



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

Living a Life of Prayer

Inside: Lord Jagannātha and Ratha-yātrā | Bhāgavata darśana: Forgiveness |
Analogy Arena | Verse of the Month



FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA



Lord Jagannātha and Ratha - yātrā

Prabhupāda's Childhood Ratha-yātrā

By the grace of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we had the chance of being born in a Vaiṣṇava family, and in our childhood we imitated the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa by imitating our father. Our father encouraged us in all respects to observe all functions such as the Ratha-yātrā and Dola-yātrā ceremonies, and he used to spend money liberally for distributing prasādam to us children and our friends. SB 2.3.15 P

Lord Caitanya in Ratha-yātrā

As long as the Lord remained at Purī, thousands of His devotees used to come to see Him during the Ratha-yātrā car festival of Lord Jagannātha. And during the car festival, the washing of the Guṇḍicā temple under the direct supervision of the Lord was an important function. The Lord's congregational saṅkīrtana movement at Purī was a unique exhibition for the mass of people. SB Intro

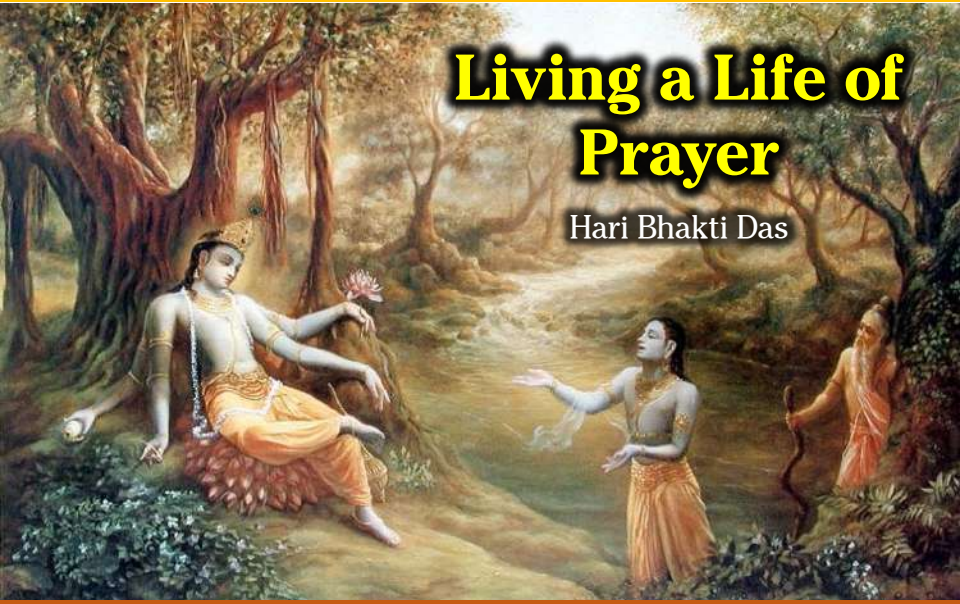
The POWER of a SMALL SERVICE offered to Lord Jagannātha

Mahārāja Pratāparudra, the greatly powerful King of Orissa, was always very busy with heavy state responsibilities, yet he made it a point to sweep the temple of Lord Jagannātha at Purī once a year during the festival of the Lord. The idea is that however important a man one may be, he must accept the supremacy of the Supreme Lord. This God consciousness will help a man even in his material prosperity.

Mahārāja Pratāparudra's subordination before Lord Jagannātha made him a powerful king, so much so that even the great Pathan in his time could not enter into Orissa on account of the powerful Mahārāja Pratāparudra. SB 2.3.21

