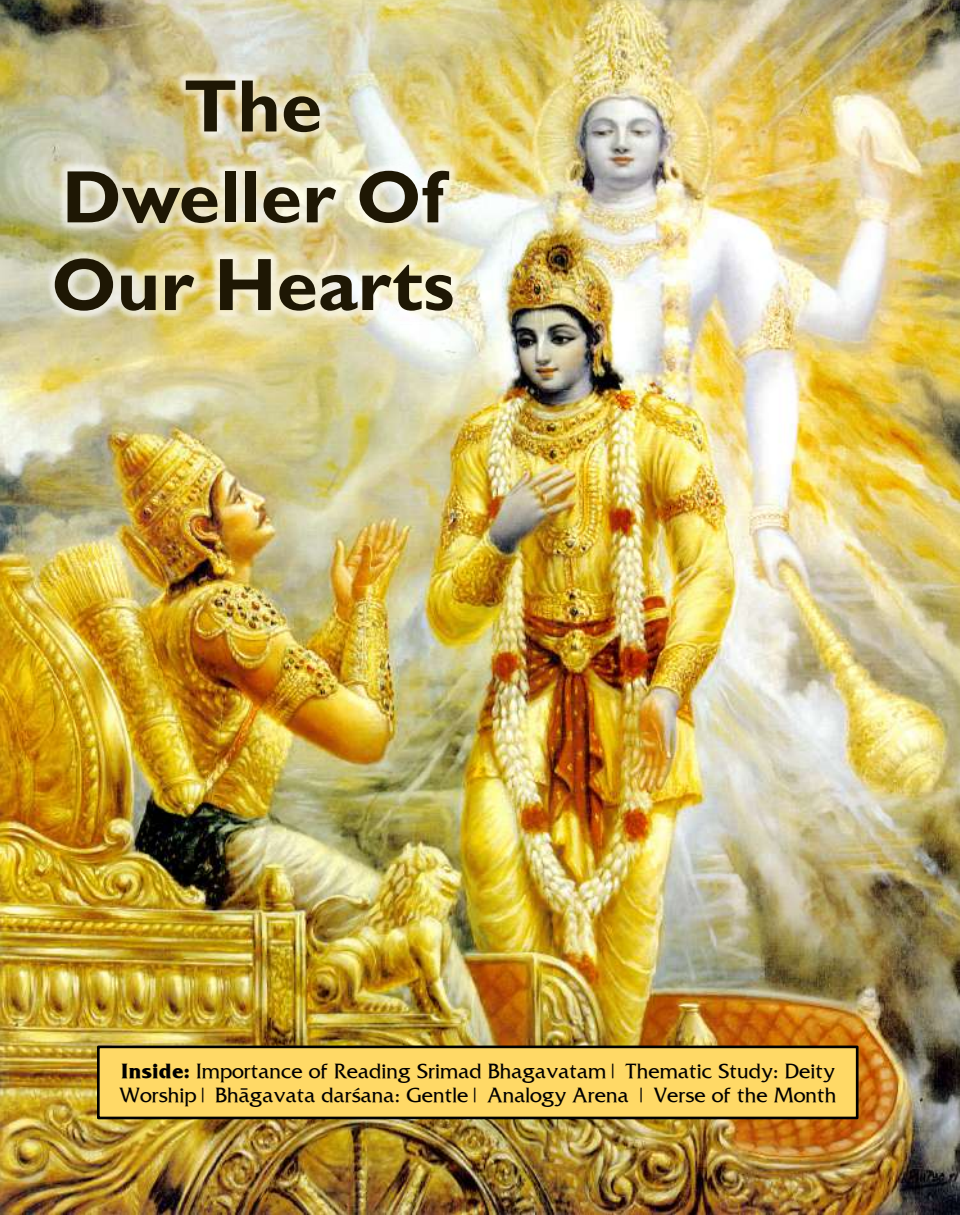
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Bask in the Illumination of the Bhāgavatam

A Monthly E-Magazine from the Bhaktivedanta Vidyapitha with Illuminating Perspectives on the Srimad-Bhagavatam

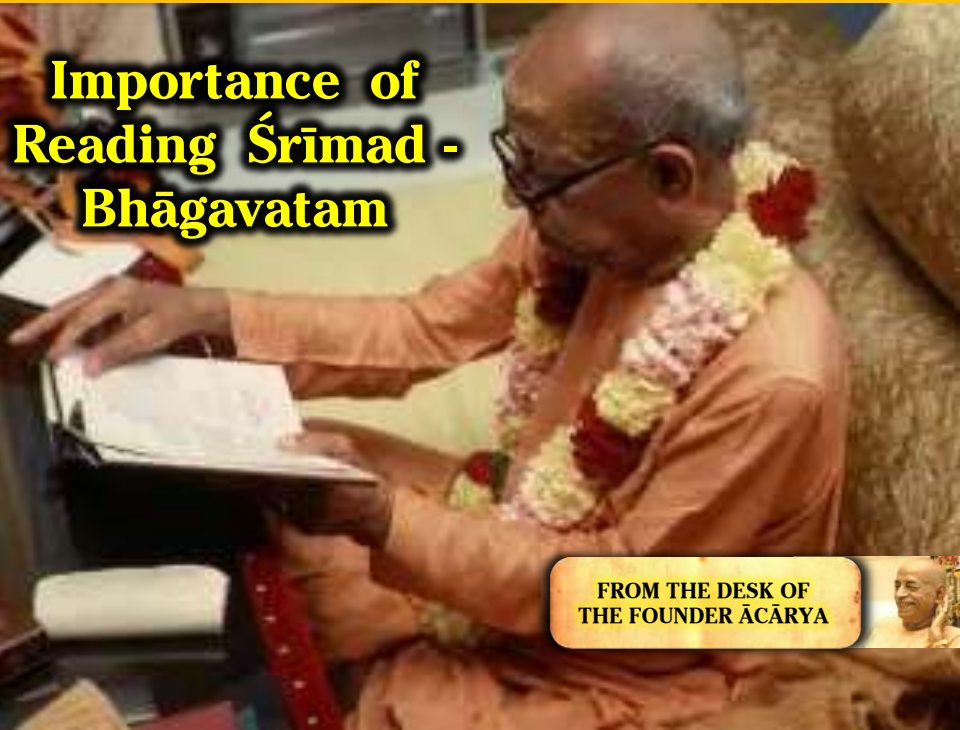
Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

The Dweller Of Our Hearts



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Importance of Reading Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam



FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA

How often should one read?

Nityam bhāgavata-sevayā [SB 1.2.18]. As a matter of principle, devotees should read, speak and hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam persistently, twenty-four hours daily if possible. That is the recommendation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ [Cc. Ādi 17.31]. One should either chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra or read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and thereby try to understand the characteristics and instructions of the Supreme Lord SB 5.6.16

How carefully should one read?

A sincere devotee should read every chapter and every word of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, for the beginning verses describe that it is the ripened fruit of all Vedic literature. Devotees should not try to avoid even a word of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. SB 4.12.44

Results of Reading

By reading and hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam as a scientific presentation,

1. The conditioned souls will gradually be promoted to the higher status of transcendental knowledge after being freed from the illusory energy based on sense enjoyment. SB 2.7.53
2. Simply by a careful reading one will know God perfectly well, so much so that the reader will be sufficiently educated to defend himself from the onslaught of atheists.
3. Over and above this, the reader will be able to convert others to accepting God as a concrete principle. SB preface

The Dweller of Our Hearts

Gauranga Darshan Das



It really doesn't take a cardiologist to understand Kṛṣṇa's heart; pure-hearted devotees brimming with love for Him will do the trick, for they are Kṛṣṇa's, and Kṛṣṇa is theirs!

My eyes can see my hands, but can my hands see my eyes?" – The answer is a No!" right?

God can see us, but can we see God?" – The answer oscillates between a No" and a Yes." But what exactly is the answer? – Well, here it is:

God is spiritual, and even the soul, a part of God, is also spiritual. Entrapped in a material body, the soul is unable to see God's spiritual form through the dull material senses, leave understanding the 'omnivision' of God. But it's still too early to be disappointed. Although the Lord's spiritual form is beyond our sensory perception, by engaging those very material senses in the selfless service of God, one can eventually see Him.

Once pleased with our unmotivated and uninterrupted service in pure consciousness, God Himself manifests before us. More than only revealing Himself to us, He enables us to realize His nature, relish His sweet names and forms, qualities, and activities.

How's that for an answer?!

The holy texts - *Bhagavad-gīta* and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* present the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, His forms, qualities, and activities in a most heart-churning way. To top that, they also present the process of realizing Him pragmatically. Well, the sheer volume of these scriptures might appear overwhelming, but upon diving deep into them patiently, we will surely experience our consciousness drenching in Kṛṣṇa's love, no matter what our background is.

1. He Is Within Us and Knows Our Hearts

There is a house in your heart! Although the Lord stays in Goloka, His eternal abode, He also stays in the hearts of all living beings as Paramātmā (*goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūto*, *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.37). Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself declares this fact in the *Bhagavad-gīta* - *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati* (18.61). Staying right within everyone's heart, He knows every single thought, desire, and plan of every individual.