Living a Life of Prayer

Hari Bhakti Das



Deepening the Quality of the Prayers we offer to the Supreme Lord

The silent yet speedy way to reach God is known as prayer. Imagine ourselves going in front of the most kind, the most magnanimous person in the entire universe. What would we ask from such a person? We would definitely want to make the best use of the opportunity at hand. Also, before we go to meet him or her, won't we plan fully what are we going to speak? And what if that person is the Supreme Lord Himself? Once a while, we may be inspired to heartfully pray what we yearn for in our life. Yet sometimes when we go in front of God, we become so captivated by the surroundings that we forget to pray. Sometimes we may be confused whether praying for a particular thing for oneself is right or not. Yet sometimes after an inspiring seminar on detachment, some prayers make way from our mind and heart in the form of a prayer. But we may later regret that we didn't really mean it and we may request Him not to take our prayers seriously. Sometimes years may go by and we may remain without praying anything substantial to the Supreme Lord. The following analysis will help us in increasing the quality of prayers when we approach the Supreme Lord. It is not that we offer prayers only when we go in front of the Supreme Lord. He is accessible everywhere and for all time without restrictions of time and space. Gajendra, the elephant was in danger of his life from a crocodile. He prayed while he was struggling inside water and the Lord heard him. Draupadi called for Kṛṣṇa in the midst of the assembly in Hastināpura. Kṛṣṇa could hear while being in Dvārakā. Little Dhruva who was only five years old prayed while being in the forest of Madhuvana. He received the *darśana* of the Lord in six months.

Whom to Pray?

While reading through the pages of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we understand that demigods like Indra, Candra, Vāyu, Gaṇeśa, Umā can fulfill our material desires, but they not being eternal in their posts cannot offer us something eternal. Furthermore, whatever they grant us is actually granted by the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa only. The demigods say in SB 6.9.22,

*avismitaṁ taṁ paripūrṇa-kāmaṁ
svenaiva lābhena samaṁ praśāntam
vinopasarpaty aparaṁ hi bālīśaḥ
śva-lāṅgulenātittitarti sindhum*

"The Supreme Lord is free from all material conceptions, He is self-satisfied and never bewildered. He is steady and unattached. Anyone who desires to be protected by others is certainly a great fool. He can be compared to a person who tries to cross the sea by holding the tail of a dog."

The demigods themselves tell the pitiable situation of one who takes their shelter. Uddhava tells why Kṛṣṇa is the perfect shelter for everyone.

*tasmād bhavantam anavadyam ananta-pāraṁ
sarva-jñam īśvaram akuṅṭha-vikuṅṭha-dhiṣṇyam
nirviṇṇa-dhīr aham u he vṛjīnābhitapto
nārāyaṇaṁ nara-sakhaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye*

"O Lord, feeling weary of material life and tormented by its distresses, I now surrender unto You because You are the perfect master. You are the unlimited, all-knowing Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose spiritual abode in Vaikuṅṭha is free from all disturbances. In fact, You are known as Nārāyaṇa, the true friend of all living beings." SB 11.7.18

Can we Pray for Fulfillment of Material Desires?

Once we are convinced that there is no one other than the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa who should be the object of our prayers, the next question that arises is what should we pray for? If we desire to have a child, if we yearn to go to another country, if we cherish the desire of cracking a competitive exam, can we pray the same to the Supreme Lord? *Bhāgavatam* urges to worship the Supreme Lord for the fulfillment of even our material desires. SB 2.3.10 mentions,

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvrena bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

"A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead."

The beauty of worshipping Kṛṣṇa is that He knows which desires to fulfill and which ones to hold back. And He exactly knows the way to fulfill them. Dhruva desired a kingdom greater than his great grandfather, the Lord fulfilled. Kardama, on the order of his father Brahma desired a suitable wife. He got married to Devahūti by Lord's grace. Mahārāja Nabhi wanted a son exactly like the Supreme Lord. Lord Vishnu replied that no one can be like Him. And therefore, He Himself came as Rṣabhadeva.

The way in which Kṛṣṇa fulfills material desires is also extra-ordinary. He certainly gives desired objects to devotees who request them, but He does not give in such a way that the devotee will ask them again after finishing his enjoyment. Instead, He gives His lotus feet, which include all desirables, to those worshippers who do not desire them. Same thing happened with Dhruva Mahārāja. He became detestable of the thing he so intensely yearned for.

Citraketu Mahārāja, who is another celebrated devotee of the Lord mentions that even those obsessed with material desires worshipping the Supreme Lord are not subject to rebirth just as roasted seeds do not grow. An object which falls in a well of juice becomes juicy, similarly, when material desires enter the Supreme Lord, they become spiritual. (SB 6.16.39)

At the same time, asking for material things does not constitute the topmost form of worship to the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Asking for material benefit is not a sign of a pure devotee. For the living entity who desires to return to Godhead, material desires are impediments." BG 7.22



At the same time, asking for material things does not constitute the topmost form of worship to the Supreme Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Asking for material benefit is not a sign of a pure devotee. For the living entity who desires to return to Godhead, material desires are impediments." BG 7.22

Pṛthu Mahārāja in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that the Lord, being our father and well-wisher, knows what is best for us. He requests the Lord to bestow on him whatever the Lord thinks the best for him.

Can we Pray for our own Deliverance?

One may feel that if one desires one's own welfare, isn't it selfishness? Yes, it is selfishness but it is real selfishness. After all, isn't self-realization desired by one who pursues a spiritual path? What one means by deliverance needs to be also understood. If deliverance means freedom from suffering, the first thing that naturally happens as a result of practicing the process is *kleśāghnī*, or relief from material distress. Yet one can beseech the Lord for deliverance from one's insignificant fallen condition and suffering to attract Kṛṣṇa's grace. There are many prayers in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that depict such feelings.

If deliverance means ending the cycle of birth and death and going back to the spiritual world, that is an extremely healthy aspiration. An orphan desiring to go back to his or her real parents is not a selfish desire. That is the orphan's greatest need. To pray to get eternal association of Kṛṣṇa is a petition from the devotee's side that makes Kṛṣṇa eager to take him or her back to the spiritual world. Also, if we do our part, even without asking Kṛṣṇa takes us back to His abode. Kṛṣṇa is more eager than us to take us back to Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Can we Pray for a Specific Service?

When one pursues the path of spiritual life, one may be simply happy rendering the services that are given by one's authorities. And that is perfect. A thought that may also arise in the mind of a practitioner is can one pray for rendering a specific type of service?

Prthu Mahārāja says, "Now I wish to engage in the service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to serve just like the goddess of fortune." (SB 4.20.27) Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, one of the acharyas in the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava-sampradāya expresses his desire to anoint the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with sandalwood paste, garland Them and fan Them with a camara whisk. These prayers are technically termed as '*lālasāmayi*', meaning to intensely long for personal service of the Lord.

Prayers for rendering a specific service to the Lord is a means to express our spiritual desires. The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Mahāmantra is also a petition to the Lord to engage us in His service. Lord is extremely pleased when we wish to render Him service. At the same time, non-fulfillment of our desires for an exclusive service should not become an obstacle in rendering other designated services. Nor it should lead to an unhealthy attitude of wanting to render a particular service by hook or crook and thus becoming insensitive towards people and situations.

Prayers Conducive to Bhakti

The basis of the prayers in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that the devotees wish to progress in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and attract Lord's grace. Their prayers give us a guideline what exactly we should pray for. Many of the devotees like Parikṣit Mahārāja, Pṛthu Mahārāja, Dhruva Mahārāja, Pracetās pray to the Supreme Lord for association of His devotees. For instance, the Pracetās say in SB 4.30.33,

*yāvat te māyayā sprṣṭā
bhramāma iha karmabhiḥ
tāvad bhavat-prasaṅgānām
saṅgaḥ syān no bhave bhave*

"Dear Lord, as long as we have to remain within this material world due to our material contamination and wander from one type of body to another and from one planet to another, we pray that we may associate with those who are engaged in discussing Your pastimes. We pray for this benediction life after life, in different bodily forms and on different planets."

Another prayer conducive to bhakti is when we pray to the Lord to protect us from committing offenses and mistakes on the devotional path. Brahmāji prayed to the Lord in the Third Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to not get deviated and to not become proud. He also prayed for getting empowered to render his designated service of creation efficiently. Such prayers for empowerment signify our dependence on the Lord. When a great king Rahūgaṇa mistakenly committed a great offense against a devotee Jaḍa Bharata, the former prayed that he was neither afraid of Indra's thunderbolt nor Śiva's trident. But he terribly feared disrespecting brahmanas and Vaiṣṇavas. All these are apt prayers to be offered to the Supreme Lord.