He maintains the entire material creation as Paramātmā (Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu), He enters into every single material universe as Paramātmā (Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu), and He enters into every single living being's heart and even into every single atom as Paramātmā (Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu). Paramātmā is also present in a material atom. The saltiness in a salt particle, or the sweetness in a sugar particle, is because of the presence of Paramātmā, although there is no *ātma* there. He is the taste of water; He is the heat of the fire; He is the light of the sun and the moon. He is the active principle of everything that exists in the entire universe. He pervades the entire creation. Just as in a necklace, the beads are strung together with a thread; similarly, the Supreme Lord is the invisible foundation and the maintainer of every single atom in the material creation. (BG 7.7)

2. He Reminds, Inspires & Sanctions

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge, and forgetfulness (*sarvasya cāham hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanam ca*)." (BG 15.15)

Kṛṣṇa brings in forgetfulness of our past lives so that we can function properly. For instance, if someone remembers his past identity as a king and is currently a beggar, the person won't be able to accept his immediate identity - that of a beggar. Therefore, the Lord mercifully makes one forget certain things, but He reminds one of one's past desires so that can be pursued. He also supplies the necessary knowledge according to what one desires and deserves. Our desires, material or spiritual, find fulfillment only after receiving His assent. So, enjoying even on the material plane embraces reality only by the Lord's sanction.

Once, Ratnamālā, King Bali's sister (or daughter), saw Vāmanadeva at Bali's sacrificial arena. Overwhelmed with motherly affection for Him, she desired to have a child-like Him and feed Him her milk. The Lord noted this unspoken desire. After Vāmanadeva occupied the entire universe within two steps and arrested Bali Mahārāja, Ratnamālā thought to herself, "If He becomes my child, I will kill Him with poisonous milk." The Lord noted the second desire too. He combined both of her desires and awarded Ratnamālā the body of witch Pūtanā. As Pūtanā, Ratnamālā fed Kṛṣṇa her poisoned milk but was liberated by the Lord eventually. She attained the position of a motherly nurse in the spiritual world.

The conditioned souls are affected by material nature because of the absence of a good connection with the Lord. But the Lord, although in full contact with material nature, remains unaffected.

3. Personal Connection & A Word of Caution!

The Lord stays with us in the house of our hearts. But His eyes never sleep. They're like evasion-proof CCTV cameras installed within the hearts of one and all. So there's absolutely no chance of any of our actions going unnoticed. The conditioned soul transmigrates from one body to another body and from one place to another place in the pursuit of material happiness.

The Lord's omnipotence and omniscience help us build a personal connection with Him for we know Him to be the denizen of our heart. Moreover, we're always subtly reminded - 'That 'someone is looking after us and at all the time'! There may be none who recognize our efforts in this world, but there's One who always does. Common people in this world may misunderstand us, but Kṛṣṇa is the only one who cuts through all of that.

Lord Rāmacandra's brother, Bharata, was misunderstood by everyone. His mother, Kaikeyi, misunderstood him thinking that giving him the Kingdom of Ayodhyā would make him happy. Thus, Kaikeyi asked her husband, Daśaratha, to coronate Bharata and send Rāma on exile to the forest. This led to Daśaratha misunderstanding Bharata. Kauśalya, Vasiṣṭha, Guha, and even Lakṣmaṇa misunderstood Bharata. Later, when innocent Bharata came to the forest to take Rāma back to Ayodhyā, Lakṣmaṇa assumed that he was coming to kill Rāma. Yet, Lord Rāmacandra never misunderstood Bharata.

The Lord's omniscience also should give us a caution note: sometimes, although our mistakes are unnoticed by the people around us, they don't remain unnoticed to the Lord's eyes. Although, one may sometimes escape punishment from the police or court for one's criminal acts, one cannot escape from the Supreme Lord's perfect judgment. His eyes, ears, hands, and legs are everywhere. Although people praise us as great, he knows our actual position. The good or bad within us – nothing remains hidden from Him. It should also inspire within us a desire to see Him by developing spiritual consciousness.

4. Understanding His Heart - A Puzzle

The conditioned souls cannot understand Kṛṣṇa because their vision is impaired by *māyā*, His illusory energy. The clouds in the sky might seem to cover the sun, but when in reality, it's the cloud covering our vision of the sun. Similarly, *māyā* cannot cover the Lord's vision, but it somewhat does to ours. Veiled behind the curtain of *māyā* one cannot see or understand the Lord (SB 1.8.19).