From Practice to Perfection

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is filled with prayers of various devotees. Although we cannot compare the prayers of the pure devotees of the Supreme Lord, we can estimate the quality of prayers based on Kṛṣṇa's reciprocation thereafter. When Dakṣa prayed to the Supreme Lord for getting empowered to increase progeny, the Lord fulfilled his desire, and He left without granting him any spiritual benediction. After Lord Vishnu appeared in Mahārāja Pṛthu's sacrificial arena, being greatly inclined to the behavior of Pṛthu Mahārāja, he didn't depart. Then Pṛthu Mahārāja offered beautiful prayers unto the Supreme Lord.

One of the kind of prayers that constitute the highest form of worship are the ones where one doesn't ask anything for oneself but simply prays for other living entities. When compassion takes the form of a prayer to the Supreme Lord, He is extremely pleased. Prahlāda Mahārāja prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva for the deliverance of all the unfortunate souls who are suffering in this material world. Nṛsiṃhadeva's reciprocation to Prahlāda was he delivered all the people from their suffering. Even Prahlāda's father, the demon Hiranyaśipu and twenty-one generations of Prahlāda's ancestors were delivered by the grace of Nṛsiṃhadeva.

Another place where Kṛṣṇa offered even higher reciprocation was when He confessed to the gopis His inability to reciprocate their love. And what was the gopis mood and their prayers that made Kṛṣṇa speak like that? Gopīs desired nothing for themselves. They simply desired Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. They were ready to sacrifice any amount of time and energy, they were ready to forsake their reputation and they were ready to be forever in utter distress simply to make Him happy for a moment. Their prayers and their life both were simply meant to awaken the deepest feelings of love in Kṛṣṇa's heart and give Him the ultimate happiness.

A Life of Prayer

Sometimes, Kṛṣṇa may reciprocate externally and sometimes He may not as well just to intensify the devotion of His devotees! Therefore, all the prayers from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or any other scripture that express the highest desire to serve Kṛṣṇa and to please Him demanding nothing for oneself are valuable jewels to be cherished and adored. All of these constitute the perfect prayers. In *bhakti*, there can be unlimited perfections in various shades. Journey of life is to transform ourselves from a state of no prayer or prayers for material well-being to a state of prayers of the highest stature. One must not only deepen the quality of prayers, but deepen the commitment to prayers. From occupying a small part of our daily life, prayers are meant to envelope our entire life. The heart-melting prayers of Vṛtrāsura from the sixth canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the devotional prayers of Pracetas, Pṛthu Mahārāja's earnest entreaties and many others are among the choicest prayers offered in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Kṛṣṇa fills that devotee's heart with grace who prays to the Lord in a humble disposition. That grace inspires newer and newer desires for service in the heart of the devotee and the cycle continues indefinitely. When a devotee lives a life of prayer, not only he or she feels extremely content in life, but such devotees become touchstones of Lord's grace and spread that grace everywhere. Śrīla Prabhupāda was such a touchstone whose life exemplified prayerful living. By his prayers and by his life, he transformed the lives of millions of people all over the world.

VERSE OF THE MONTH



The ONLY Benediction Desired

SB 4.20.25

*sa uttamaśloka mahan-mukha-cyuto
bhavat-padāmbhoja-sudhā kaṇānilaḥ
smṛtiṁ punar viśmṛta-tattova-vartmanām
kuyoginām no vitaraty alaṁ varaiḥ*

My dear Lord, You are glorified by the selected verses uttered by great personalities. Such glorification of Your lotus feet is just like saffron particles. When the transcendental vibration from the mouths of great devotees carries the aroma of the saffron dust of Your lotus feet, the forgetful living entity gradually remembers his eternal relationship with You. Devotees thus gradually come to the right conclusion about the value of life. My dear Lord, I therefore do not need any other benediction but the opportunity to hear from the mouth of Your pure devotee.