But here's an exception. Those who sincerely desire to see the Lord can see Him by His kind assistance. He destroys the darkness of ignorance within everyone's hearts and gives them the necessary intelligence to reach Him. Here's the Lord's proclamation itself (BG 10.10-11).

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ
bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ
yena mām upayānti te*

"To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me."

*teṣāṁ evānukampārtham
aham ajṣāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho
jṣāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

"To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."

When someone sincerely desires to connect with the Lord, help is not so far away. For instance, the Lord knew that Dhruva desired to worship Him, and thus He sent Nārada Muni to guide Dhruva. Even without our expressing, the Lord understands our desires, motivations, and inclinations. Whether spiritual or materialistic, no desire is fulfilled without His sanction.

5. Those Who Understand His Heart

The Lord resides in everyone's heart and understands everyone, as described above. But, you may be curious to know whether someone is residing in *His heart as well?* – The answer is a big "Yes!" Well, who is that? – They're none other than His beloved devotees. Here's what the Lord says:

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ
sādhūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyaṭ te na jānanti
nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api*

"The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them." (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68)

Magically, devotees are also situated within the Lord's heart, just as He is within theirs. Just as the Lord understands the desires, motives, and plans of His devotees, so do the devotees situated within His heart.

Unlike conditioned souls, pure devotees, their eyes and hearts undeterred by the curtain of māyā, can see the Lord and know Him perfectly.

For example, intimate devotees like Mother Yaśodā and the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana would immediately understand what Kṛṣṇa needed even without Him having to express His desires. Similarly, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, knowing well the heart of Lord Caitanya (*śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale*), would act for the fulfillment of His desires even before the Lord voiced them.

In essence, although Kṛṣṇa resides in everyone's heart, He allows Himself to be understood by only those in pure consciousness. So let's lock our most valuable possession – our consciousness, carefully within the vault of our heart, Kṛṣṇa's seat.

6. The Hearts That God Can't Understand!

The all-knowing Kṛṣṇa sometimes cannot understand the minds of His pure devotees. So he becomes curious to know how much they relish serving His lotus feet. To understand the devotees' minds, He appears as *Vaṭa-patra-sāyī*, where He lies like an infant baby on a banyan leaf, sucking His own toe. Thus, he fulfills His desire to taste the sweetness of His own lotus feet, which His devotees relish. He is extremely inquisitive to know why His devotees are so attached to His lotus feet and hover around them like bumble bees.

The topmost of all the devotees of Kṛṣṇa is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Kṛṣṇa cannot understand the deep emotions and joys within Her heart. He wonders, "I am receiving so much service from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but Her happiness is ten million times more than Mine. I want to understand Her happiness. I want to understand the extent of love within Her heart. Unless I accept Her mood as My devotee, I cannot experience the superior pleasure of Her heart." Thinking thus, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu with the emotions of Rādhārāṇī.

Kṛṣṇa cannot even completely understand Himself. Only His exalted devotees can somewhat comprehend His completeness.

As the neutral Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa understands everybody's hearts and reciprocates according to their moods and deeds. He specifically understands the hearts of those practicing *bhakti* and imparts unto them the necessary inspiration and guidance to reach His Lotus feet. He houses the pure devotees - those devoid of malice, right within His heart, allowing them to understand His heartfelt desires and serve Him accordingly. But in the case of the most exalted devotees like the Vrajavāsīs, Kṛṣṇa longs to understand their hearts! This is the inconceivable nature of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the controller, master, proprietor, and enjoyer, but in front of His pure devotees, He takes a subordinate position and makes them greater than Himself.

ANALOGY ARENA



“You will see Me in all living entities as well as all over the universe, just as fire is situated in wood. Only in that state of transcendental vision will you be able to be free from all kinds of illusion.” SB 3.9.32 T



People are unaware that the ultimate goal of human life is to achieve Viṣṇu, the Lord of the cosmic manifestation, and so their struggle for existence is in the wrong direction of material civilization, which is under the external energy. They are led by similar foolish persons, just as one blind man is led by another blind man and both fall in the ditch. SB 3.9.17 P



The light of the moon on the Taj Mahal appears to be more beautiful than the same light in the wilderness. Although the light of the moon is the same everywhere, due to being differently appreciated it appears different. Similarly, the light of the Lord is equally distributed everywhere, but due to being differently received, it appears to be different SB 3.7.11 P

VERSE OF THE MONTH



Krishna's Beauty and the Gopis' Anger

SB 9.24.65

*yasyānanaṁ makara-kuṇḍala-cāru-karṇa-
bhrājat-kapola-subhagaṁ savilāsa-hāsam
nityotsavaṁ na tatṛpur dṛśibhiḥ pibantyo
nāryo narāś ca muditāḥ kupitā nimeś ca*

Kṛṣṇa's face is decorated with ornaments, such as earrings resembling sharks. His ears are beautiful, His cheeks brilliant, and His smiling attractive to everyone. Whoever sees Lord Kṛṣṇa sees a festival. His face and body are fully satisfying for everyone to see, but the devotees are angry at the creator for the disturbance caused by the momentary blinking of their eyes. *(Sukadeva Goswami to Pariksit Maharaja)*



THEMATIC STUDY DEITY WORSHIP

The TWO Most Important Things

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has recommended that one follow both processes simultaneously - performing Deity worship and saṅkīrtana along parallel lines. This we should continue. SB 6.3.26

Can material contamination affect a place where Deities are worshipped?

Any place where the Deity is worshiped is transcendental; it does not belong to the material world. one is recommended to live in the temple community as a devotee, regularly worship the Deity, follow the regulative principles and thus make the place like Vaikuṅṭha.

SB 7.14.29

Which all Items can be used for making the Deities?

There are eight kinds of forms recommended for the devotees to see. The forms may be made out of sand, clay, wood or stone, they may be contemplated within the mind or made of jewels, metal or painted colors, but all the forms are of the same value. Sb 3.28.18

Is Deity different from the Person?

There is no difference between the arcā-vigraha and the original person, and therefore those who are engaged in worshiping the Deity in the temple in full opulence, even on this planet, should be understood to be directly in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead without a doubt. By avoiding offenses against the Deity and the spiritual master, one can advance in spiritual life, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. SB 5.17.14

Deity is one of the five incarnations of the Lord

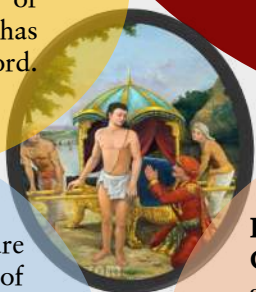
The Deity is a particular incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Lord Kṛṣṇa can present Himself before the worshiper in five different manifestations, namely His original form as Kṛṣṇa (para), His quadruple expansions (vyūha), His pastime incarnations (vaibhava), the Supersoul (antaryāmi) and the Deity (arcā). SB 11.2.47

BHĀGAVATA DARŚANA

Jewels of Vaiṣṇava Character

JEWEL SIXTEEN GENTLE

Undisturbed: He does not consider anyone his enemy and is never disturbed by the tendency to desire or enjoy the suffering of others because he has taken shelter of the Lord. SB 11.11.29-32



Above Duality: The pure devotee is the noblest of all, and he has no feelings of animosity towards anyone. Duality due to animosity is a creation of this material world. There is no such thing in the spiritual world, which is the absolute reality. SB 4.9.45

Beyond Sense Gratification: 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.



Defeats Maya: A saintly person is always a perfect gentleman and is never greedy or lusty. Although māyā tries to defeat him by offering different material allurements, ultimately these attractive material features are themselves defeated by the spiritual power of a saintly person. SB 11 .7.45

Forgives and Forgets: A devotee forgives and forgets any offense against himself. A Vaiṣṇava is personally detached from his material body, which is made of pus, stool, blood, and so on. Therefore the devotee is able to overlook the obnoxious behavior he sometimes meets with in the course of preaching work and always deals with people as a perfect gentleman. SB 11.11.29-32

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NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

CC: Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

BG: Bhagavad-gītā

BS: Brahma-saṁhitā

1.1.1: Canto 1, Chapter 1, Verse 1

1.1.1 P: From Śrīla Prabhupāda's purport to SB 1.1.1

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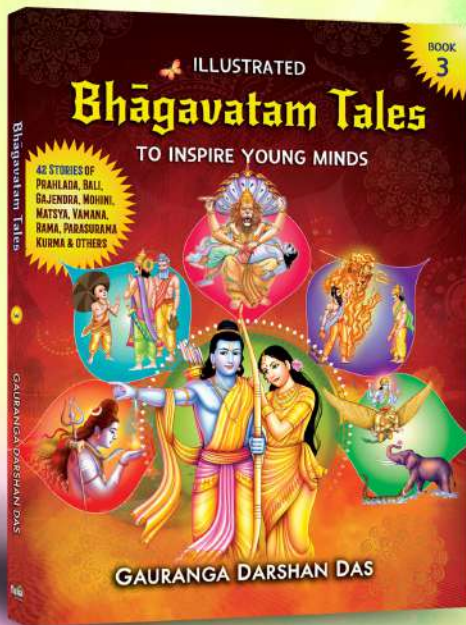
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