(Pṛthu Mahārāja to the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu)

ANALOGY ARENA



Just as a student in a law class is to be understood to have already graduated from general education, anyone who is engaged in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—must have already passed all lower stages. SB 3.33.7

Just as one can appreciate the real taste of milk with the tongue and not with the eyes, nostrils or ears, one can similarly appreciate the Absolute Truth perfectly and with all relishable pleasure only through one path, devotional service. SB 3.32.33



I may dream that I am flying in the sky or that I have gone into the forest or some unknown place. But as soon as I am awake I forget all these bodies. Similarly, when one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, fully devoted, he forgets all his changes of body. SB 3.33.26

Kṛṣṇa is Supremely Forgiving

Uddhava says in SB 3.2.23

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam
jighāmsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema*

Kṛṣṇa granted the topmost destination of a nurse to a demoness who had come to kill Him. This is the forgiveness exhibited by the Lord.

Why should one Forgive Others?

1] Kṛṣṇa is pleased and it is duty of saintly people to Forgive:

*kṣamayā rocate lakṣmī
brāhmī saurī yathā prabhā
kṣamiṇām āśu bhagavāms
tuṣyate harir īśvaraḥ*

The duty of a brāhmaṇa is to culture the quality of forgiveness, which is illuminating like the sun. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is pleased with those who are forgiving. SB 9. 15.40

2] Revengeful Attitude spoils one's Consciousness:

The material world is full of embarrassing and irritating situations, and unless one is inclined to be very much forgiving he will become infected by a vindictive mentality, which spoils one's spiritual consciousness. SB 11.3.24 P

3] Why to kill those who are already killed?

Lord Brahma says to Lord Siva begging pardon from him for the offense of Dakṣa, “My dear lord, if in some places materialists, who are already bewildered by the insurmountable illusory energy of the Supreme Godhead, sometimes commit offenses, a saintly person, with compassion, does not take this seriously. Knowing that they commit offenses because they are overpowered by the illusory energy, he does not show his prowess to counteract them.” SB 4.6.48

4] Forgiveness is a Measure of one's Advancement:

One who is both devoted and highly advanced in intelligence does not take action against the soul or the body. If there is any discrepancy, he forgives. It is said that forgiveness is a quality of those who are advancing in spiritual knowledge. SB 4.20.3 P

BHĀGAVATA DARŚANA



*Jewels of
Vaiṣṇava Character*



JEWEL EIGHTEEN FORGIVENESS

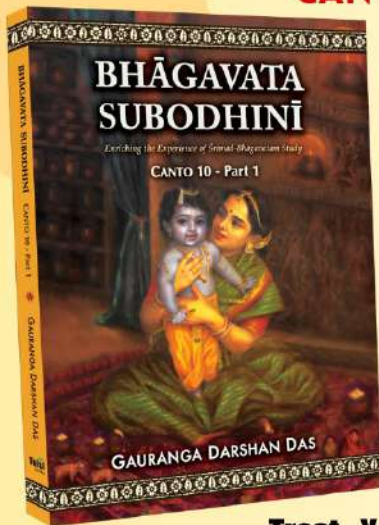
Part-2 : Forgiving Others

The LONG Wait is Finally over....

Tulsi
Books

BHAGAVATA SUBODHINI

CANTO 10 - PART 1



Visualize the Beautiful Lotus Face of Sri Krishna non-different from the Tenth Canto through Precise Narratives.



Absorb yourself in the Charming Pastimes of Krishna ecstatically described by Sukadeva Goswami.



Enrich your Bhagavatam Experience through Systematic Study.

**Treat Yourself and Others
with a RATHA YATRA Gift!!!**

Available on Amazon, Kindle version,
www.tulsibooks.com, www.gaurangadarshan.com,
For bulk orders contact tulsibookssales@gmail.com



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

To subscribe, please visit our website

www.vidyapitha.in.

PUBLISHED BY

Bhaktivedānta Vidyāpīṭha, ISKCON Govardhan Eco Village (GEV), Galtare, Hamrapur (P.O), Wada (Taluka), Palghar (District), Maharashtra, India, 421303.

The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam images, verses and quotes from the books of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda are copyright of The **Bhaktivedanta Book Trust**. Other images are copyright of their respective artists / photographers/ websites.